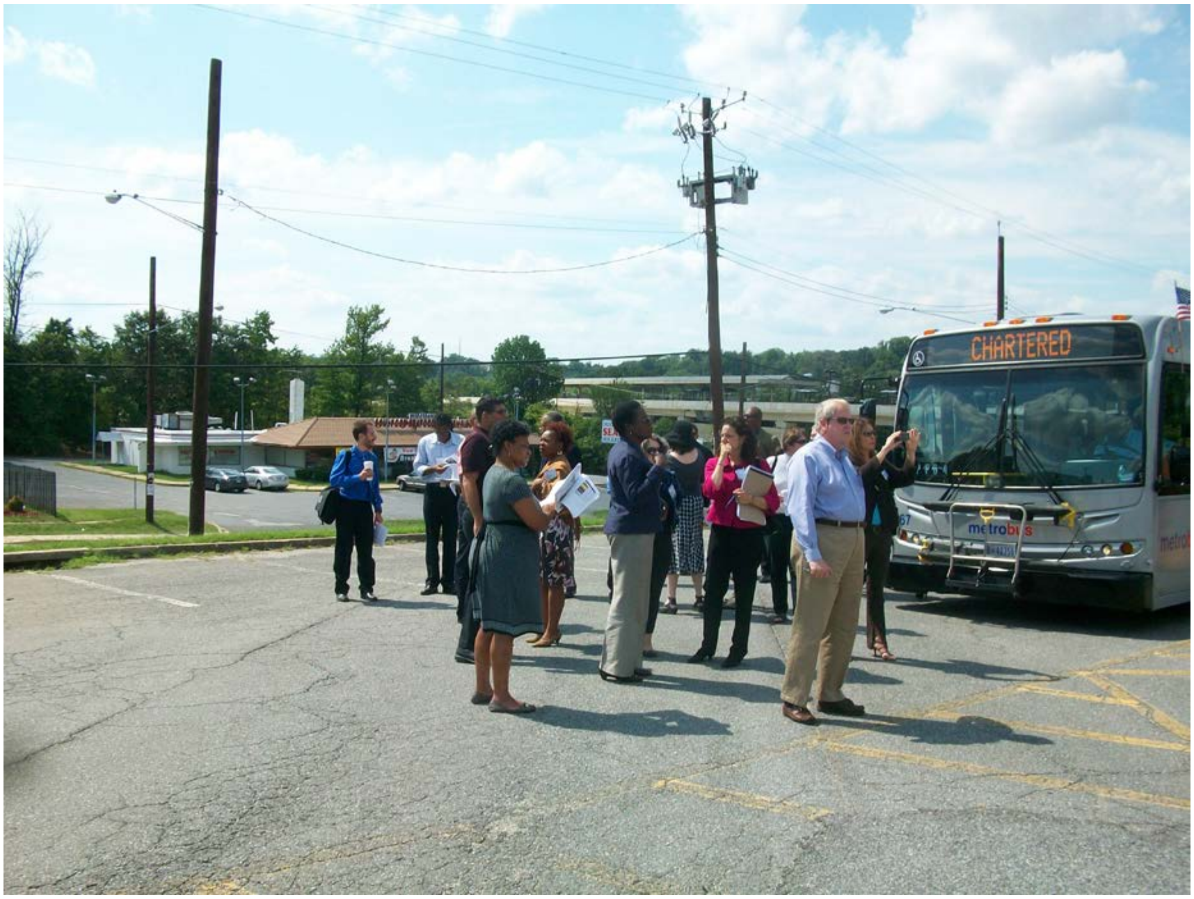

A Technical Assistance Panel Report

Metro Green Line Corridor

Sponsored by:
Prince George's County Planning Department
The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

August 24-25, 2011

Metro Green Line Corridor

Prince George's County, MD

August 24 - 25, 2011
A Technical Assistance Panel Report

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About ULI Washington
A District Council of the Urban Land Institute

ULI Washington is a district council of ULI–the Urban Land Institute, a nonprofit education and research organization supported by its members. Founded in 1936, the Institute today has over 30,000 members worldwide representing the entire spectrum of land use planning and real estate development disciplines, working in private enterprise and public service.

As the preeminent, multidisciplinary real estate forum, ULI facilitates the open exchange of ideas, information, and experience among local, national, and international industry leaders and policy makers dedicated to creating better communities.

ULI's mission is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. ULI Washington carries out the ULI mission locally by sharing best practices, building consensus, and advancing solutions through its educational programs and community outreach initiatives.

About the Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) Program

The objective of ULI Washington's Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) program is to provide expert, multidisciplinary advice on land use and real estate issues facing public agencies and nonprofit organizations in the Washington Metropolitan area. Drawing from its extensive membership base, ULI Washington conducts one and one-half day panels offering objective and responsible advice to local decision makers on a wide variety of land use and real estate issues ranging from site-specific projects to public policy questions. The TAP program is intentionally flexible to provide a customized approach to specific land use and real estate issues.

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Acknowledgments

Both personally and on behalf of the Urban Land Institute Washington District Council (ULI Washington), the panel members and project staff would like to thank the Prince George's County Planning Department, Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), for inviting ULI Washington to the Metro Green Line Corridor, in order to assist their efforts in establishing a Metro Green Line TOD Corridor Action Plan. Specifically, the panel would like to thank Ivy Lewis, Chief, Community Planning South Division; Barry Gore, Project Manager; and Clara Fenwick, Community Planner, for their work in initiating the Panel and defining the scope, preparing the briefing materials and arranging the additional briefings, touring the panel around the study area, and providing on-site support, thereby ensuring that the panel was well-prepared prior to their arrival, and well-briefed and supported once they began working.

The panel would also like to thank Albert G. Dobbins, Deputy Director, Prince George's County Planning Department, M-NCPPC; Robin McElhenny-Smith, Planning Manager, and Catherine Jones, Urban Senior Planner, from the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA); Evelyn Kasongo, Ward 8 Planner, D.C. Office of Planning; Aubrey D. Thagard, Assistant Deputy Chief Administrative Officer for Economic Development and Public Infrastructure, Office of the County Executive, Prince George's County; Christine Saum, Chief Urban Desiner, Policy Research, and Julia Koster, Director, Intergovernmental Affairs, National Capital Planning Commission; Rodney L. Moulden, Regional Urban Development Officer, U.S. General Services Administration; and Chris Dickersin-Prokopp, Capital City Fellow, D.C. Department of Housing & Community Development, for their additional briefings to the panel, which provided a comprehensive view of all of the efforts being undertaken by the various public sector stakeholders, within both the study area itself and those areas which impact it.

Finally, the panel was also very grateful to have the benefit of input from other stakeholders, residents, business owners, and public officials, who attended the opening and/or closing sessions of the panel, as listed below:

Karen Anderson	Suitland Civic Association
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Charles Whitaker	River of Life Church
Kevin Waskelis	Prince George's County Planning Department, M-NCPPC
Casey Willson	University of Maryland Small Business Development Center

The findings and recommendations provided in this report are based on the collective expertise of the panel, along with the briefing materials, and information gleaned from the tour, stakeholder presentations, and roundtable discussions conducted during the panel's one and one-half day effort.

Panelists, residents, and stakeholders participate in briefings on the first day of the panel.

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Foreword: Overview and Panel Assignment

Prince George's County has committed to establish policies and plans that will foster creation of transit-oriented development (TOD) in proximity to the county's Metrorail stations. Station areas in the county have not grown as quickly as TOD corridors and centers in Montgomery County, Maryland and Arlington, Virginia. However, this new commitment to TOD and urban style development has produced results with plans for substantial new development around the New Carrolton Metrorail Station on the Orange Line, which ULI helped to guide through a technical assistance panel in July of 2007.

Prince George's County Planning is once again seeking the expertise of the Urban Land Institute as they initiate planning for the area surrounding the last four stations on the southern part of the Metrorail Green Line. Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) received a 2010 Community Challenge Planning Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to prepare a Metro Green Line TOD Corridor Action Plan. Contracts with HUD were finalized in March and a project coordinator hired to manage a three-year planning process. A consultant team will be hired in the coming months to analyze existing conditions and make recommendations on future economic development strategies, future land use, and transportation infrastructure and transit service.

The project corridor surrounds four stations on the southern end of the Metrorail Green Line, extending from Southern Avenue, which is the boundary between the District of Columbia and Prince George's County, Maryland, down Branch Avenue to the Capital Beltway (Interstate 495). The four stations are:

- Southern Avenue
- Naylor Road
- Suitland
- Branch Avenue

These stations all opened in January 2001, as part of a 6.5 mile extension of the Green Line from Anacostia Station that also included a fifth station at Congress Heights in the District of Columbia. In the 10 years that have passed since the opening of the four stations, only limited new development has occurred within the immediate station area.

The area directly served is, like most of Prince George's County, unincorporated; however, the corridor overlays or is adjacent to a number of named communities, including Hillcrest Heights, Marlow Heights, and Suitland. The building stock in these communities dates from the late 1950s and 1960s, with single-family rambler houses, duplexes, townhouses, and clusters of multifamily apartments. The Branch Avenue strip in its heyday during the 1960s was a shopping destination anchored by Marlow

Heights Shopping Center and Iverson Mall, with Iverson being one of the first malls in the Washington metro area.

While these retail centers struggle to compete with much newer developments in the county as well as Virginia, the Green Line corridor does exhibit trends toward becoming a federal employment corridor. Substantial new federal and private investments are being made on the District of Columbia portion of the Green Line, including:

- U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) and Naval Sea Systems facilities located at the Navy Yard Metrorail Station.
- Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Headquarters, with 4.5 million gross square feet of space, located at St. Elizabeth near the Congress Heights Metrorail Station.
- Planning by the District of Columbia for major development on the west campus of St. Elizabeth's to include housing, office, retail, and educational and cultural facilities.

Within Prince George's County recent and planned developments also show promise for extending this activity along the transit line. At the Suitland Metrorail Station the headquarters for the U.S. Census Bureau, along with other agencies in the immediate federal jobs campus, has brought approximately 8,000 employees to the corridor. Developers have also shown interest in bringing additional federal office space to the Naylor Road Metrorail Station area, and to the Branch Avenue Station, the current terminus of the line. In addition, more than 1,000 units of new rental housing have been constructed immediately north of the Branch Avenue Station, with even more units and retail space in the approval process. While some local and global market factors may have delayed robust development on the Green Line over the initial 10 years of service, Prince George's County now believes that the time for new development, redevelopment, and investments has come.

Understanding the regional economic position of the corridor and suggesting strategies for future economic development is crucial to the Green Line TOD Corridor Action Plan project. While current trends show strength in terms of federally-funded office development, budgetary and other forces could slow this development. The Prince George's County Planning Department seeks the assistance of a ULI Technical Advisory Panel in order to identify and consider a wide variety of possible future economic development programs for the corridor. Recent planning work has established a regulatory framework for new mixed-use development north of the Suitland Metrorail Station, as well as along Branch Avenue. This is an important step, which will be followed by the creation of the TOD Action Plan. Prince George's County seeks ULI's assistance in looking at the big picture in terms of the regional real estate market and making sure that their consultants and partners in the project have a solid foundation to build upon.

Once the regional position of the Green Line is understood and potential markets identified, Prince George's County seeks ULI's analysis on the impediments to development and investment in the corridor, the major assets to be promoted, and initial strategies and incentives to be further explored during the main part of the planning process.

Questions to be Addressed by Panel Members

1. Does recent and planned growth in federal office space development near station sites on the Green Line represent the formation of a federal employment corridor? If so, is it possible to project the full potential, or build out, for this type of development? Or is it possible that the 'market' for federal growth has already peaked?

2. Besides federal investment, what other types of office space might the corridor compete for in the regional market? Is there a need for more professional office space or need for local services?

3. The corridor contains two aging retail centers at Marlow Heights and Iverson Mall—is there a continued market for retail space in the corridor, and what form (i.e. big box, outlet, mixed use) is the best fit for Branch Avenue?

4. What are the key elements to successful local retail at the immediate station sites? How can empty ground floor retail be avoided in primarily residential projects?

5. Is there any potential for a game changing, destination type commercial development in the corridor, perhaps in terms of hospitality or entertainment uses?

6. How should the stations be planned to complement each other in terms of land use? Is it possible to encourage use of the Metrorail as a local transit linking local uses at each site; or if not, what would expand the range of pedestrians and help the areas and streets between stations function as a pedestrian corridor?

7. How can employees, especially those working at federal campuses, be encouraged to engage with the local community and local businesses?

Market Potential

The panel began its day and a half-long process by reviewing the current market within the study area, and found a median household income that is less than the countywide median, as well as an unemployment rate that is higher than the county's average. There is currently no Class A office space within the study area, and approximately 850,000 square feet of Class B and C office space, with a vacancy rate nearing 17%. Although this vacancy figure is somewhat daunting, it is not totally out of the norm for some submarkets within the region. In terms of retail, two national retailers serve residents within the study area, but the area is largely a "food desert" in terms of restaurant options. The housing stock is older, with home values that are less than that of the county average, except for the newer stock that has recently been added around the Branch Avenue station.

Looking at employment, the number one industrial sector is retail, with 21% of all business establishments; these jobs are generally lower wage and frequently part-time. The next largest sectors are "other services" at 10%, which basically includes all those sectors that cannot be classified, with health care/social assistance also at 10%. As such, there are not a lot of skilled employment opportunities currently existing within the study area, nor the diversity of employment opportunities that can increase household income. However, because such statistics are not set in stone, the panel unanimously agrees that the Green Line Corridor is a hidden gem within our region, and that transit-oriented development zones around the stations could produce revitalization in the broader area, thereby moving the needle in a positive direction for many of the numbers cited above.

The Green Line Corridor has Significant Potential. Of course, many others have already made convincing cases for the opportunities presented by these sites, not the least of which being the Coalition for Smarter Growth, with its highly useful *Invest Prince George's* report and online resource.[1] During their briefing on the first day of the TAP, the panelists heard several presenters make the case for these sites, particularly in terms of their suitability for new federal office locations and the added employment opportunities such facilities, and the private sector contractors that could follow them, would bring. Indeed, the need for more employment in Prince George's County and the eastern part of our region—both for the benefit of residents of the county and for the sustainable growth of our entire region in general—has been compellingly illustrated as far back as 1998, in the Brookings Institution's Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy

[1] Coalition for Smarter Growth. (2010, September). *Invest Prince George's*. Retrieved August 11, 2011 from http://www.smartergrowth.net/anx/index.cfm/0,229,html

Report, *A Region Divided: The State of Growth in Greater Washington, D.C.*[2] As a result, the panel plunged head-first into the question of whether the area is a federal employment corridor, and if so, whether the 'market' for federal growth had peaked.

The Prospect for Continued Federal Employment Growth within the Corridor is Highly Uncertain. The panel recognizes that the Green Line is clearly a federal employment corridor, as is demonstrated by the existence of federal facilities all along the line, including Suitland Federal Center with its approximately 8,000 employees, as well as the northern end of the line to Greenbelt and NASA. Has the opportunity to lure new federal office space and employment already passed, though? Unfortunately the panel's answer to that question is that it is indeed possible that it has. At least over the foreseeable future, demand from the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) users may be minimal as budget considerations impact new space needs. A commonly-cited example of the federal government's intention to "do more with less" is the renovation of the GSA's own headquarters building, on F Street in the District of Columbia: whereas 2,000 employees had previously reported to the building, it will be the home base of at least 4,500 employees when it reopens, as the federal government further embraces the space- and cost-saving approaches of the private sector by expanding access to telecommuting and unassigned office seating techniques such as hoteling and "hot-desking." Even the long-planned and high-profile consolidation of Department of Homeland Security agencies into a new campus at St. Elizabeth's has been the subject of recent budget battles, putting that project behind schedule and leaving open the possibility that it will be scaled back.

An Enhanced Amenity Base is Key to Realizing the Area's Market Potential and the Community's Vision. Moreover, when opportunities for federal office relocations do present themselves, sites with an established amenity base frequently win out, as was demonstrated coincidentally on August 24, 2011, the first day of the TAP, when the GSA reaffirmed its previous decision to award a 15-year, $450 million lease to a location in Rockville, Maryland, despite protests by three development teams who had been promoting their sites in Prince George's County for the bid. As noted in *The Washington Post* article that day, "The GSA weighed the price against location, building characteristics and past performance. Location and building characteristics had equal value, according to the GSA. Location was based on access to Metrorail and amenities, such as restaurants, day-care centers and stores."[3]

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[2] Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy. (1999, July). *A Region Divided: The State of Growth in Greater Washington, D.C*. Retrieved August 11, 2011 from http://www.brookings.edu/reports/1999/07washington_dc.aspx

[3] Wiggins, O. (2011, August 24). GSA rejects Prince George's bids for HHS offices. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved August 24, 2011 from http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/gsa-rejects-prince-georges-bids-for-hhs-offices/2011/08/24/gIQArHrVcJ_story.html

Nor is the need for an enhanced amenity base simply an economic development issue. In the *Envision Prince George's* 21st Century Town Meeting®*,* community members focused on six key *Envision* areas, including Live, Work, Enjoy, Sustain, Serve, and Learn. Community members who participated in the *Envision* process agreed to the following as a key long-term goal in the *Live* Envision area: "Provide a great diversity of high quality shopping, restaurants, entertainment, and services available to everyone in the county, especially near workplaces and communities, where residents and visitors can enjoyably spend their dollars."[4] In the Sustain *Envision* area, residents called to, "Develop and redevelop vibrant, walkable / bikeable, transit-oriented, mixed-use communities throughout the county with a mix of residences, retail and commercial businesses, and services particularly around rail and bus stations that are pedestrian-friendly, aesthetically pleasing, safe, and have a great mixture of live and work amenities."[5]

Thus the panel took a step back, to consider how a greater amenity base could be added around the sites, using as its touchstone the old adage that "retail follows rooftops." The following table offers a snapshot of the number of households typically required to support different types of retail land uses.

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[4] The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Prince George's County Planning Department. (2010, June 11). *Envision Prince George's Action Agenda*. Retrieved August 11, 2011 from http://envisionprincegeorges.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/EPG_Phase-I-Final-Report_web.pdf

[5] Ibid.

Market Criteria Retail Center Size, Trading Area and Number of Households Selected Retail Uses United States			
Description	*(Range)* Square Feet	*(Miles)* Trading Area	*("Roof Tops")* Households
Corner Store	2,000 - 5,000	0.5 - 1.0	1,000
Convenience Center *(No Anchor)*	10,000 - 25,000	1.0	2,500
Neighborhood Center *(Supermarket Store Anchored)*	60,000 - 90,000	1.0 - 2.0	5,000 - 8,000
Community Center *(Discount Department Store Anchored)*	300,000 - 500,000	5.0 - 7.0	30,000 - 50,000
Regional Center *(Fashion Department Store Anchored)*	700,000 - 1,000,000	12.0 - 15.0	150,000
Lifestyle Center	150,000 - 250,000	8.0 - 12.0	100,000
Data Source: Gibbs Planning Group.			

Looking out at a five-mile radius from the center of the study area, the panel found approximately 140,000 households, with an average of $60,000 in household income. These numbers are not currently sufficient to support a flourishing regional retail center within the study area, particularly in the face of strong regional competitors in Alexandria and even in Tysons Corner. Moreover, due to the strong preference shown for automobiles by the existing infrastructure and residential product type in the area, driving to these other locations is relatively quick and easy. It is therefore not surprising that Iverson Mall and Marlow Heights Shopping Centers qualify more as community centers than regional centers, and struggling ones at that, despite the fact that Marlow Heights is anchored by a Macy’s.

Put simply, in order for there to be more stores and restaurants, there need to be more residents, particularly residents with higher disposable incomes, who are willing to spend a larger percentage of their income on dining, entertainment, and retail, close to home. As has been noted in other TAP reports, this presents the classic “chicken or egg” dilemma, as prospective new residents also seek out existing amenities when choosing a place to live, or when deciding whether to stay put or move. As demonstrated by rents and sales prices around the region, residents are willing to pay a significant premium for Metro-accessibility. Some of these residents may be lured to the sites within the study area by the mere availability of Metro-accessible housing at prices that are affordable when compared to other sites in the District, Virginia, or Montgomery County. Yet, this demographic group within the study area is not currently sizable enough to provide the critical mass needed to attract significant new retail. This led the panel to take yet another step back, to see what else would be needed to lure the new residents, who would attract the new retail, which would provide the amenity base sought by employers in both the public and private sectors.

Significant Public Sector Investments Must be Made to Start a “Virtuous Cycle”. This process of continuing to step back in order to find the proper starting point led ineluctably to the conclusion that **more public investments must first be made in the area for the corridor to achieve its eventual market potential.** The nature of these public investments is laid out in greater detail in the Development Strategies section of this report, and potential funding mechanisms are identified in this report’s Implementation section. The panel cannot stress enough that in order to realize the true market potential for the study area, the public sector must be the primary actor, making much-needed and long-deferred investments in the area’s infrastructure. These investments do not only benefit new residents; basic amenities such as sidewalks, landscaping, lighting, parks, an overall improvement of the connectivity of the area, and other more extensive investments discussed in the following sections of the report benefit everyone, particularly those who have been long-time residents of the area.

In summary, the panel viewed the market potential of the area as evolving over a period of time, with the full potential for each segment only being realizable once the preceding segment grows to a critical mass, in the following sequence:

Significant increase in community-based amenities

↓

Metro-accessible, higher-valued housing

↓

Improved retail options (movie theater, restaurants, arts, entertainment), focusing on local needs first

↓

Government contractors, and/or office space.

The panel stressed that this process would very likely take 10 years or more, as has been the case in other Metro-accessible sites around the region, such as the Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor, where planning and infrastructure investments were sometimes made 20 to 30 years prior to the realization of the vibrant, mixed-use communities we see there today. Although we often hear of the “vicious cycle” in areas facing disinvestment, the county has an opportunity here to instead start a “virtuous cycle,” where each successful solution leads to more success.

Development Strategies

Process

Unlike many ULI Technical Assistance Panel reports, which have a large Planning and Design section, this panel understands that the Branch Avenue Corridor and Suitland Town Center area have been the subject of recent planning efforts, and that comprehensive and detailed planning and design work will follow the panel as part of the area's HUD Sustainable Communities Challenge Grant. Thus, the panel tried to instead focus their recommendations on issues of process.

Expect Excellence. The panel's first and most important recommendation is for the county and all of its agencies to expect and demand excellence from any new developments within the study area, and indeed within the county in general. Although this recommendation may sound obvious at first blush, the panelists have seen all too many examples in jurisdictions throughout our region where this guiding principle has not been followed and where a desire to "post a quick win" has not only failed to deliver the hoped-for results, but has stifled future development and/or lowered the bar for anything that did follow, leaving succeeding generations to lament the lost potential. Such suboptimal results are particularly tragic when land around a Metrorail station is involved, as these station areas are some of the greatest man-made resources within our region, and much like natural resources, they are scarce. The community's vision has been clearly and thoughtfully expressed through the *Envision Prince George's* process, referenced previously in the report, and therefore the panel urges all public agencies to never settle for less than that vision whenever a conversation is held with a potential developer.

Prioritize Projects. At the same time, the public sector must be willing to bring all of its available resources to bear in order to help produce the highest quality development, and unfortunately such resources cannot be deployed at a multitude of different sites all at the same time. Therefore, the panel recommends that the county identify and execute a discrete number of priority projects in a way that makes clear that there is a laser focus on achieving the community's previously-cited vision, which bears repeating, for "vibrant, walkable/bikeable communities throughout the county with a mix of residences, retail and commercial businesses and services." Rather than diluting its efforts, the county "must go all-in" on one or two projects, in order to help create a highly-successful example of TOD that can be pointed to with pride. Such projects will then set the standard for those that follow. The panel understands that significant efforts have already been undertaken by the State, County, and WMATA to promote new TOD at New Carrollton, so it may well be that only one station along the southern Green Line corridor can be targeted for the type of public investment and involvement that is so essential to making high-quality TOD projects happen. The panel's recommendations regarding order of prioritization of Green Line sites are discussed in the Implementation section of the report.

Appoint an Empowered Liaison. The best way to ensure and maintain this focus is to have an empowered liaison in the County Executive's office, working with both external stakeholders and with the communities that will both be affected by and benefit from the new development in these discrete areas. Such a liaison can also help ensure that there is a clear direction about the process to develop a specific transit-accessible site.

Ensure Predictability. In order to attract high-quality developers—the type who are willing to invest more in a project, take on the risk of "being first," and hold on to the project for the long-term, secure in the knowledge that their greater upfront investment will eventually pay for itself—predictability in the process must be assured. This translates into working with WMATA for Metro-adjacent sites to establish clear metrics for performance that developers, the public, and all property owners can understand regarding project timing, expectations, code requirements, and all other related aspects for the life cycle of the project, from the great idea to execution and permitting.

Branding

In a region such as our own, where multiple jurisdictions aggressively compete for new residents, jobs, and services, having a distinct identity for each station area could be a positive differentiator. Currently, however, the identities of the Metro stations within the study area are confusing. To cite but one example, the Branch Avenue Metro Station is not actually located on Branch Avenue. Similarly, Mapquest identifies the location of the Branch Avenue Metro Station as Suitland, MD, yet a nearby development and other signage around the station would seem to indicate that the area is called Camp Springs. Finally, several projects in the vicinity borrow names reminiscent of places in New York City, adding to the confusion.

Work with Community Members to Identify and Build Upon Key Assets of Each Station Area. Rather than looking so far afield, a consultant should be hired who can engage residents, property owners, associations, agencies and people who work in each station area to discover their perceptions, in terms of what they think of the area, what they see as key assets, and to determine the historical and cultural roots of each site. This effort was undertaken on the county-wide scale as part of the *Envision Prince George's* process, and should now be "drilled-down" to a more localized level.

For example, the briefing materials provided to the panel noted that "forest" is the largest land use for parcels within, or mainly within, a half-mile circle of the Southern Avenue station on the Prince George's County side. Given that the panel rated the development potential of the Southern Avenue stations among the lowest of the four station areas (as will be discussed in the Implementation section), one could ask, "What are creative uses of that forest that would simultaneously help give the place an identity and activate the area, drawing people in?" A mountain biking park, of which there are precious few in the entire region, is one idea quickly identified by the panel, and is one which would also provide the type of amenity discussed previously, enhancing the quality of life of existing residents while also serving as a powerful tool to attract new residents to the area. This is but one example; clearly community members, who know the area best, could identify many more. By engaging the community in such a manner, everyone who lives and works in the area can speak in a more unified voice and themselves act as "cheerleaders" for the area, recruiting new businesses, residents, and visitors.

The panel appreciates that there is already an initiative underway by the Maryland Small Business Development Network to reinvigorate a portion of Branch Avenue, entitled, "Branch Avenue in Bloom." Although this area does not currently cover the Branch Avenue Metro Station, similarly clever uses could be made of the Branch Avenue Metro Station's name, to help identify and locate the somewhat hard-to-find station, such as "Branch Avenue Metro Station: Just "Auth" the Beltway!" Or, given that these stations are all along the Green Line, a focus could also be made on developing LEED-certified buildings or even a LEED-ND community, to build off the "green" angle.

<u>Strategically Locate New Public Facilities, i.e. Schools, Libraries, Recreation Centers, Conference Facilities, and Employment Centers</u>. Akin to the idea above about locating a mountain biking park next to the Southern Avenue station, other public facilities can also help create an identity and sense of place for the stations. Shirlington, in Arlington, Virginia, is well-known for its public library and theater, as well as its dog park, which have helped create a transit-oriented, mixed-use, easily identifiable place, even without Metrorail access. Montgomery County, Maryland acquired, rehabilitated, and subsidized the initial operations of what is now the AFI Silver Theatre, which has since become a regional destination and host to well-attended annual film festivals, including SilverDocs and the Latin American Film Festival. The lack of large-scale meeting facilities, public or private, that are adjacent to any of the Metro stations in Prince George's County precludes organizations like the Urban Land Institute from holding some of its meetings and events there, and doubtless this is the case for a number of other organizations as well. Providing transit-accessible meeting facilities can draw in large groups of visitors, introducing them to an area they may have otherwise never encountered.

<u>Find Creative and Temporary Uses of Vacant Assets</u>. In the interim, before such facilities can be provided, creative, temporary uses should be made of available space and land. In a Crystal City office building that had been vacated, a group called Art-O-Matic brought in 1,000 non-juried artists and turned the space into a museum; over the course of six weeks 32,000 people visited the exhibition.

Public Investments, Tools and Incentives

TOD projects are more complex, more expensive, and typically involve more stakeholders than regular development projects, and as a result require engaged partners in the public sector who are willing to make the investments needed to ensure that the project meets the highest standards of the community. Indeed, as was noted by one of the panelists familiar with the Shady Grove Metro station, Montgomery County has committed more than $250 million in infrastructure and other related investments in preparation for transit-oriented development around that station area. In a hyper-competitive region such as ours, each jurisdiction must be willing to demonstrate a similar level of commitment in order to attract the highest caliber of development.

Investing through the Life Cycle of Projects. Although public investments are most important at the front end of a project, at which point they can include land development, provision of complete streets, sewers, green stormwater management and other basic services, public-private partnerships can benefit projects at every stage. Even in well-established areas like Bethesda, a parking district takes the costs of providing and operating parking facilities out of the private sector's hands, while a Circulator bus operated by the Bethesda Urban Partnership ensures easy access from the parking facilities and Metro station to surrounding retail and office space.

Drawing from his own experience as a member of the team that developed Arts District Hyattsville, one panelist discussed the fact that although the project still turned out very well, with a good mix of townhomes, multifamily, and retail, the project did not receive the type of front-loaded infrastructure and financial assistance that the District of Columbia or other jurisdictions frequently provide, and as a result the project is not as fulsome as it otherwise could have been.

Funding mechanisms. As for funding such investments, the Panel commended Prince George's County for its AAA bond rating—higher now than even the U.S. Government's, at least according to Standard & Poor's—and urges the county to put that rating to use on these sites through targeted capital improvements, be it through simple General Obligation bonds, special taxing districts, or tax increment financing (TIF) districts to prime the pump. Other tools that can be used by the public sector include the following:

- Eminent domain;
- Coordination with state and federal programs, such as Smart Sites;
- Enterprise Zone designation;
- Public safety support to change community perceptions;
- Transit extensions, i.e. Bikeshare, BRT, circulators and other shuttles;
- Employer housing incentive programs, housing preservation fund; and,
- Business Improvement Districts (BID) or similar entities.

The panel recognizes that the county is well-aware of all of these tools, but lists them in such a manner in order to stress that all of these mechanisms, and any others at the county's disposal, must be brought to bear in order to make these projects successful; a piecemeal approach simply will not suffice. The difficulty in coordinating all of these activities points again to the need to have an empowered liaison who can manage the county's participation in these targeted projects.

Implementation

Focus on Branch Avenue

Clearly, bringing all of the public resources cited above to bear in such a concentrated manner can only happen at one or two places within any jurisdiction at any one time; there are simply too many funding and staffing constraints to take on more simultaneously, not to mention the finite market demand. In the panel's assessment, that place within the Green Line Corridor is around the Branch Avenue station. Successfully executing plans for this station area can serve as the model for everything else built along the corridor. The Branch Avenue station area provides the most convenient and easily-accessible location and the most potential for continued growth over time, given the large tracts surrounding it. Moreover, the recently-completed townhome and multi-family projects adjacent to the station have already tested the market and laid the groundwork for future development.

Looking around the region, there are several successful examples of such project prioritization and concentration of effort. In the previously-cited example of Silver Spring, former Montgomery County Executive Doug Duncan made it clear to everyone that his focus was to make redevelopment happen there, to commit all resources at the county's disposal to make it happen, and to admit that if such a focus meant that other transit-oriented development opportunity sites such as Wheaton would have to wait, that is what the county would have to do. Silver Spring at the time had declined greatly since its prosperous days as a suburban shopping center, yet today it is well-known and well-loved by residents throughout the region as a walkable, vibrant urban place, with a healthy mix of age groups, races and ethnicities, and people of varying income groups. Similarly, former District of Columbia Mayor Anthony Williams made a commitment to invest in the Gallery Place/Chinatown area, and it has also become a focal point for entertainment within the region. The Branch Avenue station area also has the potential for the creation of an 18-hour community, just like those examples cited above. Doing so will require bringing different landowners such as Archstone to the table for discussions about potential long-term public-private partnerships, while simultaneously pursuing specially-tailored recruitment strategies for each of the different product types, as detailed below.

<u>Office</u>. The panel reiterates its caution against relying too heavily on federal government agencies to occupy a large amount of space within the study area. This is not to say that the county shouldn't use every means at its disposal—as it has been doing—to attract such users, including the use of pressure by its Congressional delegation, but it should not be the sole focus, and amenities must still be provided in order to make the sites more competitive on their own. To the extent that federal users are sought out, the county should be selective in what types of users it seeks, as not all federal agencies bring equivalent types of employment to an area, nor do they require the same types of

facilities. Agencies that demand compound-like facilities offer little benefit to the nearby community, and can even impede the creation of the type of vibrant station areas the county seeks to create. In thinking about which users to attract, the county should focus on “communities over compounds.” Quasi-federal agencies such as the FDIC and Federal Reserve may provide a greater qualitative benefit to such station areas than some larger agencies, and may have greater spinoff benefits in terms of the number and type of government contractors following them.

Experience has also shown that no federal user can serve as the type of game-changer that a creative private-sector user can. Looking again at Silver Spring, the attraction of Discovery Communications, with its reputation, signature building and its high-tech jobs, instantly conferred a cutting-edge and cool vibe upon the area. While there are few such big fish out there, and all are aggressively courted by jurisdictions throughout the nation, smaller, home-grown companies also exist and can serve a similar function. As reported earlier this year, LivingSocial, an online-coupon company that was founded in Georgetown in 2007, secured 26,000 square feet of space in Gallery Place in part because, “being in a unique building in a hip neighborhood is a way to attract employees,” according to the company’s real estate broker.[6] The same article mentions that Facebook is moving its office nearby, creating a nascent social networking cluster in the area. By working in a public-private partnership to create a unique destination at Branch Avenue, the county would be far better-positioned to attract similar ventures.

<u>Retail</u>. In terms of tenant mix for retail, the focus should be on attracting the best in class, and to start locally. Quality is more important than quantity, and the right type of retail frequently provides community gathering spaces as an ancillary benefit, as can be seen with the Busboys & Poets in Hyattsville. Meanwhile, vacant retail spaces should be converted into incubator spaces or live-work spaces where feasible, so that the spaces remain active while also generating economic benefits, even if they are at less than market-rate.

<u>Residential</u>. Due to the fact that much of the housing stock within the study area was created in the 1950s and 1960s, bringing in newer housing would help increase the number of higher-income households with disposable incomes that can in turn attract more retail to the area, and the panel does see an opportunity to embrace and encourage more higher-end residential within the Branch Avenue station area. Pursuing such a strategy may also necessitate the creation of a housing preservation fund or similar mechanism to ensure the preservation of affordable units and multifamily stock for the community’s elderly and other budget-constrained households. Enterprise Community Partners and the Low Income Investment Fund (LIIF) recently announced a

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[6]O’Connell, J. (2011, May 11). LivingSocial Leases Building in D.C. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved August 25, 2011 from http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/capitalbusiness/living-social-leases-entire-building-in-dc/2011/05/11/AFJX5PqG_story.html

new partnership to advance equitable TODs nationwide, and they could be approached as active participants in this effort. Other tools to ensure a lack of displacement could include strengthening homeowner education programs across the county to stem additional foreclosures, and providing home purchase assistance programs.

Community, Cultural and Institutional Uses. The importance of adding a public use such as a theater, library, conference center, recreation center, or signature park has been mentioned previously in the report, in order help provide a sense of place and an additional amenity to improve the quality of life experienced by current residents and to attract new residents and employers. Similarly, an urban-scale (i.e., multi-floor and compact) high-quality magnet public school could also do much to attract younger households, and/or to ensure that households remain in this corridor once they have families. Other game-changers could include hotels, a minor-league baseball stadium, or a soccer-plex- anything that makes the area distinctive and sets it apart from other Metro-accessible sites within the region.

Streets and Trails: Streets are some of the most important assets that the public owns, and those within the study area should support the development types listed above through better design, appearance and improved functionality. Admittedly, Branch Avenue is a state road and Suitland Parkway is under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service, but the county nonetheless needs to focus on harnessing them and making them better places. Utilizing the urban boulevard concept, existing roads can be improved in appearance, so that retailers and other potential users can witness that the area is valued and improving. These improvements could include street medians, walkable sidewalks (in excess of five feet in width), tree panels between the curb and sidewalk, and a finer grain of network streets that are local. Such streets should have 60 to 70 foot cross-sections, with parking on at least one side, in order to slow traffic and improve the walking experience for pedestrians, as well as improving connections. Similarly, there are many great public assets in terms of parkland, but there is an acute lack of trails and a network within the study area. As the difficult and more expensive part of the work has already been done in setting aside the lands, connecting them to each other and to transit assets should be a priority.

Naylor Road, Suitland, and Southern Avenue Stations

The Branch Avenue station area seems to offer the strongest starting point, but clearly there needs to be a corridor-wide plan and vision for development and growth, as recognized by the county in undertaking this planning project. Previous infrastructure decisions, not the least of which being the siting of these Metro stations, have undoubtedly created constraints in how development would take place naturally, and future decisions cannot be allowed to exacerbate these challenges.

Naylor Road. The panel viewed the Naylor Road station area as the second most promising site for redevelopment within the study area. Of course, if a state agency, GSA, or other “big fish” saw an opportunity at Naylor Road, it would jump to the front of the line. Again, however, providing infrastructure that would better connect the potential redevelopment sites to the Metro station is essential, so that if a developer working on a smaller scale saw an opportunity for redevelopment, such as the hilltop condominiums, the project would be connected to the rail station and bring more life there. The fact that the separated segments of Southern Avenue do not connect from Naylor Road to Branch Avenue provides yet another unnecessary impediment to greater connectivity in the area, so the panel urges the county to work with neighboring jurisdictions to make that connection.

Suitland. With the federal campus fenced off from the surrounding community and thereby conferring little benefit upon it, the county needs to continue its engagement with the GSA, which should at a minimum take down the dirt banks and develop community retail and service space where the dirt and excess parking lots currently exist. There are some areas such as the Redevelopment Authority site where the panel recommends holding off on development for now and instead effectively land-banking, due to the fact that the sites would currently only bring three- or four-story development at best, where they could potentially support taller high-rise buildings in the future.

Southern Avenue. The panel was somewhat limited in its ability to provide recommendations for this station area, due to the lack of clarity regarding the ownership and environmental conditions there. There are also significant topographic constraints to development. For this station area, the panel recommends that the county conduct a land inventory and environmental assessment. As there is already a hospital presence there on the District side, albeit one which has a questionable future status, ancillary uses could be focused on. For those areas near the station that are zoned for strictly commercial use, mixed-use zoning would provide for a higher and better use.

In conclusion, it bears repeating that these stations are among the newest within the Metrorail system, and that other station areas around our region that are now successful both as places and as economic generators—several of which have been cited in this report—certainly did not develop overnight. The panel hopes that its efforts and the recommendations laid out in this report will assist Prince George’s County as it works to realize the full potential of these sites.

About the Panel

Susan Ingraham Bell
Former Director (retired)
Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development
Arlington County, VA

Susan Ingraham Bell recently retired as Director of the Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development (DCPHD) for Arlington County, VA, a position which she held since July 1998. DCPHD is responsible for development review and approval; comprehensive planning; affordable housing policy and project development; neighborhood programs, including neighborhood-initiated capital projects and historic preservation; construction permits and inspections; and works extensively with the Arlington community to help achieve the best and safest of built environments.

Prior to becoming Director, Ms. Bell served as the county's Zoning Administrator for 10 years, and in both Comprehensive and Current planning positions in DCPHD. She worked for Garfield Schwartz Associates, an economic development consulting firm, and the National Center for Urban Ethnic Affairs before joining the county in 1983. Ms. Bell is a member of the Urban Land Institute (ULI) and has served on the AdvisoryCommittee of the Washington District Council for several years. She also is a member of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and a Lifetime member of Leadership Arlington.

Ms. Bell holds a Master's in Urban and Regional Planning (MURP) from George Washington University in Washington, D.C., and a Bachelor's Degree in political science and American Studies from Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania. She and her family reside in Arlington's Lyon Park neighborhood.

Sadara Barrow
Executive Director
Port Towns Community Development Corporation
Bladensburg, MD

Ms. Barrow has twenty-eight years of experience in implementation planning, deployment, process management, quality management and people management. Her skills include implementation of projects for business development, management information systems, finance, accounting, and community development. She worked eighteen years at Computer Sciences Corporation where she served in various capacities including, but not limited to, Accounting Manager, Implementation Manager, and Senior Project Manager. More recently, Ms. Barrow was named Executive Director, Port Towns Community Development Corporation, a position that she has held since 2006. She has lived in the Port Towns community for over 28 years with her husband and five children, and has served as a Council Member for the Town of Colmar

Manor since 2000. She is also a Maryland State Commissioner for the Chesapeake Bay and Critical Area Commission, and member of the board of directors' for the Anacostia Watershed Society and Anacostia Trails Heritage Area.

Dean D. Bellas, Ph. D.
President
Urban Analytics, Inc.
Alexandria, VA

Dean Bellas is the president of Urban Analytics, Inc., an Alexandria, Virginia–based real estate and urban planning consulting firm that provides urban development analytical services to public, private, and institutional sector clients. His consulting services include fiscal and economic impact studies, market research analysis, real estate asset management and institutional portfolio analyses, real estate development economics, project feasibility studies, fiscal policy studies, and regional economic development policy studies. Since 1996, Dr. Bellas has analyzed the fiscal and economic impact of real estate development on a variety of local governments in Kansas, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia. He has analyzed the fiscal impact of more than 16,000 residential units and more than 38.7 million square feet of nonresidential space on local government finances. He has authored or coauthored more than 50 research reports on the fiscal and economic impact of real estate development.

Dr. Bellas has been an adjunct faculty member in the School of Professional Studies in Business and Education at the Johns Hopkins University and an adjunct faculty member in the School of Management at George Mason University. He currently teaches Real Estate Finance, Real Estate Investments, and Urban Economics to graduate level students in the School of Architecture and Planning at the Catholic University of America. He has also taught candidates for the CFA (certified financial analyst) designation on behalf of the Washington Society of Investment Analysts. He has consulted to the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Community Development Financial Institutions Fund.

Dr. Bellas received a BS degree in business administration from Western New England College with a concentration in finance, a M.U.R.P degree in urban and regional planning from George Washington University, and a PhD degree in public policy with a concentration in regional economic development policy from George Mason University. Dr. Bellas is a member of Lambda Alpha International, an honorary society for the advancement of land economics. He is also a full member of the Urban Land Institute and has served on two national ULI advisory panels.

Walter S. Bialas
Senior Market Advisor
CoStar Group
Washington, DC

Walter is a seasoned real estate professional with more than 25 years of creative problem solving experience in the consulting, banking, and development industries. By virtue of a long-standing career in evaluating real estate across the US, he has comprehensive knowledge of all the major markets and property types, as well as a particular strength in quickly assessing market dynamics and their implications on project feasibility.

As Senior Market Advisor at PPR / CoStar, Walter's role is to enhance the research capabilities of both companies and expand the potential services available to clients in the Washington, DC region.

Prior to this role, Walter oversaw Madison Marquette's research function as part of their investment and acquisitions team for retail properties across the U.S. Before his work at Madison, Walter established an internal real estate consulting group at PNC Bank. During his 14-year tenure with PNC, he provided custom market due diligence in support of the bank's commercial underwriting process, evaluating unique location dynamics, market issues, and the reasonableness of proforma assumptions. Projects evaluated at PNC ranged across the U.S. and covered all the major property types, with special expertise in mixed use, retail, and affordable housing.

Before joining PNC, Walter spent ten years with the national consulting practice of GA/Partners - Arthur Andersen in Washington, DC. While a senior manager there, he advised clients on the market and financial feasibility of proposed projects across the US.

Walter is an active Urban Land Institute member. As part of his ULI commitment he has completed seven advisory panels, addressing a variety of downtown master planning and redevelopment issues. Walter also served on the executive committee of the Pittsburgh District Council. In addition, he is a member of the International Council of Shopping Centers and is the current chair of their North American Research Task Force.

Walter received his bachelor's degree in Urban Studies from Albright College in Reading, Pennsylvania and his master's degree in City and Regional Planning from Catholic University in Washington, D.C.

Angela Fox
President/CEO
Crystal City Business Improvement District
Arlington, VA

Angela Fox was hired as the first President/CEO of the Crystal City BID in November of 2006. Under her leadership, the Crystal City BID has grown in both size and scope, dramatically changing the way the people see and perceive Crystal City. The Crystal City BID is also become a pioneer in the industry, with many of the programs and methods created by Ms. Fox being adopted by other organizations throughout the region.

Prior to working at the Crystal City BID, Ms. Fox served as Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer for Cultural Tourism DC. While at Cultural Tourism, she expanded the capacity, visibility, viability, and reach of the organization in every area from membership and funding, to program delivery. She either initiated and/or delivered creative and innovative marketing programs including three Heritage Trails, WalkingTown Spring/Fall, Warm Up to a Museum, and Culture Cool.

Though Ms. Fox now works in the non-profit sector, her background is primarily corporate. She has run her own consulting firm providing business strategy, marketing and executive coaching services to individuals, corporations, and non-profits, including ESPN, Bank of America, Association for Education Development, and more. She was also VP for Product and then Strategic Development at Simplexity, and she began her career in the Executive Development Program at Bell Atlantic (now Verizon). While at Bell Atlantic, she launched Bell Atlantic.net, the company's Internet Access product, and, as CIO for Consumer Services, their first e-commerce application for their consumer base; as well as appearing in two Bell Atlantic commercials and facilitating Diversity Management training throughout the organization.

Graduating from Georgia Tech with Highest Honors in electrical engineering, Ms. Fox has honed a commitment to her community. She currently serves and has on several boards, including the Arena Stage, Capitol Fringe Festival (as Chair), Georgia Tech, and FOTOWeek Advisory Board. She is a past chair for the Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company's board, which raised more than $9M and built a new theatre during her tenure. She also served on the Arlington Arts Commission. A 24 year, Prius-driving vegetarian, avid traveler, runner, and active yogi, Ms. Fox lives in Arlington with her family.

Jason Hercules
Manager, LEED Department
U.S. Green Building Council
Washington, DC

Jason Hercules has studied, taught and worked to implement sustainable development practices for more than 10 years. During his time with the U.S. Green Building Council, he has helped to manage resource development for the LEED for Neighborhood Development rating system, along with many other USGBC rating systems. Jason relies on his expertise in Smart Growth, transit-oriented, mixed-use development, and green building to provide technical development of the rating system; project review and certification; and education on many of the sustainable development elements espoused by LEED for Neighborhood Development.

Prior to joining USGBC, Jason worked as an urban planner with PB PlaceMaking where he prepared access and joint development concept plans for TOD projects based on mobility, mixed-use development potential, market analysis, Capital Improvement Plans and community-created sustainability objectives. He also drafted policy recommendations on a variety of topics including climate change, context-sensitive solutions and sustainable planning for communities across the U.S.

Jason has also supported international sustainable development efforts, including work in Taiwan and Mexico, in addition to his local community involvement. He has advised the AIA Committee on the Environment, Envision Central Texas Planning Process and the Sustainable Sites Initiative, among others. Jason holds a Master of Science in Community and Regional Planning from The University of Texas at Austin and a Bachelor of Art in Environmental Studies from Southwestern University.

Alicia Lewis
Housing Planner
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG)
Washington, DC

Ms. Lewis is a Washington, DC resident and parent of a high school-aged student. She is passionate about economic and community development issues and has lent her time mentoring youth with the District's Higher Achievement Program – an after school and summer educational enrichment program for middle school students. She has also coached adult civic leaders participating in the George Washington University's Neighborhood College program. Ms. Lewis recently served as a board member of the Deanwood Heights Main Street – an organization that supports business retention and commercial corridor revitalization for the commercial areas in Northeast Washington, DC.

Professionally, Ms. Lewis has extensive project management, land planning and research experience, and currently serves as a regional housing planner with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG). She is presently managing the creation of a regional transit oriented development (TOD) fund. The fund will acquire, maintain and preserve affordable rental buildings adjacent the region's major transit stations and employment centers. Ms. Lewis is also assisting COG with its multi-million dollar HUD grant proposal for a regional TOD planning initiative. She has worked on two other large federal grant applications while with COG. The first opportunity was a $34 million consortium federal grant application to stabilize devastated communities across the Washington region due to the current foreclosure crisis. The second opportunity was a $5 million federal grant application to create a regional plan for the Washington metropolitan region.

Prior to her work at COG, Ms. Lewis served as a senior project manager in the Office of the Deputy Mayor for the District of Columbia. In this capacity, she was responsible for the land planning activities for three public housing sites – Park Morton in Ward 1, Lincoln Heights/Richardson Dwellings in Ward 7, and Barry Farm in Ward 8 – included in District of Columbia's *New Communities Initiative*, a $1 billion program. She crafted public solicitations for the disposition and redevelopment of public housing property valued in excess of $1 million. Having lead responsibilities in projects involving community planning, land disposition and acquisition, and equipping civic leaders of all age groups, Ms. Lewis understands the complexity of issues associated with community development in and for underserved yet viable communities.

When first joining the District of Columbia government, Ms. Lewis served as a senior policy analyst in the Mayor's Office of Policy and Legislative Affairs. With oversight of the city's economic development cluster, she regularly worked with advocates, labor unions, business associations and city councilmembers to interpret, craft and enact fair economic development policy. Examples include Ms. Lewis' involvement with the drafting, vetting and passage of the District's living wage and rent control laws. Ms. Lewis also wrote the white paper for the city's *New Communities Initiative* – a public housing redevelopment program.

Stacy Plotkin Silber
Partner
Holland & Knight
Bethesda, MD

Stacy Plotkin Silber is a member of the Real Estate Group and focuses her practice on land use and zoning issues in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties. She assists clients in navigating the complexities of securing the necessary approvals for their projects at the local and state levels of government. Ms. Silber counsels clients in the mixed-use, office, retail, residential and private school industries. Her representation involves working with clients on land development processes including master planning, zoning, rezoning, project plans, site plans, subdivisions, historic preservation, affordable housing matters, transferrable development right issues, legislative matters, special exceptions and variances. By undertaking an analysis of her clients' present situation, needs, and objectives, she helps develop and implement strategies to pursue efficient and effective public approvals. Ms. Silber acts as an advisor from the very beginning of the development stage of a project, helping clients avoid potential hurdles during the course of the approval process.

In addition to her private practice, Ms. Silber is an adjunct professor at George Washington Law School, where she teaches a class on land use and historic preservation. She serves as Board Chair for the Montgomery Housing Partnership, a nonprofit that provides affordable housing and supporting communities for working families. Ms. Silber has also published an article on the constitutionality of the afforestation provision of the Maryland Forest Conservation Act.

Aakash R. Thakkar
Senior Vice President, Acquisition and Development
EYA, LLC
Bethesda, MD

Aakash Thakkar joined EYA, one of the region’s premiere urban-infill real estate developers, in 2004 as a Development Executive and now serves as a Senior Vice-President for Acquisition and Development. His responsibilities overall project stewardship and include new deal sourcing and acquisition, site selection, financing, and project development through the design and governmental and community approval process. He focuses on pubic-private partnerships, private ventures, and mixed-income communities. He led EYA’s efforts to be selected as the developer for the 25-acre McMillan Sand Filtration Site in Washington, DC, one of the largest and most unique development sites in the region. He was responsible for the public approval for portions of EYA’s development at the Arthur Capper/Carrollsburg HOPE VI redevelopment in Washington DC. He is the project executive for EYA's Arts District Hyattsville, a 25-acre mixed-use revitalization project, with a development program of over 600 residential units and an eclectic retail mix including Busboys & Poets and Tara Thai, as well as two new projects in downtown Silver Spring and Bethesda. He is also focusing on new project sourcing.

Prior to joining EYA, Mr. Thakkar was a Senior Development Manager at the National Capital Revitalization Corporation (NCRC). Mr. Thakkar has completed the Presidential Management Fellowship, a 2-year Federal Government appointed Fellowship during which he served at the Department of Housing and Urban Development and on the House of Representatives Housing Sub-Committee. Mr. Thakkar is a member of and guest speaker for the Urban Land Institute and a District of Columbia Building Industry Association. He is on board of the Smart Growth Alliance and Co-Chair of the DC Building Industry Association Housing Committee. He is a member of the Obama for

American Mid-Atlantic Finance Committee and a co-founder (along with his wife) of the Thakkar/Giallourakis Scholarship Fund for St. John's College High School, his alma mater. In 2008, he was included on Bisnow’s “35 under 35” in real estate. Mr. Thakkar has a BS in Accounting and Political Science from LaSalle University and holds both an MBA and a Masters in City and Regional Planning from Rutgers University. Mr. Thakkar is active in civic and professional life in the City, is native Washingtonian, and currently resides in Washington, DC.

Nkosi Yearwood
Planner
Montgomery County Planning Department
Silver Spring, MD

Nkosi Yearwood is a community planner in the Montgomery County Planning Department. Since 2000, Nkosi has participated in developing comprehensive plans for the Shady Grove and White Flint Metro Stations in Montgomery County, Maryland as well as developing zoning standards for transit areas and reviewing public and private development. His education includes architectural history and architecture from the University of Maryland, College Park and University of Cincinnati. He is a member of Urban Land Institute and USGBC. Besides his work activities, he volunteers with Loaves and Fishes, a homeless feeding program in Washington, DC and Neighborhood Design Center, a non-profit that works to improve neighborhoods livability and sustainability in Baltimore and Prince George’s County.