

ULI Washington

A Technical Assistance Panel Report

**An Implementation Strategy for Revitalizing
Historic Downtown Leesburg**

**Sponsored by:
The Leesburg Downtown Improvement Association**

January 29-30, 2008

An Implementation Strategy for Revitalizing Historic Downtown Leesburg

Leesburg, Virginia

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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 more than 40,000 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 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

On behalf of ULI Washington, the panel would like to thank the Leesburg Downtown Improvement Association in partnership with the Town of Leesburg, Loudoun County, and the Loudoun County Visitors Association for sponsoring the Technical Assistance Panel, and for providing outstanding support throughout the course of the panel's assignment. The panel was honored to have been invited into Leesburg to work on an implementation strategy for the revitalization of downtown Leesburg. Specifically, the panel would like to thank Peter Burnett, co-chair of the Downtown Improvement Association and Lisa Capraro, Executive Director of the Downtown Improvement Association for all of the time, energy and insight that they gave to preparing for the panel and completing the outstanding briefing materials. The panel would like to thank Betsy Fields from the Town of Leesburg for leading the panel on a comprehensive bus tour of the Town and surrounding areas of Loudoun County, and to the Lightfoot Restaurant for hosting the panel. Finally, the panel would like to thank the many stakeholders –Town and County staff representatives including staff and elected officials, business and property owners, developers, and others – who informed the panel process through the roundtable discussions and final presentation.

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The findings and recommendations provided in this report are based on the collective expertise of the ten-member panel, along with the briefing materials and information gleaned from the tour and roundtable discussions conducted during the panel's one and one-half day effort. We hope that the following information will help guide the Downtown Improvement Association and Town of Leesburg as they work towards revitalizing the Historic District, and we welcome the opportunity to provide further assistance in the future.

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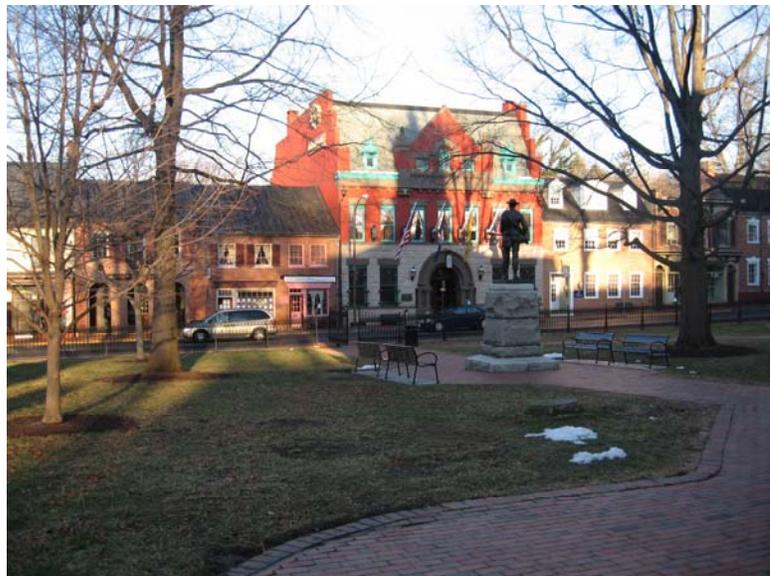
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Foreword: Overview and Panel Assignment

The Town of Leesburg is a community rich in history dating back the 18th century. The Town has made a commitment to protect, preserve and promote its unique heritage, and has maintained most of its original architecture, brick sidewalks and historic landmarks. Located in the middle of Loudoun County, the Town serves as the County seat and is home to the Town and County government centers and the County Courthouse complex.

The historic fabric has created a charming downtown that bustles during the day with people moving back and forth between their offices and the Town and County government centers and courthouse. However, there is relatively little economic development in the Historic District compared to the tremendous growth that surrounding areas of the Town and the County have experienced over the last fifteen years. While public investments have been made in the historic district and include two structured parking garages, the Town and County municipal government centers, and an expansion of the courts, there has been very little private investment – and those long term retailers that have been housed in the downtown core are beginning to close their doors.



Historic Downtown Leesburg

This disparity between the Historic District and the surrounding Town and County has not gone unnoticed, and a number of studies, including the 2003 Business Development Strategy, the 2006 Crescent District Master Plan and the 2007 Downtown Market Study, were commissioned to solidify a vision for Leesburg's future and to jumpstart development. While elements of these studies have been implemented, the execution of these action items has not been carried out to the satisfaction of many stakeholders.

A group of property owners, businesses, organizations, and stakeholders who are interested in seeing Leesburg's Historic District regain vitality, have come together and formed the Leesburg Downtown Improvement Association. With a full-time Executive Director, this group has charged itself with developing a strategic action plan to bring vibrancy back to downtown Leesburg; educating stakeholders about the challenges involved with achieving the vision, and advocating for the involvement of the Town,

County, citizens and stakeholders in creating an environment to spur economic development.

Assignment

Recognizing the challenge of creating an action plan for the downtown, the Downtown Improvement Association in partnership with the Town of Leesburg, Loudoun County and the Loudoun Convention and Visitors Association invited ULI Washington to convene a Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) on January 29-30, 2008. The purpose of the panel was to develop a strategic implementation plan that the Downtown Improvement Association can use as a roadmap to begin the revitalization process.

A ten member panel spent an intensive one and one-half days touring the Town of Leesburg, its Historic District, and new development projects in surrounding Loudoun County; participating in a stakeholder roundtable session attended by a very knowledgeable and passionate group of residents, business owners, Town staff, County staff, and others vested in the future of Leesburg; and taking a full day behind closed doors to respond to the Downtown Improvement Association's key issues and questions.



The panel tours downtown Leesburg

Armed with an extensive and thorough briefing book sent in advance of the TAP, the panel spent its time formulating recommendations that focused on the vision for the downtown; the process to realize the vision; and the work plan for necessary public and private investment in the Historic District.

In proposing a roadmap for the *Vision, Work and Process* necessary to revitalize downtown Leesburg, the Downtown Improvement Association also asked the panel to address issues and questions surrounding finance and economics; the amenity base and tenant mix; improvements to the land development process; public and private investment opportunities; and accessibility and streetscape.

Finance / Economics

Development has been limited to small-scale projects in part due to Leesburg's important public policy to preserve and protect the fabric of the Town's Historic District and the comparatively lengthy regulatory process. This raises the issue as to whether this type of development is practical and sustainable. If it is not, how can the Town balance the needs of the Historic District with the demands for economic development? What impact does economic development have on the tax base, rents, and the Town's goal of differentiating itself?

Amenity Base / Tenant Mix

The Downtown Improvement Association is seeking to create a more vibrant downtown with increased foot traffic, restaurants, entertainment, and retail. What steps need to be taken to achieve this? What improvements to first floor office buildings need to be made to make them more welcoming, and how does a performing arts center play into the vision of Leesburg?

Process Improvements

The Town is currently improving the land development process. The Downtown Improvement Association along with a number of experts and stakeholders have suggested improvements to the development approval process, which were listed in the panel's briefing materials and in the *Implementation Strategies* section of this report. What recommendations does the panel have to improve the process?

Public and Private Investment Opportunities

There is currently the potential for a significant amount of development in the downtown from private investment and through public improvements. How should this investment be phased, what form should it take, and what is a reasonable level of public investment?

Accessibility / Streetscape

There are a number of publicly funded streetscape improvements currently proposed for the downtown. These include expanding the street lighting plan, painting brick-colored crosswalks, enhancing the Courthouse grounds, including public art, and creating pocket gardens. The Downtown Improvement Association would also like to see improved signage for parking lots and Wi-Fi throughout downtown. Accessibility improvements are also proposed including building new parking garages, discouraging pass-through traffic from downtown; and implementing a campaign to promote access. What streetscape improvements in the panel's opinion will be most helpful in increasing the downtown vibrancy, and which improvements should be a priority?

Executive Summary: The Panel's Recommendations

The Town of Leesburg has a well preserved Historic District located in the middle of Loudoun County – one of the fastest growing, most affluent counties in the nation. While Loudoun County has grown tremendously over the past fifteen years, downtown Leesburg has lagged behind in comparison, and within its Historic District, the focus has been on public investments and small scale infill projects, resulting in little impact to the tax base. Leesburg has begun to see pedestrian traffic decrease and retailers leave the downtown, and new, nearby projects continue to draw visitors and residents away from Historic District.

State of Leesburg

With a weak retail sector, lack of services and amenities, little diversity in housing type, a decline in pedestrian traffic, and an uncertainty of the impact that the relocation of the County Government offices will have on the downtown, the Historic District may appear stable, but is actually in a fragile economic state.

While the downtown commercial district is weak, the Town does have a very solid historic foundation to build upon. Leesburg's authentic historic fabric is its competitive edge and cannot be found or replicated anywhere else in Loudoun County. The Town has a very passionate, loyal group of business owners, residents and other stakeholders who share the Town's preservation goals and at the same time want to see increased economic vitality in downtown Leesburg. With a proactive Downtown Improvement Association in place ready to help implement an action plan for economic development, the Town is well situated to begin to carry out a revitalization plan. By leveraging its authenticity and taking advantage of the fact that it is in the middle of a growing, prosperous county, the Town is positioned to build upon its Town and County government presence and attract new residents, workers and retailers to available prime development sites.

Redevelopment Strategies

To sustain and grow the level of economic vitality in downtown Leesburg, the Town needs to focus on attracting a new demographic of residents to the downtown – young professionals and families. New housing types at a variety of price points, including condominiums and townhomes, as well as retail and entertainment amenities will be needed for these young professionals and families. This will in turn spur economic development, and ensure the success of the Town well into the future. To focus development and create a catalyst for future development, the panel recommends implementing the revitalization efforts in phases – building upon the success of the first phase before entering into a second phase.

Phase One. In the first phase the panel recommends focusing on a four-block core area of downtown, between Cornwall Street and Loudoun Street to the north and south, and between Church Street and Wirt Street to the east and west. As part of the first phase, the panel recommends the following improvements:

- Brick the streets within the core area to create a true sense of arrival to the Historic District as well as to create a means to incorporate traffic calming measures.
- Widen the sidewalks in no-parking zones at intersections to provide more space for pedestrians, outside dining options, trees and planters.
- Incorporate speed tables on the streets to slow traffic.
- Enhance the Courthouse grounds through landscape improvements and the removal of the wrought iron fence. Program the grounds to provide a true *Town-Green* community space.
- Increase the intensity of development in the core – especially at the Loudoun Times Mirror site – to provide for a mix of residential development, retail, office, hotel, and a performing arts center.

Phase Two. Following the successful implementation of the first phase, the panel suggests moving outwards with public and private investment. The panel recommends focusing on a pedestrian loop that would run south along King Street to the W&OD Trail and then back up to Loudoun Street through the Waterford Project and Market Station. This area will provide additional amenities to visitors and residents including pocket parks and retail shops.



Revitalization Phases I and II

Implementation

Given the panel's recommendation that development should begin in the downtown core, both public and private investment should focus on that area as well. Public investment in streetscaping and road improvements should be prioritized for this core area and the Town should prioritize private investment proposals for this area.

Improve Regulatory Process. To keep project proposals in the core area moving through the process, the panel recommends that the Town improve the regulatory process for development approval by implementing the following:

- Green-tape / Fast-track projects within the core area that meet revitalization objectives.
- Assign a case manager to development projects to facilitate the timely review and resolution of issues.
- Create a multi-agency development review committee to identify preliminary issues at the beginning of the review process.
- Commit to a time limit for the review process to instill confidence in the development community.

Cautiously Relax Height Restrictions. The panel recommends relaxing the 45 feet height restriction to allow for more flexibility in design and product type for projects that are appropriately scaled and sensitive to historic preservation. This can be accomplished by allowing for additional height mid-block, away from the street. The panel also recommends that the Town allow for architectural embellishments above the height limit to include such things as parapets, towers and spires. This would allow for the roof lines to be more varied. A zoning amendment would accomplish these recommendations.

Create a Downtown Service District. While both the Town and a number of organizations play key roles in revitalizing Leesburg, there needs to be one unified voice to advocate for the Town. The panel recommends setting up a Downtown Service District to implement a branding strategy, attract future developers, enhance community programs, and advocate for institutional users.

Parking Management Strategy. To improve upon access to current parking and to facilitate the development of future parking, the panel recommends that the Town address parking more creatively and develop an overarching parking management strategy. Included in the strategy should be a plan to improve the directional signage for parking, and the creation of a Parking District to maintain current garages and fund future parking.

Funding. To raise funds for public investments including the Service District, the panel recommends that the Town earmark tax revenues to the Historic District from the Village of Leesburg and other successful Town projects that may negatively impact downtown businesses. The County's contribution can be in the form of payments for services that the Service District will provide in lieu of taxes or a direct payment.

The Current State of the Downtown Leesburg

The Town of Leesburg is located within Loudoun County, one of the fastest growing counties since the 1990s. With a median income of \$99,371 – which is more than double the national median – Loudoun County finds itself in an enviable position. While this economic development has resulted in a tremendous amount of development activity for the County, Leesburg’s historic downtown has not shared in the prosperity of its surrounding area.

Challenges

The Historic District while charming and appearing stable, in actuality has a fragile commercial district. The retail sector within the downtown is very weak, there is little diversity in housing and supporting services, and the streets lack activity. What was most telling to the panel however was that while the County has evolved dramatically over the last ten years, transitioning from a rural to a suburban county with strong residential, retail and commercial sectors, there has only been a total of 12,000 feet of new development in downtown Leesburg over the last fifteen years.

Vehicular Activity. The Town faces additional challenges in making the downtown more attractive to visitors and retailers. The current traffic pattern is not pedestrian friendly and the number and speed of cars that commute to and from work through the downtown, detract from the experience of visitors on the sidewalks.

Approval Process. The panel learned through its briefing materials and the stakeholder roundtable discussions that one of the largest challenges to attracting projects to downtown Leesburg is the development review process. The current difficulties and uncertainties associated with moving a proposed project through the approval process have been widely publicized.

Loudoun County Government Location (Courthouse Expansion). The Loudoun County government offices are currently considering three proposals for relocation – all outside of downtown Leesburg. It will be necessary to make sure that the vacated space is filled quickly to maintain the current level of economic activity in the town. While the panel learned that the vacated County building is likely to be backfilled by the Courts, the panel recommends that institutional users such as a University be considered.



Loudoun County Government Center

Opportunities

The Historic District is at a critical juncture and the panel sees a tremendous amount of opportunity in leveraging the authenticity of the Town's character. Other newer developments of Loudoun County cannot compete with Leesburg's historical assets and the tremendous amount of charm that the town exudes through the fabric of its historic buildings. There is an incredible sense of pride and loyalty among the Town's residents and the fact that Leesburg is the County seat strengthens the identity and gives additional meaning to the Town.

The panel believes that by being proactive, Leesburg can build upon its historical foundation and begin to capture in the downtown, a portion of the investment that is currently taking place in the surrounding areas. There are a number of prime sites such as the Loudoun Times Mirror site ready to assemble and develop; there is a demand for a more diverse housing stock that will bring new, younger residents to downtown; there are places like the Dodona Manor that offer resources for the Town to leverage, such as a conference facility or reception hall; and there are people who work in and for the Town who are capable of making this happen.

Redevelopment Strategies

Over the course of reading the briefing materials, participating in a sponsor briefing, and speaking with many stakeholders in Leesburg, the panel heard a similar vision for the future of downtown Leesburg:

Downtown Leesburg is the civic, cultural and historic center of Loudoun County. The historic downtown has a mix of commercial, residential, institutional and educational uses housed in new and historic buildings as well as public spaces. This cultural center is home to a growing number of young professionals, families and older residents. Educational institutions, government and judicial offices, cultural and arts organizations as well as professional service firms occupy the office space. With an increased number of residents and workers downtown, the streets are active in the evenings and weekends with people attracted to the broad range of restaurants, entertainment venues and specialty shops that downtown Leesburg has to offer.

A key component to bringing this vision to reality will be the success of the Town in creating more housing choices to attract new residents to the downtown. While there are stable neighborhoods of single family homes in the Town, the downtown area has few housing options. Creating a diverse mix of housing, to include condominiums and townhomes, will attract young professionals and families, and will result in the increased demand for retail, entertainment and recreational amenities. The more people there are within the downtown needing a place to work, shop, eat and play, the greater the opportunity will be for economic development.

To provide guidance in taking the next steps, the panel first focused on the proposed public and private investment projects scattered throughout the downtown's Historic District. The panel concluded that while a number of these projects will enhance the downtown, it is necessary for revitalization to start at the center of the Historic District and work outwards – creating an immediate impact. This focus area will strengthen the brand of Leesburg, show people that a commitment has been made to preserve the historic character while at the same time improving the area, and build a critical mass of residents and workers for the downtown.

The panel recommends focusing private and public investment in the four block area between Cornwall and Loudoun Street from north to south, and between Wirt Street and Church Street from east to west. This area is the armature of the Town. By focusing on the core and “getting that area right” there will be a ripple effect throughout the rest of downtown and economic vitality will spread outwards over time. While there is currently successful retail and office within the core, further development, including mix of residential, will keep more people downtown increasing the Historic District's energy level. If redeveloped correctly, the Town will have the momentum to progress to a

second phase that will build upon the idea of a pedestrian friendly, livable, walkable community.

Phase I: Improve the Downtown Core, Favoring Pedestrians over Cars

With a focus on streetscape improvements, widening the sidewalks in key areas, and creating speed tables, the downtown core area can transform to favor pedestrians over vehicles. An increase in programming of community events and festivals and a focus on private investment in the core are also elements of the first phase.

Streetscape Improvements.

There is an opportunity to emphasize the historic character of the downtown core by investing in streetscape improvements that will strengthen the identity of Leesburg and make the streets memorable. The panel recommends paving the streets in the core area with brick to achieve a destination feeling and remind visitors of the historical setting. The brick streets will also help to accomplish the goal of slowing down and reducing the amount of vehicular traffic that passes through the downtown daily. Increased lighting and light pole banners should also be put in place to add character to the downtown core.



Phase I – The Downtown Core

Create Speed Tables. As a traffic calming measure, the panel proposes the addition of five speed tables: one at each intersection entering the downtown core and one at the intersection of King Street and Market Street. Higher and wider than a normal speed bump, a speed table increases the grade of the road gradually up six inches until level with the sidewalk before gradually reducing back down to street level.

Widen the Sidewalks. One of the public investment proposals in the briefing materials is to widen the sidewalks for outdoor cafes. While the panel likes the idea of sidewalk cafes, it encountered two potential issues: First, parallel parking is attractive for visitors who are accustomed to parking within view of their destination – knowing that they may be able to find street parking is important to bringing them downtown. While teaser parking, these twenty-three spots are convenient and add energy to the street.

Secondly, Route 15 is a major thoroughfare and without street parking, vehicular speeds may increase and restaurant guests may feel uncomfortable dining within close proximity to passing cars.

To accommodate wider sidewalks, while not sacrificing parallel parking spots, the panel recommends extending the sidewalks into the parking lane where the curb is painted yellow for no-parking. These no-parking zones occur at intersections and would not result in a loss of parking spots. Bump-outs in these areas could accommodate sidewalk dining or simply give additional space for trees, benches and plantings, providing more space for people to convene. Should the town allow for sidewalk dining, appropriate plantings will need to be incorporated into the design to provide a buffer between the restaurant guests and passing vehicles.



Widen sidewalks at intersections where currently yellow curb paint indicates no-parking

Courthouse Grounds. The panel sees the Courthouse grounds as a true *Town Center* for the Historic District. During the week many people pass through the grounds to accomplish their daily business, and on the weekends, the panel envisions an increased level of community programming to include festivals, concerts, and markets. To provide for better connectivity between the streets and the Courthouse grounds, the panel recommends removing a majority of the wrought iron fence. Understanding the historic significance of the fence, the panel would recommend keeping a mementos piece of the fence such as the gate on the grounds and relocating the remainder of the fence to nearby cemeteries or the Dodona Manor. The panel believes that opening the grounds up to the community and using the grounds as a true *Town-Green* would enliven the downtown, creating a true sense of community.

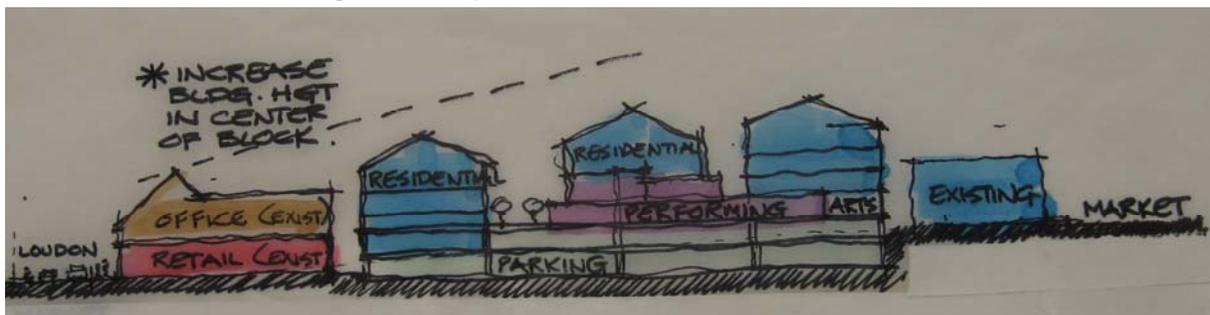


These three images depict the current Courthouse grounds and what the grounds could look like if the fence was removed and community festivals were held in the downtown. See Appendix for larger images.

Model Development after Southwest Block. The southwest block of the downtown core area is an ideal framework for development. The Town Municipal Parking Garage's location on the interior of the southwest block, allows for retail and other uses along the block's exterior. This template should be a model for the development of the Loudoun Times Mirror site located on the southeast block of the core area. The panel proposes that a parking garage be accommodated in the middle of the block surrounded by additional retail, residential, hotel, office and cultural uses to encourage economically viable development compatible with the nearby historic buildings.

The Loudoun Times Mirror site is a key site for the redevelopment and has the potential to provide a strong mix of uses including a performing arts center. The panel is aware that there has been a *Request for Proposal* released for the feasibility of a performing arts center. If accompanied by an educational component that capitalizes on the families with children in the surrounding county, the panel believes that the center can be successfully programmed throughout the day, evening and weekend, becoming an identifying element of the downtown.

Given the 20 foot grade change from the north to south side of the Loudoun Times Mirror site, the panel believes that this site can accommodate more intense development than what is currently allowed for in the Historic District. To illustrate this, the panel recommends incorporating the historical façade of the Loudoun Times Mirror building on Market Street into the entrance of a performing arts center. The center would then extend into the middle of the site and support a structured parking garage below as well as additional housing. In the words of one panel member, this "found land" creates higher rooflines in the center of the block without interfering with historical sight lines. The size of the parcel also allows for additional buildings to include additional retail, housing, a boutique hotel and/or office.



This rendering depicts the potential for a mix of uses with increased building heights mid-block.

Phase II: Pedestrian Loop

Although the core must be the priority for revitalization efforts, the panel is mindful of the long term vision and recommends that in a second phase the Town should build upon the idea that a walkable community requires destinations, and focus on creating a pedestrian path that would be a natural extension from the core area. The pedestrian loop, which would include retail, entertainment, and recreational amenities, will begin along King Street south of Loudoun Street and stretch to the W&OD trail, around the

waterway, up through the Waterford Project and Market Station, returning north to Loudoun Street.

While the panel views the core area as being demure and true to its historic roots, it envisions that the second phase will take on a more contemporary – cool and funky – character to attract a younger demographic looking for a variety of housing options, ethnic restaurants, art functions and interesting entertainment. The Waterford Project should have continuous storefronts with first floor retail and office above that flows into Tuscarora Mill, accessible via a continuous pedestrian path. Along the loop, the panel stresses the importance of creating pocket parks as well as enhancing the waterway to make it an attractive feature.



Phase II – The Pedestrian Loop

Implementation Strategies

To begin to revitalize historic downtown Leesburg, the Town must prioritize public and private investment in the downtown core; accelerate the approval process for development projects in the core area; allow for more intense uses on opportunity sites; create a downtown Service District; and develop a comprehensive parking strategy.

Concentrate Public Investment in the Core Area

The Town of Leesburg has ten public infrastructure projects under consideration that require a significant amount of investment to complete. The panel found that a number of these projects are critical to catalyze development and will strengthen the identity of the Historic District. There were other projects that while needed, are not an immediate priority, and still others that should be incorporated into private investment projects over time. In the near term, the panel recommends that the Town directs its Capital Improvement Program (CIP) funding to projects within the four-block, priority area identified under *Development Strategies*.

High Priority: King Street Corridor, The Alley, Courthouse Grounds Improvements

King Street Corridor. To create an immediate impact and begin to show that the Town is investing in the historic downtown core, the panel recommends that streetscape improvements be made in the four-block core area along King Street between Cornwall Street and Loudoun Street. Improvements should run along Market and Loudoun Streets from Church Street west to Wirt Street.

Improvements to this corridor include brick paving of the streets, widening of the sidewalks where currently no-parking is allowed, traffic calming measures, adding banners to the streetlights, and incorporating landscape improvements into the design as a means of creating barriers between the widened sidewalks and pedestrians.

The Alley. The panel called the alleyway “a little jewel” and sees the potential to create a vibrant space for retail, entertainment and cafes. The panel does not recommend spending a tremendous amount to underground power lines, but believes that relatively small investments in lighting, landscaping and paving could create a new area to convene. The panel did see an opportunity to create a truly unique alleyway should the adjacent Town Municipal Parking Garage be rebuilt to make the best use of the land and



The Alley has the potential to become a vibrant space.

building heights. If a complete demolition and redevelopment of the garage were to happen, the alley could be incorporated into the project and financed through private investment.

Courthouse Ground Improvements. While significant improvements have already been made to the Courthouse grounds, the panel believes that additional landscape and lighting investments, as well as additional community programming would make a significant impact on the downtown core. The Courthouse grounds are where people who work and do business in Leesburg come and go on a regular basis. As discussed in the *Development Strategies* section, the panel recommends that CIP funding be targeted to the Courthouse grounds to remove a majority of the wrought iron fence, add significant landscaping elements, improve lighting, and provide a venue for the community to gather.



The Courthouse Grounds

Secondary Priority: Church Street, Liberty Street Parking Structure, East End Triangle, Gateways

Church Street Corridor. Extending from the Pennington Lot on the north to the W&OD trail on the south, the corridor currently looks more like an alleyway than a true street. The panel believes that the proposal in the briefing materials to install sidewalks and lighting and to use cobblestone on the portion of the street that runs from Market Street to the County Garage exit will dramatically improve the corridor. However, the panel views the Loudoun Times Mirror Site as the prime redevelopment opportunity for downtown and given the fact that Church Street runs parallel to the development site, the panel recommends holding off on improving the street until construction is complete. Construction vehicles, which by their nature quickly degrade roads, will need access to and from the project via Church Street and will likely damage or destroy any improvements. The panel also sees the possibility to incorporate Church Street improvements into a proffer and have the project developer complete improvements as part of the redevelopment project.

East End Triangle / Gateways. The panel agrees that streetscape improvements – including sidewalks, traffic calming and signage -- to the East End Triangle as well as at North and South King Streets and the east and west intersections of Loudoun and Market Streets are an important element to helping strengthen the brand of the Historic District. The panel felt however that given its task to prioritize public improvements and provide recommendations to jump start revitalization that the core of the downtown is where the investment should first take place. At a later time, the gateways at the edge

of the Historic District will play a more prominent role in welcoming people to the downtown.

Liberty Street Parking Structure. The proposed parking structure is located on the edge of the Historic District and while a new 500-space parking garage will provide a long-term parking solution, the panel believes that this should happen at a later time.

Privatize: 6-12 Loudoun Street, The Esplanade

6-12 Loudoun. The site presents an opportunity for the public sector and private sector to partner together to improve these parcels. The panel recommends that the Town release a Request for Proposal that includes conditions for initiatives that are important to the Town including affordable housing, a small visitor center, or streetscape improvements.

The Esplanade. The esplanade is another example of a project that could be incorporated into a developer's proffers to save the Town money and provide public improvements for the community.

Concentrate Private Investment in the Core Area

While the public investment will provide the necessary improvements to help strengthen the identity of the Historic District and provide for an enhanced pedestrian experience, it is the private investment that will directly impact the tax roles and put more feet on the street. The panel recommends focusing on the core of the Historic District with the development of key parcels.



Loudoun Times Mirror Site. The largest development site in the historic downtown, this 1.69 acre site should be the priority for redevelopment in downtown Leesburg. A site this large allows for flexibility in floor-plate sizes, providing the Town with the opportunity to attract new users to the downtown. New residential units, parking, a performing arts center, a boutique hotel or additional office space can be accommodated through the development of the Loudoun Times Mirror site.



6-12 Loudoun. As discussed above, the development of 6-12 Loudoun should begin with a Request for Proposal to solicit private sector interest.

Gustavson Expansion. The build-out of the parking

The Loudoun Times Mirror Site and the site of the Gustavson Expansion.

lot behind Lightfoot Restaurant will bring additional infill retail and office to the downtown and should be a priority.

Town Municipal Garage – Market Street Entrance. Currently, the entrance to the Town Municipal Garage is set back from Market Street, providing the opportunity for a small amount of additional street front retail and second floor residential units. To accomplish this, the panel recommends bringing the storefronts to the sidewalk, providing for an entrance to the garage but removing the exit lane so that all traffic would exit on Loudoun Street.

Town Municipal Garage. While functional, the panel saw an opportunity to redevelop the Town Municipal parking garage in conjunction with the alleyway project and 6-12 Loudoun. By increasing height limits on block interiors, the panel believes that the garage could be redeveloped to better accommodate parking, and the land could achieve a higher and better use by incorporating housing above the garage. The panel does understand that the garage was only built in the 1980s and that it may not be a near term reality, but believes that the value created by a new garage and additional development would offset the cost of demolishing the current garage.

Accelerate Implementation of Infill Development

The panel was made aware of the Downtown Improvement Association's effort – along with the help of Town staff, local engineers, architects, attorneys and developers – to improve the regulatory process for development review. The panel cannot overstate the importance of having a systematic process in place that provides predictability. The developer needs to be reassured of how long the process will take and know that all major issues will have been identified early on in the review process. In the briefing materials, the panel was provided with a set of recommendations to improve the process:

- 1. The time required to approve a project should be shorter than the time required to construct it.*
- 2. The Town should require staff to use its best efforts to identify all issues early in the review process.*
- 3. Each component of project scrutiny by the Town should be measured in hours and evaluated regularly.*
- 4. The DCSM should be performance based and allow flexibility in the methods used to achieve broadly accepted engineering standards.*
- 5. An efficient, discipline specific, and quasi-binding dispute mechanism should be crafted to quickly resolve differing points of view during the application process.*
- 6. The Board of Architectural Review should immediately promulgate objective guidelines that address the issues of scale and massing within existing zoning requirements and historic fabric preservation goals.*
- 7. The process for appointing members to the Board of Architectural Review should be amended to require a minimum number of licensed architects and to require that members be selected at large rather than by individual members of the Town Council.*

8. *Allowing flexibility in height restriction will promote better architecture without overwhelming other buildings in the downtown.*

While agreeing with these recommendations, the panel wants to make sure that the approval process is not only significantly shorter but within a specific timeframe to manage expectations of the developer and staff. To accomplish this, staff should set forth all requirements for projects in preliminary phases and refrain from adding new requirements throughout the process. The composition of the Board of Architectural Review should require licensed architects but should also include members with other professional backgrounds as well as a citizen representative to review the project as a resident and neighbor.

The panel also recommends that in addition to flexibility in the height restriction for future development, there should also be flexibility in floor-plate sizes to allow for a diversity of users. The Board of Architectural Review and Town should also look at the architecture of proposed projects as a statement of our time, embracing contemporary architecture that meets the needs of contemporary uses while at the same time being respectful of the Town's historic fabric. The panel felt strongly that an authentic building of today is far superior to a new building that tries to look historic.

These goals can be best implemented through developing a green-tape process; assigning a case manager to new projects; creating a development review committee; and committing to a time limit for the review process.

Develop a Green-Tape Process. The opposite of red-tape, the panel recommends that projects that are within the H-1 overlay zone be assigned priority and expedited through the approval process. This has been successfully implemented in other jurisdictions and sends a message to the developer that the Town is interested in having the project seen through to completion.

Assign A Case Manager to Facilitate Review. As is done in Montgomery County, the panel recommends assigning a case manager to projects within the H-1 zone. This person will have the responsibility of accelerating the review of projects in the core area, and mediating competing interests or requirements by staff.

Create a Development Review Committee. To streamline the process and bring all potential red flags to the forefront at the beginning of the development review process, the panel recommends assembling a development review committee for core area projects. The developer, Town, Board of Architectural Review, Virginia Power, police, and those who address life safety issues, should all come together in the preliminary stages of a project to identify potential issues with the project. This will create fewer future surprises and will lead to a more streamlined process.

Commit to a time limit for review process. To attract development to the downtown core, the panel recommends having the Town commit to a complete review of the project within a predetermined amount of time. As was mentioned to the panel, *a guarantee*

that the review process will take no longer than the time it takes to build the project is needed.

Allow for More Intense Development on Opportunity Sites

The panel feels that for certain sites the Town should relax the height limitation of 45 feet for appropriately scaled development that is sensitive to historic preservation. Current height restrictions should be maintained at street façades but in block interiors, the panel recommends allowing up to 65 feet height limits so long as the architecture is respectful of sight lines and topography.

The panel also believes that increased height limitations will allow for more inspiring building design. At a 45 feet height limit, there is a struggle to accommodate a four-story building, so proposed projects are designed as square boxes, creating a disconnect



The Lightfoot Restaurant is an example of how increased heights allow for more creative architectural design.

between the rich architectural fabric of the older buildings and new development. With increased height limitations, building design could be more creative to include architectural embellishments such as parapets, towers and spires – architectural elements that are seen on historic buildings such as the Lightfoot Restaurant.

Allowing additional height and therefore density would encourage residential development in the core area. Residential development is needed to bring more people downtown on a regular basis and will lead to additional commercial and retail development. The panel views the Loudoun Times Mirror site as having the potential to capture a significant amount of the needed residential -- accommodating up to 200 units or 400 new residents in the downtown. This will increase pedestrian traffic and will help stimulate the desired retail activity.

Create a Downtown Service District

Often referred to as a Business Improvement District or BID, under Virginia law, towns may create Service Districts to provide targeted governmental services, including economic development services. The panel recommends that the town pass an ordinance for a Service District to focus on development of the H-1 district. There are currently a number of stakeholders and organized groups taking part in improving the downtown. Through the Service District, the work of these groups can be consolidated to provide a unified voice for the implementation of the downtown's vision.

Roles and Responsibilities. The Service District will provide leadership for the revitalization of the downtown and should have dedicated staff. Leesburg needs a zealous advocate of the downtown and what it has to offer. While not an exhaustive list, the functions of the Service District include the following:

- Develop a Merchandising Plan.
- Market to brokers, potential tenants, consumers.
- Maintain a space inventory of sites available for development, rent, or sale.
- Develop and implement a branding strategy.
- Develop and implement a storefront program to work with merchants to make their storefronts more attractive.
- Coordinate and publicize the retailers' hours of operation.
- Implement a streetscape maintenance program to maintain the landscaping and keep the streets clean.
- Manage a 'business loss mitigation fund' to help businesses that suffer from the construction of area public improvements.
- Enhance special events including a farmers' market and First Fridays.
- Develop and maintain a website.
- Institute a Wi-Fi zone for the core area.
- Work with the Town's Economic Development Director to aggressively pursue academic and institutional users. Whether housed in the County government building or just outside the downtown core, a public or private university would create a tremendous amount of energy in the downtown.

Develop a Parking Management Strategy

The panel spent time analyzing the current and future parking needs for the downtown as it relates to the current availability of parking and the perception of area residents and visitors on the availability of parking. What the panel concluded was that there is a perception that there is not enough parking due to the lack of signage and the habits of suburban shoppers who generally find a parking spot within site of their destination.

Given current issues with parking – both perceived and real – as well as the future demand for parking, the panel recommends developing a comprehensive parking strategy that includes the creation of a Parking District to manage current parking and to finance future parking. The Parking District will oversee a fund dedicated to managing the Town's parking needs and will be responsible for managing parking fees and fines as well as developer proffers. This fund will pay down bonds issued for building and maintaining parking garages. The Parking District would also be responsible for increasing signage in the area to direct visitors to nearby parking garages.

The panel noted that the Town's parking requirements may be too onerous and may be discouraging development in the Historic District. One way to address this through a Parking District is to have developers pay into a fund that provides parking through future garages in lieu of providing a portion of the parking themselves.

Through an ordinance amendment, the parking strategy should also consider an increased use of shared parking for new projects. This is especially applicable to the panel's proposal for a boutique hotel and additional office space, uses that have parking needs at opposite times of the day. A shared parking strategy will reduce overall parking requirements for development projects, making development more feasible.

Funding

Throughout the panel's briefing book, there was the question of how to fund public investments and improvements. The Service District should be funded through a combination of the Town budget, County contributions and an assessment on district properties that will benefit from the work of the Service District.

The Town of Leesburg. The panel recommends that the portion of the Service District budget that comes from the Town should be raised from revenues flowing from the Village at Leesburg. Stakeholders repeatedly voiced concerns that this new Leesburg project, while an economic stimulus for the Town overall, will likely drive away a lot of the energy left in the downtown. To combat this effect, the panel sees an opportunity to funnel revenues received by the Town through this project directly back into the Historic District. This can be done through the Service District or the funding of public investment projects.

Loudoun County. As is done by the General Services Administration in Washington, DC, the County can make its contribution to the Service District in lieu of a direct contribution, in the form of a payment for services rendered.

Property Owners. Property owners should be assessed a tax, based upon the level of benefit they receive from the Service District. Those who are most impacted, receiving the greatest benefit, should be taxed the highest.

Conclusion

Leesburg has a rich and meaningful history and the panel wants to see it have as bright of a future. Resting on its historic character will not be enough however to maintain and increase the downtown's vibrancy. Historic preservation does not work without economic development – Therefore Doing Nothing is Not an Option.

The Town and its stakeholders should not view development as just projects, but rather should understand that development brings architectural diversity and alternatives of goods and services to the downtown. There must be the ability to adapt to the changing needs of businesses and residents, and the Town must have the ability to adjust with time. While the historic fabric must be respected, it has to be given room to breathe in order to thrive.

By entering into public-private partnerships to ensure the Historic District's future success, and by providing strong, consistent leadership, the Town will be able to leverage downtown Leesburg's authenticity and evolve into tomorrow's civic, cultural and historic center of Loudoun County.

Appendix

Phase I and Phase II



Phase I – Downtown Core



Phase II – Pedestrian Loop



The Courthouse Grounds – Today and in the Future



The Courthouse Grounds Today



The Courthouse Grounds With the Fence Removed



The Courthouse Grounds: Active with Events From a Street Festival

About the Panel

Douglas M. Wrenn (Panel Chair)
Rodgers Consulting
Germantown, Maryland

Douglas M. Wrenn is a Principal with Rodgers Consulting, Inc., where he directs the firm's work on a broad range of urban planning and site development projects. Prior to joining Rodgers Consulting, Wrenn was the Director of Redevelopment Programs for Montgomery County, Maryland. He was responsible for the management of all aspects of the County government's participation in a \$400 million public/private partnership to revitalize downtown Silver Spring and the County's recently created Redevelopment Office in Wheaton, Maryland.

Wrenn has many years of consulting experience as a land planner and urban development specialist. He has directed multi-disciplinary teams on large-scale community planning and urban redevelopment projects, for both public and private real estate interests. He established a national reputation for his work in urban waterfronts, initially as author of the Urban Land Institute's first book on the subject, and later as a planning consultant on numerous projects. He holds a BS degree in Resource Management and a Masters degree in Landscape Architecture, both from North Carolina State University. Wrenn is a member of the Urban Land Institute and is active in its Washington District Council. Wrenn sits on the district council's Executive Committee and is chair of the district council's Technical Assistance Panel Committee.

Dennis Carmichael, FASLA
EDAW
Alexandria, VA

Dennis Carmichael is a principal and vice president with EDAW and has been with the firm for 28 years. A licensed landscape architect, his focus is placemaking in the public realm. With dozens of built projects around the country, his work in public places is characterized by the use of narrative, cultural and historical references in landscape solutions. Rather than a signature style, his approach to design is about revealing the special qualities of a given place, seeking to make the landscape visible, comprehensible and valuable.

His work has given several cities renewed vigor as it created opportunities for new investment. In Louisville, Kentucky, \$10 million worth of public plazas and streetscapes has generated over \$150 million in new housing, retail, office and museum construction. In Chattanooga, Tennessee, Ross's Landing, a \$9 million park, has helped stimulate over \$100 million in a new riverfront neighborhood. And in Atlanta, the \$50 million Centennial Olympic Park has become a catalyst for \$1 billion in reinvestment in the surrounding blocks of downtown. Carmichael has received over forty design awards

and his work has been published in such magazines as Landscape Architecture, Urban Land, and Architecture. In 2006, Carmichael served as President of the American Society of Landscape Architects. He is currently President –elect of the Landscape Architecture Foundation, a national organization devoted to research, education, and communication of the principles of sustainability.

Yolanda Cole, AIA, IIDA, LEED® AP
Hickok Cole Architects
Washington, DC

Yolanda Cole is a Principal and owner of Hickok Cole Architects, a large commercial architecture and interiors firm located in Washington, DC. She has nearly 25 years of base building and interior design experience in a variety of project types from large-scale, mixed-use developments to small commercial interiors, both around the world and in the region. She is widely recognized for her leadership in the region's business community and for her work on many award-winning projects in the commercial/corporate, government, and institutional markets.

Prior to joining Hickok Cole Architects as a partner, Cole was a partner with Arlington-based LyrixDesign, which merged with Hickok's firm to become Hickok Cole. LyrixDesign was one of the top 25 woman-owned and interior design firms in the region. She began her career with New York-based Kohn Pederson Fox Associates (KPF), where she was a senior designer of large-scale high-rise office buildings. While with KPF, Cole served as senior designer for the 1.2-million square-foot Chifley Tower in Sydney, Australia (where she lived for two years) and the award-winning Capital Cities/ABC headquarters in New York.

Cole has over ten years of graduate and undergraduate education in the fields of architecture and music, receiving her Master of Architecture from Columbia University, her Bachelor of Music Education from The Ohio State University and completed four years at the University of Cincinnati's College of Design, Architecture and Art, undergraduate co-op program.

Cole has been an active member of the Board of Trade for over 10 years and currently co-chairs the Regional Development Task Force and is an alternate juror for the Smart Growth Alliance awards panel. She is a registered architect, a member of the American Institute of Architects, the International Interior Design Association and is a LEED Accredited Professional by the US Green Building Council. In her position as the Principal of three firms over her career, she has also been a sponsor and contributor to a number of non-profit organizations, as well as an active member of a number of professional organizations. She is currently the Chair of the Board of Browne Academy in Alexandria, Virginia.

Bill Dickinson
The Rappaport Companies
McLean, VA

Bill Dickinson is Senior Director of Brokerage with The Rappaport Companies and has almost 20 years experience in commercial real estate. During his career he has been involved in nearly every facet of commercial real estate including construction, property management and leasing. Bill now specializes in brokerage, representing retail tenants and landlords in the Washington, DC/Baltimore market. Current clients include: Ruth's Chris Steakhouse, AT&T Mobility, PNC Bank, and Gander Mountain. Bill has completed transactions with CVS, US Airways, Bank of America, Ted's Montana Grill, Ann Taylor, Legal Sea Foods, Thomas Pink and Chipotle, among others.

Landlord representation assignments include: 1000 Connecticut Avenue, Chevy Chase Pavilion, Carlyle Place, 1700 K Street, 1776 K Street, The Buchanan, Main Street at Cameron Station and Crystal City. His extensive knowledge of building systems and construction is very helpful in his leasing assignments.

Bill is a member of the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) and the Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA). He holds the Real Property Administration Designation from the Building Owners and Managers Institute (BOMI) and is a member of National Association of Corporate Real Estate Executives (NACORE).

Josh Dix
PN Hoffman, Inc.
Washington, DC

Josh Dix joined PN Hoffman in 2002 and is primarily responsible for the acquisitions, financing, and budgeting for development projects. Dix also manages all day to day activities required in order to see the project from acquisition and preliminary concepts through design coordination to final product. Additionally, Dix oversees all retail leasing for the company, currently managing a portfolio of over 50,000 square feet.

Since joining PN Hoffman he has been actively involved with the execution of over 650,000 square feet of mixed-use development, creating more than 500 high-end residential units. Dix is responsible for company projects in the pipeline including an additional 625,000 square feet, representing more than 500 residential units and 45,000 square feet of retail.

Prior to joining PN Hoffman, Dix was a Project Manager at The Clark Construction Group where he focused on preconstruction, estimating, contracts and development. While at Clark he worked on a wide array of projects including Class A office, hospitality, residential, and data center development.

Dix is a graduate of Lehigh University with a degree in Civil Engineering and holds a Masters of Business Administration from the University of Maryland. He is currently a member of the Urban Land Institute (ULI), the DC Real Estate Group, the District of Columbia Building Industry Association (DCBIA), and the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC). Dix is a resident of Loudoun County where he resides with his wife and two children.

Noah Mehrkam
The Arcland Group, LLC
Washington, DC

Noah Mehrkam is founder and partner of The Arcland Group, LLC, a real estate development and investment firm focusing on commercial properties in the western suburbs of the Washington, DC metropolitan region. The company's real estate development services include land and property acquisition, commercial development, property management and leasing, along with brownfield and historical redevelopment. Arcland's current project scope includes the management, construction and development more than 130,000 square feet.

Prior to launching Arcland, Mehrkam managed all aspects of development for the Manassas-based Rector Companies, including direct oversight of hundreds of thousands of square feet of office, residential, and retail properties, in addition to build-to-suit warehouse facilities, and self-storage.

Before joining the commercial real estate sector, Mehrkam served as director of real estate for the Civil War Preservation Trust, a national land conservation organization, where he negotiated the acquisition and disposition of historical properties valued at more than \$35 million.

Mehrkam serves on the Technical Assistance Panel committee of the Urban Land Institute's Washington District Council and is a member of the Johns Hopkins University Real Estate Forum. He serves on the board of directors for the Contemporary American Theater Festival. He is a graduate of West Virginia University and holds a Master of Science in Real Estate Development from Johns Hopkins University where he is currently an assistant instructor of Real Estate Investment. Memberships include the Gateway New Economy Council, Martinsburg Rotary Club, Jefferson County Chamber of Commerce, Harpers Ferry Historical Association, and the Jefferson and Berkeley County historical societies.

McDuffie (Mac) Nichols
Economics Research Associates
Washington, DC

Mac Nichols has twenty years of experience in downtown revitalization and redevelopment, urban neighborhood commercial district revitalization, historic real estate development, community development, public-private partnerships and strategic planning. He has extensive experience designing and managing revitalization incentive grant and loan programs and processes supporting revitalization projects and implementation strategies for private corporations, nonprofit organizations and government. He joined ERA in 2005 as a Senior Associate working on urban retail and commercial projects and brownfield redevelopment. Recent projects include the master plan for Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, retail analysis and merchandising mix for a private development in downtown Santa Fe, New Mexico, and economic analysis supporting the Miami 21 economic master plan for Miami, Florida.

Prior to joining ERA, Nichols served as Director of Preservation Development Initiatives at the National Trust for Historic Preservation in Washington, DC managing a pilot program combining urban commercial development, residential neighborhood revitalization in historic and older districts, cultural heritage tourism and targeted financial incentives. He designed incentive grant and loan programs for preservation-based revitalization projects in Philadelphia, Detroit, Miami and Saint Paul. He developed program standards and eligibility criteria, systems and implementation models. His projects included a national survey of New Markets Tax Credits eligible commercial districts, an analysis of tax increment financing in Pontiac, Michigan, retail market demand analysis in inner-city Chicago and historic neighborhood redevelopment in Georgia.

As the Senior Program Manager for Technical Services at the National Trust's National Main Street Center, Nichols oversaw a nonprofit consulting practice serving forty-three statewide Main Street revitalization programs. He consulted on downtown and neighborhood commercial revitalization programs in over 200 local Main Street revitalization programs in 49 states in the US, Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands, India and Singapore. He consulted on the development of urban neighborhood commercial district revitalization programs for Boston, Baltimore, Detroit, and Los Angeles. He directed a project creating a "community-initiated development" process for nonprofit revitalization organizations. He developed rural Main Street revitalization programs for communities with populations under 5,000.

Nichols served on the *Urban Land Institute (ULI) Advisory Services Panel* for the Southwest Washington, DC waterfront. He is a former board member of the *Responsible Hospitality Institute*, advising on developing urban entertainment districts, and member of the *International Franchise Association's* Emerging Markets Committee, encouraging franchise opportunities for minorities and women.

The Governor of Maryland appointed Nichols to the Smart Codes Steering Committee to develop a rehabilitation building code and development guidelines for core areas. He has served as guest lecturer at the Center for Urban Redevelopment Excellence at the

University of Pennsylvania and the Center for Smart Growth Policy Research at the University of Maryland. He is co-author of the book, *Marketing an Image for Main Street*.

He is a member of the International Downtown Association, the National Main Street Network, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Nichols holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science and History from the University of Alabama.

Mary Petersen
Cassidy & Pinkard Colliers
Washington, DC

Mary Petersen, the retired Senior Vice President of Cassidy & Pinkard Colliers has been acknowledged as a leader in real estate market research in the Washington, DC metropolitan region. She has been recognized throughout the industry as a major information resource and market analyst and is quoted widely in real estate and business press, including Washington Post, New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Fortune magazine, Real Estate Forum, Washington Business Journal, Washington Times, and Journal Newspapers

Petersen joined Cassidy & Pinkard in 1988 as head of the firm's Market Research. In her 16 years as Director and three years as consultant, she expanded the Department to include a staff of three full time research assistants, who supported the effort to maintain a comprehensive database of comparable lease and sales transactions. Petersen led the team's work in producing the firm's research publications, as well as special consulting studies for the firm's brokers and clients.

Prior to joining Cassidy & Pinkard, she worked for Bovermo Properties, an overseas investment and development group, where she wrote a newsletter on US real estate for overseas investors, worked in acquisitions and marketing, and directed market research.

A graduate of Northwestern University, Petersen has been a frequent speaker on regional office markets. She has served on The Board of Commercial Real Estate Women (CREW), and on The Board of the Northern Virginia Chapter of NAIOP. She is a member of the Lambda Alpha honorary land use fraternity.

Petersen has 40 years of involvement in the civic life of the City of Fairfax, including service as chairman of the Planning Commission and of the Downtown Fairfax Coalition. She currently serves as the City's representative to the Fairfax County Library Board of Trustees and as a member of the board of Fall for the Book, a book festival co-sponsored by George Mason University and the Fairfax County Library system.

Gary W. Stith
Montgomery County, Silver Spring Regional Services Center
Silver Spring, MD

Gary Stith is currently the Director of the Silver Spring Regional Services Center where he directs and manages the delivery of government services to the Silver Spring Region. Stith represents the County in the redevelopment of downtown Silver Spring and manages ongoing redevelopment efforts that have resulted in \$1.2 billion in public and private investment in downtown Silver Spring over a 7-year period. The Urban District provides special services and marketing and promotions for downtown Silver Spring. The redevelopment project is 1.2 million square feet of commercial space in a mixed-use public-private project, which includes retail, restaurants, entertainment, office, hotel, and residential uses. Works with community and business organizations, and staffs several advisory boards which address a variety of issues related to the Silver Spring region and the redevelopment of the downtown.

Prior to his role as Director of the Silver Spring Regional Services Center Stith served five years as a Redevelopment Manager for the Silver Spring Redevelopment Program. In this role he managed the redevelopment of the core area of Downtown Silver Spring and developed the Urban Renewal Plans that established the County's authority to develop the project. Stith has also worked for and consulted to the Hechinger Company where he provided services in retail project management including design and construction management, site analysis, cost estimating and control. Prior to moving to the region, Stith served for ten years as a Community Development Director and Downtown Redevelopment Coordinator for the City of Manhattan, Kansas.

Stith received his Master of City Planning and MA in Public Administration from Ohio State University, and his BA in Sociology from Oklahoma State University. Stith has his CCIM designation, and is a member of the Urban Land Institute where he serves on the Public-Private Partnership Product Council. Stith is a charter member of the American Institute of Certified Planners, and is also a member of the International Downtown Association as well as the American Planning Association where he participates in the National Capital Chapter.

Bryce Turner
Brown Craig Turner
Baltimore, MD

Bryce Turner is the President and CEO of Brown Craig Turner and the energetic force behind its emergence from a small design consulting firm to a nationally recognized architecture firm. Turner joined the firm in 1994, and became President and CEO in 2002. He is a registered architect in twenty U.S. states, has directed the design of projects in five countries within Europe, North America, and Asia, and is a major force in obtaining entitlements and approvals for the firm's complex retail, commercial and mixed-use projects. Turner frequently testifies before public commissions and agencies,

and is an asset to a development team. His achievements include Charles Plaza and Center Plaza, Baltimore (MD) , Eastgate Complex (Harare, Zimbabwe), Downtown Silver Spring, (MD), Paramus Place (NJ), and Belvedere Square, Baltimore (MD).

Turner is a frequent speaker at ICSC and ULI events; and as chair of ULI Baltimore, recently led the successful Reality Check Plus visioning events across the four regions of Maryland. Turner has been recognized by ULI as being instrumental in increasing the awareness of “Quality Growth Principles” and the need for greater density in urban areas and inner suburbs. Turner speaks passionately about the importance of redevelopment in urban and suburban revitalization. Brown Craig Turner has had been a strong voice for promoting greater density on existing one story building sites, such as strip shopping centers in excellent locations. Turner recognizes the importance of this type of growth - near areas of existing infrastructure and transportation - to the success of our cities, and as a method to slow suburban sprawl.

Turner's university thesis in 1980 at Virginia Tech was entitled “Urban Infill in Main Street Communities” and involved the development of design to complement existing pedestrian scale buildings of three and four stories. Much of Brown Craig Turner's work today involves urban design and mixed- use developments that have evolved from that original thesis.