

ULI Washington

A Technical Assistance Panel Report

Bladensburg Town Center

**Sponsored by:
The Port Towns Community Development Corporation**

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Bladensburg Town Center Bladensburg, Maryland

A Strategy Towards Implementation

April 23-24, 2008
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 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 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

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The panel would also like to thank the mayor's of the Port Towns for taking the time to speak to the panel on the issues and opportunities that they see surrounding the revitalization of the Bladensburg Town Center. In particular the panel would like to thank Hon. Walter James of Bladensburg, Hon. Diana Fennell of Colmar Manor, Hon. Commission Chair Aileen McChesney of Cottage City, and Hon. Adam Ortiz of Edmonston. The panel also appreciated hearing from stakeholders also addressed the panel including, Rufus Lusk, Partner, Port Towns Shopping Center at Colmar Manor; James F. Connelly, Executive Director, Anacostia Watershed Society; John Sower, Friends of the Battle of Bladensburg; Joe Rodgriguez, Owner, Port of Bladensburg Shopping Center; and Brendan Quinn of Ernest Maier Company. The panel thanks the many residents, business owners, Port Towns CDC board members, and other community stakeholders who attended the roundtable discussions and final presentation.

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 and roundtables conducted during the panel's one and one-half day effort. We hope that the following information will help guide the Port Towns CDC as it collaborates with the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) on the *Port Towns Plan*, and continues to revitalize the Town of Bladensburg along with its neighbors of Colmar Manor, Cottage City and Edmonston.

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Foreword: Overview and Panel Assignment

As a means to foster relationships and redevelopment in the region's emerging neighborhoods, ULI Washington received a grant from the ULI Foundation's Community Action Grant program to offer a series of complimentary TAPs following the 2007 Urban Marketplace Conference and Expo. While a number of applicants submitted worthwhile proposals, the review committee chose three projects, one of which being the Port Towns CDC's request to develop an implementation strategy for the revitalization of the Bladensburg Town Center.

Located within one mile of the eastern Washington, DC, border, the Town of Bladensburg is part of a group of communities in Prince George's County known as the Port Towns. Made up of the Towns of Bladensburg, Colmar Manor, Cottage City and Edmonston, the Port Towns collectively span a radius of approximately three miles, have a population of approximately 12,000 residents, and have a median household income of about \$45,000.

Situated along the Anacostia River, the area is rich in history, having served as a major port in the 18th and early 19th century. It is also home to the Battle of Bladensburg, one of the most significant turning points in the War of 1812. While once a thriving maritime community, in the late 19th century, the Port of Bladensburg started to silt-in, limiting the ability for ships to navigate the river. This had a tremendously negative effect on the economic vitality of the area, which was only furthered in the 20th century by the development of the Capital Beltway and continued outward growth of the region.

The Port Towns partnership was launched in 1994 by Prince George's County in response to local concerns to provide a focus for neighborhood and commercial revitalization in the older, inner-beltway communities. At this time, the Bladensburg commercial areas were experiencing approximately a 50% vacancy rate. The process to develop the Port Towns Community Development Corporation (CDC) began with a series of workshops attended by residents and business owners, and resulted in the towns of Bladensburg, Colmar Manor, and Cottage City forging a partnership based on the notion: *A rising tide raises all ships*. The "Port Towns Action Plan" was established and soon after the community based Port Towns Action Committee was formed to implement the plan. In 1996, the action committee formed Port Towns CDC, and in 2005 the Town of Edmonston joined this collaboration.

The Port Towns CDC has worked closely and directly with the Port Town's Town Councils and staff, along with other county, state and nonprofit partners since its inception. Together the groups have accomplished many of the goals defined in the Port Towns' original action plan, and have succeeded in many of their revitalization efforts.

Issues

In June 2007, the Prince George's County Council approved a new Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment (SMA) for the Bladensburg Town Center. The plan provides for a series of recommendations, strategies, and policies that are now a part of the Master Plan for the corridor. The plan details recommendations for development / redevelopment, infrastructure improvements, urban design, and economic development opportunities. The Port Towns CDC is now preparing to start the implementation of the recommendations, and has requested technical assistance to develop a reasonable and manageable set of processes, and an action plan to accomplish these goals.

In addition to the Bladensburg Sector Plan, the county is planning to begin the Sector Plan and Map Amendment for the surrounding towns of Colmar Manor, Cottage City, and Edmonston. The Port Towns CDC hopes that processes developed during the TAP are reusable towards the development of an implementation and action plan for this forthcoming plan as well.



The panel met with members of the community to discuss revitalization opportunities.

The Assignment

The Bladensburg Town Center Sector Plan includes multiple recommendations for key issues to be addressed including infrastructure, mixed-use urban development / redevelopment, historic tourism, and improved retail amenities. The Port Towns CDC's expectations from this panel is to gain advice on the development of an implementation plan including an appropriate timetable, and specific action items, which work towards the recommendations in the plan. Questions to the panel include:

1. How can the Port Towns CDC successfully utilize assets and opportunities to encourage economic development?
2. What incentive methods will encourage property owners to convert or redevelop their properties in line with the Sector Map Amendments?
3. How can the Port Towns utilize the Bicentennial of the Battle of Bladensburg (August 25, 2014) for economic development?
4. What are some suggestions for phase-in retail changes to avoid long-term vacancies while property is being acquired / assembled?

5. Please provide business / retail recruitment recommendations – including the types of businesses the Port Towns CDC can / should recruit and recruitment methodologies.
6. What is the appropriate timing of revitalization activities?
7. How can the *People's Harbor* project relate to the Bladensburg Town Center? Please include suggestions for pedestrian connectivity.
8. What incentives are available to property owners to sell property for the purpose of the new plan?
9. Please provide specific recommendations to gain funding for land purchase and development.
10. How can the Port Towns CDC relocate businesses defined as undesirable on the primary corridor?

Executive Summary: The Panel's Recommendations

Approved in 2007, the Bladensburg Town Center Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment (SMA) reflect the 2002 Prince George's County Approved General Plan. The sector plan, prepared in conjunction with the Town of Bladensburg, contains goals, policies, and strategies to guide future growth and development for the Bladensburg Town Center Sector Plan area. As part of the plan, there is the potential for a town center in Bladensburg anchored by municipal services that will serve all of the Port Towns.

The Port Towns CDC and the Town of Bladensburg are now positioned to facilitate the implementation of the revitalization of the Bladensburg Town Center. As a recipient of a complimentary Technical Assistance Panel from ULI Washington, the Port Towns CDC welcomed a ULI Washington panel to provide the Port Towns CDC with development and implementation strategies for the Bladensburg Town Center.

The Panel's Approach

Taking into consideration the real estate market's current down cycle, the panel developed actionable items that the Port Towns CDC can accomplish in the near term to raise the visibility of the community, and set the foundation for developing a town center in Bladensburg. In anticipation of the *Port Towns Plan*, the panel also developed alternatives and amendments to the Bladensburg Town Center Sector Plan that in the panel's opinion better fulfill the goals of the community.

Setting the Stage

The location of the Bladensburg Town Center, within close proximity of the Capital Beltway, the Baltimore-Washington Parkway, and Washington, DC, make this area attractive for redevelopment. The Port Towns also have established recreational amenities that are a true asset for the area. The panel was impressed with the Anacostia River Trail system that will soon connect Bladensburg to attractions in Washington, DC and would like to see the trail system used as a backbone to connect residents and visitors to the area's historical amenities and new development. This area is in transition, however, and quality housing will need to be developed in order to achieve the desired vision for a mixed-use environment with attractive retail. While the market's current down-cycle has reduced the demand for development, the cycle will once again change and it is important that the Port Towns CDC prepare for the market by altering the perception of the community to future developers, residents, retailers, and workers.

The Towns of Bladensburg, Colmar Manor, Cottage City, and Edmonston comprise the Port Towns, and they all work together to further the mission of the Port Towns CDC. Given the number of municipalities involved, the panel recommends that the Port Towns CDC work with each of the towns to identify core competencies of each, in order to better define the roles and responsibilities of the Port Towns CDC. The balanced representation of the Port Towns is also important to the vitality of the Port Towns CDC.

The Port Towns CDC should continue to be the vehicle to bring these communities together.

Historically, community development corporations have been instrumental in the redevelopment of communities across the country. It is therefore important that the Port Towns CDC builds upon and strengthens its capacity so that it can continue to implement the breadth of tools and initiatives that are available to it.

Priority Activities

The Port Towns CDC currently plays a vital role in the nearby *People's Harbor* project and will play a similar role in the development of the Bladensburg Town Center. There are a number of functions that must first be performed by the Port Towns CDC in anticipation of the Bladensburg Town Center's development to ensure the highest and best use of the land, as well as the greatest chance of success for the Bladensburg Town Center. These initiatives include:

- A comprehensive land inventory of uses, owners, vacancies, tax delinquencies, historic assets, parkland, and available land.
- A survey of both the business community and the residential community to gauge perception and issues with redevelopment, retail needs, a safety audit, and a general understanding of what is, and what is not working in the community.
- Undertake a branding and marketing strategy, beginning with adding signage to the building where the Port Towns CDC locates its office, so that businesses and developers have a better understanding of who the Port Towns CDC is, as well as the resources that the CDC can provide.
- Identify specific target areas within the Bladensburg Town Center to begin development. A strategy for discussions with landowners should be developed along with a strategy for acquisition and assemblage of land.
- Create a business development strategy to identify sources of business assistance for existing businesses, to broker relocation of businesses when necessary, and to establish a means to pursue partnerships with colleges and universities.
- Establish a *Clean and Safe Team* to augment established public services, and to begin to enhance the perception of the community by offering ambassadorial assistance to visitors and residents.
- Build upon the Port Towns CDC's strength as a convener by instituting a Stakeholder Advisory Group and by organizing private developer charrettes to gauge the interest level and issues of the development community.
- Build upon the Port Town CDC's strength as a receiver and disseminator of information by routinely surveying the business and residential community and educating both businesses and members of the community, through its established e-newsletters and website.

The Bicentennial of the Battle of Bladensburg

While the Bicentennial of the Battle of Bladensburg (August 25, 2014) should be celebrated, the panel cautioned that the Bicentennial will be a short term event with limited economic development potential, so investments made to recognize the battle should be leveraged to achieve other community goals. Investments made should be to create something authentic for the community that will in turn generate a true heritage tourism attraction. A historic entity should be created with the authority to coordinate and manage the community's historic assets, link the properties to the Anacostia Trail System, and manage the programming for the Bicentennial.

Planning and Design

The panel proposes several changes to the Bladensburg Sector Plan Amendment that will create a strong civic and retail focus in the Bladensburg Town Center. The first phase is to create a civic core, including new civic buildings and a civic green. The second phase will include a concentration of new retail and housing at the intersection of Annapolis Road and Edmonston Road, which will turn Edmonston Road into the Bladensburg Town Center's new, pedestrian-friendly Main Street.

The focal point of the Bladensburg Town Center will be two new civic buildings—a new library and a new Municipal Center, including room for the town hall and police



The intersection of Annapolis Road and Edmonston Road should have a concentration of new retail and housing.

department—and a new civic plaza. The panel proposes that the civic complex be located in the parcel fronting the south side of Annapolis Road that is currently home to the Mango Caffé & Restaurant.

By building the new municipal center and library on the Mango Caffé & Restaurant site, the intersection of Annapolis Road and Edmonston Road becomes available for pedestrian-friendly retail and housing that will create a new Main Street for Bladensburg. This intersection has optimum visibility, creating a logical location for new private sector development.

Focus on Image-Building Opportunities. The revised master plan and future development plans for the Bladensburg Business District should take advantage of opportunities to create iconic elements that enhance the identity and further brand the Bladensburg community. The panel identified the block that is currently home to the popular nightclub *Crossroads* and other small buildings, as an ideal location to bring an iconic office or several restaurant pads to the site.

Circulation and Connectivity. The current plan for the Bladensburg Town Center consists of a series of wide streets, which meet the goal of moving traffic, but is hostile

to pedestrians. The panel believes that the pattern of wide streets throughout the Bladensburg Town Center needs to be corrected – especially for those streets that will provide access to the proposed civic core and Main Street. To enhance the development potential of future sites, the panel’s proposal calls for expanded road connections, aggressive traffic-calming measures, and additional traffic signals to create a more walkable and bike-friendly community. If Kenilworth Avenue is ever brought to grade, there will be ample opportunities to integrate it into the Bladensburg Town Center street network and to improve the pedestrian experience along Annapolis Road.

Pedestrian Circulation. Pedestrian circulation is a critical element of any successful, mixed-use town center. Particular attention needs to be placed on how bicyclists and pedestrians would travel from the Anacostia River Trail and Waterfront Park to the Bladensburg Town Center. Any such linkages could also connect to the historic resources and the nearby Bladensburg Elementary School.

Incorporate Design Guidelines. The panel suggests that the Port Towns CDC work with planning staff at the M-NCPPC to draft design guidelines that improve property in a way that increases foot traffic and helps create a traditional downtown atmosphere. Carefully implemented design guidelines that are flexible enough to allow individual expression and innovative design, while also being structured enough to create a pedestrian-oriented environment, will be a key to the future success of the Bladensburg Town Center.

Streetscape Improvements. There is an immediate need for high-quality investment in the Bladensburg Town Center’s public realm to improve the perception of the corridor, especially on Annapolis Road. The guidelines should address sidewalk widths, street trees, street furniture, landscape buffers to screen pedestrians from traffic, and lighting. There is room for a median on Annapolis Road that could be planted with shade trees every 35 feet, decorative street lights, and banners that promote the Bladensburg Town Center, and future Port Towns CDC events or initiatives.

Industrial Zones. The panel was impressed with the viability of the industrial area and did not see a reason to push them out of the Bladensburg Town Center given their contribution to the tax base and the need for these industrial uses. To improve the industrial area, the panel recommends landscaping the periphery of the industrial zones along the roadways, and working with the industrial property owners to make façade enhancements to their properties.

Public Art & Wayfinding. The panel was pleased with the murals that graced the sides of a number of the Port Towns’ buildings and encourages the Port Towns CDC to continue to incorporate public art into the redevelopment of Bladensburg Town Center. The panel feels that additional murals, sculptures, paintings, and landscaping will help cultivate the identity of the Bladensburg Town Center. Additional wayfinding improvements are also needed in the Bladensburg Town Center to better orient automobiles, bicyclists and pedestrians.

Setting the Stage

The panel was impressed with the fundamental strengths of the Port Towns. The Anacostia River Trail system will soon connect Bladensburg to attractions in Washington, DC including the National's Stadium and the National Mall, providing a tremendous resource for the area, and a spine upon which to connect the community's historic properties. The Bladensburg Waterfront Park provides amenities for the area, and the proposed environmental center, which is seeking feasibility funding, will provide an educational resource. The location of the Bladensburg Town Center, within close proximity of the Capital Beltway (I-495), the Baltimore-Washington Parkway (I-295), and Washington, DC, also make this area attractive for redevelopment.



The Bladensburg Waterfront Park provides recreational amenities for the community.

This area is in transition, however, and in order to achieve the desired vision for a mixed-use environment with attractive retail, the Port Towns will have to address the underlying marketability of the Bladensburg Town Center. The Port Towns will need to add quality housing, as additional rooftops will help attract desirable retailers. While the market is currently in a down-cycle, the cycle will change and it will be important for the Port Towns CDC to prepare for the market and begin to send a positive message of change to alter the perception of future developers, residents, retailers, and workers.

Define Roles and Responsibilities

A Community Development Corporation is a very good tool to facilitate the implementation of the Bladensburg Town Center's revitalization. The Port Towns are fortunate to have a strong CDC already in place to guide the towns through this process. It is important however that the roles and responsibilities of the Town of Bladensburg and the Port Towns CDC be well defined so that both the Town and the Port Towns CDC can best work together and use their strengths to most efficiently achieve their goals.

Maintain Balanced Representation

The Port Towns CDC is a unique entity in that it works tirelessly to maintain the individual identities of Colmar Manor, Cottage City, Edmonston, and the Town of Bladensburg, while at the same time bringing them all together via an overarching branding strategy to create a sense of a united community. To maintain checks-and-balances, and to continue to make the Port Towns CDC effective, it is important that all four towns remain vested in the Port Towns CDC.

Strengthen Capacity

While there are many activities and initiatives that the Port Towns CDC can pursue in order to help revitalize the Town Center, as in many organizations, capacity is limited. It is important that the Port Towns CDC define their priorities while working to expand the capacity within their organization to take on additional activities. The surrounding towns should work together to help the Port Towns CDC build its capacity so all of the towns can benefit from the value of having a CDC working for them.

Development and Implementation Strategies

The Port Towns CDC serves an important role in the coordination and sensitive revitalization of all of the Port Towns. The panel applauds the efforts that the Port Towns CDC has taken with the *People's Harbor* project. Their work to acquire the land, and begin to bring the project to fruition is the type of catalytic activity that the Port Towns need to draw new retailers, residents, and the attention of the development community to the area. The panel hopes that *People's Harbor* acts as a means to help attract development across the river to the Bladensburg Town Center. In the interim, as the market matures, the panel believes that it is important that the Port Towns CDC continues to lay the foundation for development within the Bladensburg Town Center.

Comprehensive Land Use Inventory

The Port Towns CDC can provide a tremendous resource for future redevelopment by creating a comprehensive inventory of undeveloped land, land uses, owners, vacancies, tax delinquent properties, historic assets and parkland. This database will provide a quick reference for prospective developers, as well as help the CDC identify target areas for redevelopment.

Identify Target Areas

The Town Center Sector Plan encompasses a large area and will have to be redeveloped in phases. The Port Towns CDC should identify the most catalytic areas for revitalization and develop a strategy to work with land owners to assemble properties. The Port Towns CDC should also work with the M-NCPPC to use public land to jumpstart redevelopment.

Survey Businesses and Community Members

The panel learned that there is a demographic shift taking place in towns like Cottage City – older residents are selling their appreciated homes and moving out of the community, while new families are settling in to reasonably priced single family homes. Shopping centers have also become very stable over the last fifteen years with limited vacancies. This dynamic presents a good opportunity to survey both local businesses and community members to determine which programs and incentives they take advantage of, which work for them, and which do not. The survey of businesses should identify why businesses like doing business in the Port Towns, what they feel could be improved upon, as well as their perceptions and concerns regarding new development.

The community survey should also identify perceptions and concerns for redevelopment in the Port Towns, as well as address why residents like living in the community, and what enhancements they hope to see made in the near future. A retail survey should be incorporated to evaluate what types of retail the community finds to be sufficient, what they would like to see added to the community, and where they currently do their shopping. A safety audit should be a final element of the survey to get a sense of the community's perception of crime. The results of the community survey should be shared

with local businesses as a means of helping them meet the needs of the community they serve.

Establish a *Clean and Safe Team*

The panel recommends that the Port Towns CDC establish a *Clean and Safe Team* for the Bladensburg Town Center. While the panel is aware that the Town of Bladensburg has a full-time police department, full-time code enforcement, a Public Works Department, a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) that is trained to assist in an emergency when professional responders are not immediately available, a Neighborhood Watch program, and a Youth Council clean-up program, the panel believes that the *Clean and Safe Team* will augment these programs, providing above all, an ambassadorial function for the community.

Successful in many communities throughout the country, the *Clean and Safe Team* model would mimic the Downtown DC's Business Improvement District's Safety and Maintenance Program (SAM.) Known as *Downtown SAMs*, the program has uniformed employees trained in first aid, provide a friendly, welcoming presence throughout the downtown by assisting visitors, residents, and workers with maps, directions and information on shopping, dining, local attractions and current events. *Downtown SAMs* offer whatever assistance is needed to enhance the downtown experience, from walking people to their cars, to connecting people in need with outreach and emergency services.

Downtown SAMs maintain the curbs and sidewalks by picking up litter as well as removing trash and graffiti. They also patrol the neighborhood with clean machines, litter vacuums, and gum-busting machines as a supplement to city cleaning services. SAMs also beautify downtown public spaces by painting light and utility boxes, planting flowers, supporting landscaping efforts, and hanging banners. Additionally, the panel sees the Port Towns' *Clean and Safe Team* playing a role in identifying code enforcement violations and related issues. The *Clean and Safe Team* would need public funding to begin, but to create a long-term program with its own sustainable funding sources, the Port Towns CDC would have to pursue enabling legislation to create a vehicle similar to a Business Improvement District.

Build on Strength as a Convener and Disseminator

One of the greatest strengths of the Port Towns CDC is its ability to convene. The panel encourages the continued use of this strength by convening stakeholders and developers. The panel recommends establishing a Stakeholder Advisory Group that meets regularly, perhaps quarterly, for the benefit of the Port Towns CDC. The group would keep the Port Towns CDC apprised of their current issues and concerns as well as provide feedback on new programs, incentives, plans, and initiatives. The panel recommends that the Town of Bladensburg and the M-NCPPC appoint someone on staff to participate in this group to ensure cross-communication, and provide the most efficient means of implementation.

The panel recommends that the Port Towns CDC host a program, in which developers could help determine development potential, identify what obstacles or hindrances need to be overcome, and discuss the timing of the market. These charrettes could happen on a quarterly basis and should include residential, retail, and office developers.

The panel also sees the Port Towns CDC as a good disseminator of information and recommends that the CDC continue to educate both businesses and the community on events, as well as available programs and incentives. This can easily be done through the Port Towns CDC's established e-newsletters and website.

Branding and Marketing Strategy

The panel was impressed with the work that the Port Towns CDC has accomplished to date, but was unsure how aware businesses were of the benefits that the Port Towns CDC could provide for educational resources and revitalization opportunities. The panel recommends that the Port Towns CDC undertake a branding and marketing strategy to make it more visible in the community – this would start with a sign on their offices identifying it as the home of the Port Towns CDC. The marketing strategy should be targeted towards current business owners and future developers, providing them with a listing of the resources that the Port Towns CDC has to offer.

Develop a Comprehensive Strategy for the Bicentennial of the Battle of Bladensburg

It was evident from discussions with the sponsor and stakeholders that the community is proud of the historical role of the Town of Bladensburg in the early years of our country's history. The Battle of Bladensburg, although won by the British on August 24, 1814, provided the impetus for American troops to win the Battle of Baltimore. The Americans then went on to win the War of 1812. Bladensburg's battlefields have fortunately been preserved through its park and cemetery, and the town's historic buildings tell important parts of the community's history.

The panel was surprised to find that while the Port Towns have all of these resources, none of them are linked in design, programming, or through any tourism literature. The Port Towns CDC in partnership with the Town of Bladensburg should develop a comprehensive strategy to preserve these historic buildings so that they work together and become part of the community.

The upcoming Bicentennial of the Battle of Bladensburg provides an ideal opportunity to identify partnerships with the State of Maryland, The City of Baltimore, the District of Columbia and other nonprofit organizations to leverage funding and make the most of the opportunities that the Bicentennial will provide.

The panel wants to make clear however that when developing the strategy to best highlight and profile the town's historic assets, the Port Towns CDC must first and foremost think of this as an opportunity to create something that will enrich the community. The Bicentennial is a short-term event with limited economic development potential. Similar to the model used for the Olympics, the sponsor wants to be sure that

it creates something which will continue to benefit the community once the celebration has passed. The heritage tourist who will travel to Bladensburg for the Bicentennial, or the regional resident who enjoys history, is more apt to have a great experience and come back in the future if they experience something that is authentic and made for the community, as opposed to contrived for tourists. Authenticity is a key driver of heritage tourism and must not be compromised.

The panel encourages the Port Towns to incorporate their current festivals into the Bicentennial and use their historic buildings to house exhibits on the Battle of Bladensburg. The panel does not recommend that any of the houses hold a permanent exhibit, but instead they should be incorporated into its current programming. This is due to the limited nature of Bicentennial celebration as well as the panel's emphatic agreement that the historic buildings should not become museums, but rather house a mix of uses.

To develop the comprehensive strategy, the panel recommends that the Port Towns create a historic entity that will provide a complete inventory of the historic assets and develop programming for the historic buildings. The houses are all under diverse ownership and management so the entity will need the authority to work with the owners to acquire programmatic leases that provide the opportunity to manage the maintenance, use, and programming of the buildings. The partnership between the University of Maryland and the Town of Bladensburg as it relates to the Bostwick (one of four colonial houses in the town) is an important example of how the town can collaborate to maintain historical assets for community use. These historic houses should also be linked to the trail system through urban design, signage, and collateral materials.



The Magruder House - One of the Town of Bladensburg's four historic houses.

Create a Business Development Strategy

The panel recommends that the Port Towns CDC be the primary contact for business owners as the Port Towns begins the implementation phase for the Town Center Sector Plan. The Port Towns CDC should become a resource for existing and future businesses that are seeking assistance to either improve their façades or establish a location within the Bladensburg Town Center.

Through the panel's observations, they recognized that the Port Towns CDC is well connected within Prince George's County and the State of Maryland, and is educated on the local and national programs that are available for local businesses. The panel recommends that the Port Towns CDC follow a model similar to that used by the

Wheaton Redevelopment Program to identify incentives and established programs that attract new businesses, and retain existing, successful businesses. The Port Towns CDC could create an inventory of the programs, resources and opportunities available to existing and future businesses.

For technical assistance, educational resources, grants, and incubator funding, the panel was impressed with the scope and depth of resources that the Port Towns CDC has availed themselves to, and recommends that moving forward they continue to look to the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development and the Department of Housing and Community Development as well as Maryland Small Business Development Centers. On the county level, the Port Towns CDC should continue to look to the Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation, the Prince George's County Department of Housing and Community Development, and any county workforce development programs. The panel also recommends that the Port Towns continue to seek out local resources through area colleges and universities, public libraries and the Chamber of Commerce.

The Port Towns CDC should then create an inventory of the services that each of these organizations can provide to local businesses and coordinate these services with the Port Towns Community. While the Port Towns CDC is already helpful in this regard, state, county and local organizations can provide one-on-one business counseling – including specific assistance directed to retail and restaurant establishments; micro-lending; job training and recruitment; computer literacy classes; secondary language skills; financial incentives; and advocacy for local business interests.

The Town of Bladensburg has already been very progressive in engaging the University of Maryland to locate their Historic Preservation program within the Bostwick; one of the town's four historical houses. The panel sees an additional opportunity however, to engage colleges and universities – both public and private, to establish campuses within the Bladensburg Town Center.

Additional Funding Tools and Resources

The panel was impressed by the sophistication of the Port Towns CDC and the resources that they have already identified and have taken advantage of to further their programs and initiatives. The panel recommends that the Port Towns CDC look to the following additional tools and resources as they move forward:

Battle of Bladensburg Bicentennial Funding. To ensure that the Port Towns are included in all Bicentennial literature and calendars, the Port Towns CDC should contact the Maryland Office of Tourism and the Maryland Heritage Trust. These offices may also offer grants for publications and other cost associated with the Bicentennial.

National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP). The NTHP offers small grants of up to \$5000 that the Port Towns CDC can take advantage of – matching funding is required.

Washington Area Bicycle Association. The completion of the Anacostia Trail System provides an ideal opportunity to contact the Washington Area Bicycle Association to organize tours between Washington, DC and Bladensburg. The Association may also know of funding resources.

Maryland Community Investment Tax Credit Resources. Overseen by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, the Community Investment Tax Credit program provides tax credits for nonprofit organizations like the Port Towns CDC to allocate to businesses that donate money, goods, or real property to support costs that the Port Towns CDC would incur while enhancing the community.

Micro-Loans. Under the Micro-loan program, the Small Business Administration makes loans of up to \$35,000 available to nonprofit community based lenders (intermediaries). These intermediaries then make loans to eligible new and growing small business, in order to help spur revitalization.

New Market Tax Credits. The New Markets Tax Credit Program provides tax credits to those who make qualified equity investments in designated Community Development Entities (CDEs). Substantially all of the qualified equity investment must in turn be used by the CDE to provide investments in low-income communities.

Community Development Block Grants. Administered through Maryland's Department of Community Development, the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program provides annual grants for projects meet one of three national objectives: principally benefits persons of low- and moderate- income; eliminates slum and blight; or meets an urgent need of recent origin threatens public health and safety. The panel is aware that this is currently one of the Port Towns CDC's primary sources of funding, and the panel recommends that it continues to seek block grants as it moves forward.

Planning and Design

Bladensburg serves as the town center for all of the Port Towns. Each community is strengthened if Bladensburg's Town Center is improved. During the interview process, the panel continuously heard about the need to create a "small town" sense of place in Bladensburg. The strength of community identity and pride in Bladensburg's residential neighborhoods, schools, and open-space resources is evident, but there is not yet a strong identity in the Bladensburg Town Center among residents and certainly not by outsiders. The Town of Bladensburg has an invaluable opportunity to build upon the strengths of the existing town center core by adding new housing and businesses.

The panel has attempted to absorb and build upon the extensive thinking and planning that has already taken place for the Bladensburg Town Center, including the M-NCPPC's Bladensburg Town Center Approved Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment. In addition, the panel took time to drive and walk through the Bladensburg Town Center, and to understand future plans for the relocation of civic buildings. Knowing that the M-NCPPC is undertaking the *Port Towns Plan*, the panel developed recommendations for urban design principles, sector plan amendments and programming tools that will help the Port Towns meet the needs of 21st-century residents in the Bladensburg Town Center.

Proposed Amendments to Sector Plan

The M-NCPPC, a bi-county agency that administers parks and planning in Prince George's and Montgomery counties, completed the Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment that will guide future development in the Bladensburg Town Center. The panel seeks to further advance this planning process by recommending that the M-NCPPC revise Bladensburg's Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment following the various recommendations in this report. The M-NCPPC is currently working on a *Port Towns Plan*, for all of the Port Towns communities. As a result, any changes proposed by the panel for the Bladensburg Town Center could be adopted in that plan.

For example, the county, with support from key leaders and landowners in Bladensburg, needs to affirm the Bladensburg Town Center's future role as a great place to live and work, by refocusing its assets and adopting new development strategies to create an environment through which the community can benefit from these new conditions. This will involve adoption of planning policies and urban design standards, infill development, and the creation of an identity, all of which will attract and retain commercial and mixed-use development. The Form Based Code, which the county is proposing as a zoning tool applicable in several corridors through its countywide Sectional Map Amendment process, will encourage compact and walkable, mixed-use development in the areas of the Bladensburg Town Center that are accordingly rezoned.

Restructuring the Bladensburg Town Center: A New Civic Core & Main Street

The panel proposes several changes to the Sector Plan Amendment that will create a strong civic and retail focus in the Bladensburg Town Center. The first phase is to

create a civic core, including new civic buildings and a civic green. The second phase will include a concentration of new retail and housing at the intersection Annapolis Road and Edmonston Road that will turn Edmonston Road into the Bladensburg Town Center's new, pedestrian-friendly Main Street. New development in the Bladensburg Town Center should be encouraged in an incremental and market-responsive manner around these catalytic projects. As such, it will be imperative that the Town of Bladensburg and the Port Towns CDC working together, play an active role in these projects.

The focal point of the new Bladensburg Town Center will be a new civic plaza and two new civic buildings—a new library and a new Municipal Center, including room for the town hall and police department. The panel proposes that the civic complex be located in the parcel fronting the south side of Annapolis Road, between 48th Street and Kenilworth Avenue, currently owned by the Town of Bladensburg and home to the Mango Caffé & Restaurant pad at 4719 Annapolis Road. Instead of rebuilding the library on its current site and relocating the Bladensburg Town Hall and Police Station to the school property on Annapolis Road, the panel believes the proposed site is more strategic in the Bladensburg Town Center's overall redevelopment. This block is also home to the historic Market Master's House and was the historic site of Bladensburg's market square. The civic green would be located on the adjacent parcel to the west, between Kenilworth Avenue and the CSX railway, which is home to the Magruder House. The civic green will surround the historic house and would benefit from improved landscaping by the raised avenue and railway line. While this parcel is separated visually from the



Above: This rendering demonstrates the mix of uses for the Bladensburg Town Center. Please see Appendix for larger image and Legend.

Below: The Mango Caffé and Restaurant is a prime site for the proposed civic complex.



proposed civic center site by Kenilworth Avenue, the panel believes the two sites would be linked by their common civic and historic themes. This approach also creates a much needed public gathering place and integrates the community's historic properties into the Bladensburg Town Center.

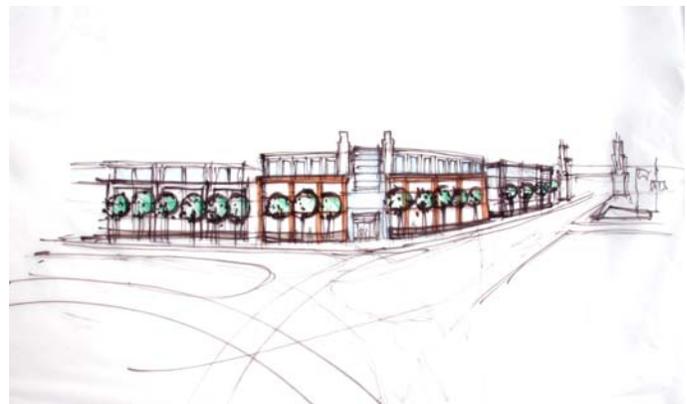
By building the new municipal center and library on the Mango Caffé & Restaurant site, the intersection of Annapolis Road and Edmonston Road will be available for pedestrian-friendly retail and housing that will create a new Main Street for Bladensburg. This intersection has optimum visibility and is a logical place for new private sector development. While new mixed-use development with retail on the ground floor should be located on Annapolis Road from 46th Street and then east of Edmonston Road, the focus should be at the Edmonston Road intersection and then for 500-1000 feet along Edmonston Road. This concentration of retail rather than the current development pattern of low-density retail along Annapolis Road will create the density needed in order to make a walkable pedestrian Main Street. The proposed retail development will need to be supported by new housing in order to be viable. The application of mixed-use development in the Main Street area of the Bladensburg Town Center will play an integral part in ensuring Bladensburg's future economic development success. It is most realistic, however, that the mixed-use will be primarily horizontal in form rather than a vertical stacking of uses. There eventually will be a market for denser stacking of uses vertically from three to four stories in height. The panel suggests that the Town of Bladensburg take the lead in redeveloping the old library site as a mixed-use demonstration project. In the long term, there might be demand for structured parking in the Main Street area of the Bladensburg Town Center, but this is not a short-term priority as there is currently ample surface parking.



The Peace Cross is a landmark in Bladensburg

Focus on Image-Building Opportunities.

The revised master plan and future development plans for the Bladensburg Business District should capitalize on opportunities to create iconic elements that create identity and branding for the Bladensburg community. The panel identified the block bound by Upshur Road on the north, 46th Street on the east, Annapolis Road on the south, and Baltimore Avenue on the west, as an



The panel recommended an iconic at the *Crossroads* site.

opportunity to build a truly iconic building that would create a visual reference point for those entering Bladensburg. Located in a prominent site opposite the Peace Cross and other memorials, the block is currently home to the popular nightclub *Crossroads*, and other small buildings including *King Pawn Shops*. The panel recommends that the Port Towns CDC or the Town of Bladensburg act as a partner in a project to bring an office building of approximately six stories with internal parking to the site. While the property has good visibility, it is not a good site for retail since it is separated from the proposed core of the Bladensburg Town Center due to the elevated rail line and would sit on an intersection with very fast traffic. If greater analysis shows that the market is not strong enough to support an office building, then the site could be used for several restaurant pads as an interim solution. If possible, the project should include safe pedestrian linkages to the George Washington House and the proposed Environmental Education Center.



A rendering of the panel's proposal to improve circulation and connectivity. Please see Appendix for larger image and Legend.

Circulation and Connectivity

The Bladensburg Town Center consists of a series of wide streets, which meets the goal of moving traffic but also forms an environment hostile to pedestrians. The panel's proposal calls for expanded road connections, traffic calming measures, and additional traffic signals to create a more walkable and bike-friendly community. If Kenilworth Avenue is ever brought to grade, there will be ample opportunities to integrate it into the Bladensburg Town Center street network and to improve the pedestrian experience along Annapolis Road.

Street Network. Two traits of the Bladensburg road system are its large super-blocks with long distances between roads, and its excessively wide roads that are good for moving traffic but bad for pedestrians. The panel believes that the pattern of wide streets throughout the Bladensburg Town Center needs to be corrected, especially the streets that will provide access to the proposed civic core and Main Street, in order to enhance development of future sites. The panel also recommends an aggressive program of traffic calming on selected streets to slow down traffic and/or divert it to adjacent arterials that are more appropriate for carrying high-speed traffic. At several points, Annapolis Road and its intersecting streets are unsafe to cross due to high-speed traffic and a lack of crosswalks. Priority needs to be given to new pedestrian crossings on Annapolis Road at 51st Street, Edmonston Road, Kenilworth Avenue and 46th Street. Given the number of alternate routes via major roadways, the panel believes

that slowing traffic along Annapolis Road by adding traffic signals will not greatly increase congestion on the artery.

Other traffic-calming measures include street narrowing, on-street parking, and the creation of traffic circles. Annapolis Road is not wide enough to allow on-street parking, but it should be considered on side streets as a traffic-calming measure. The panel also emphasizes the need for Bladensburg to provide an interconnected street system of short blocks to break up the super blocks and encourage pedestrian and bicycle use as an alternative to automobile use.

Pedestrian Circulation. Pedestrian circulation is a critical element of any successful, mixed-use town center. Place making and the creation of a vibrant retail environment is based on the premise that sidewalks and intersection crossings must be made safe and provide ease of access and movement. New developments should be designed with the pedestrian in mind so that there is easy access from parking to building entrances. Particular attention needs to be placed on how bicyclists and pedestrians will travel from the Anacostia River Trail and Waterfront Park to the Bladensburg Town Center – especially once the trail connects to the National Arboretum. Any such linkages could also connect to the historic resources and nearby elementary school.

Incorporate Design Guidelines

The panel suggests that the Port Towns CDC and the Town of Bladensburg work with the planning staff at the M-NCPPC to draft design guidelines that improve property in order to increase foot traffic and create a traditional downtown atmosphere. Carefully implemented design guidelines that are flexible enough to allow individual expression and innovative design, while also being structured enough to create a pedestrian-oriented environment, will be a key to the future success of the Bladensburg Town Center. If adopted by the M-NCPPC, guidelines for the Bladensburg Town Center could guide new development as well as shape redevelopment, namely any addition, exterior remodel, relocation, or new construction requiring a building permit. Typically guidelines are user-friendly documents that define the community's expectations through a defined framework of design principles that supplement zoning development standards by providing direction on the more qualitative aspects of a development project. Often, a project is not required to meet all design guidelines, as not all guidelines may be applicable on a case-by-case basis. The design guidelines should address the following:

- Buildings that extend to a “required building line” to create a continuous street wall for new buildings;
- Location of parking at the rear of lots;
- Building height;
- Articulation of building entrances and fenestration to contribute to streetscape experience;
- Mix of uses, including retail or public uses on ground floor;
- Ground-floor awnings;
- Wayfinding signs;

- Landscaping;
- Building design should contribute to the character and identity of the town;
- Buildings should be articulated to add variety to the streetscape;
- Street furniture; and
- Lighting standards.

Above the first floor, the design guidelines should deal mostly with scale and massing. They should allow for a variety of uses and encourage mixed-use development. Guidelines should be supported through incentives and not be made mandatory. Developers can be persuaded to follow the guidelines if there is a reward of a density bonus, an expedited review process, a reduction in the number of parking spaces required, or an economic incentive. In addition, the guidelines should encourage new designs to be respectful of the historic resources yet also indicative of their own era.

Streetscape Improvements. There is an immediate need for high-quality investment in the Bladensburg Town Center's public realm to improve the perception of the corridor, especially on Annapolis Road; therefore, the guidelines should address sidewalk widths, street trees, furniture, landscaping to screen pedestrians from traffic, and lighting. While parallel parking would be a welcome traffic calming measure on Annapolis Road, there is not enough road width for this feature. The visual qualities of Annapolis Road, and secondary roads, would be strengthened if overhead power lines were placed underground. While possibly cost prohibitive, the power lines on the south side of Annapolis Road appear to be the best candidates for undergrounding. Improvements to the public realm, such as landscaping and new signs, are also needed to soften the edges of the industrial sites of the Bladensburg Town Center. Finally, the panel suggests planting street trees on the south side of Annapolis Road, if the overhead lines are ever put underground. Given the power lines that run along the north side of Annapolis road, the panel recommends planning a shorter variety. There is room for a median on Annapolis Road that could be planted with shade trees every 35 feet, decorative street lights, and banners promoting the Bladensburg Town Center or future Port Towns CDC events or initiatives. In addition to providing refuge for those crossing Annapolis Road, the median would help improve the public realm of the busy road and, in turn, the Bladensburg Town Center. Finding funding for the trees and integrating the plan into the Port Towns Plan or the Town Center Sector Plan are two important steps



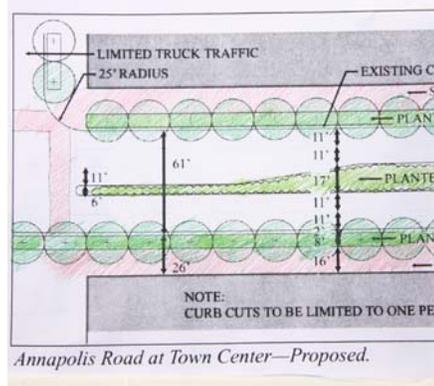
The two images show the how the streetscape could change with the addition of trees and lighting.

that the Port Towns CDC and the Town of Bladensburg can do to take steps towards enhancing the corridor.

The panel's proposed streetscape improvements will have a powerful impact on the appearance of Bladensburg and need not wait for major redevelopment to occur to be implemented. For example, the proposed landscaped median down Annapolis Road could begin immediately. These improvements are:

1. Independent of redevelopment on both sides of the boulevard;
2. Can be done without interference with the overhead utilities on the north side;
3. Can be done in small phases (one or two blocks at a time);
4. Will calm traffic along Annapolis Road;
5. Provides a much safer street for pedestrians by providing a safety zone at mid-street;
6. Will better channel traffic and allows safer traffic turning movements; and
7. Will have an immediate effect on the visual appearance of the downtown.

Industrial Zones. The panel was impressed with the viability of the industrial area and did not see a reason to push them out of the Bladensburg Town Center, given their contribution to the tax base and the need for these industrial uses. One of the reasons that Bladensburg is so attractive to industrial users is its proximity to major roadways including The Capital Beltway (495) and the Baltimore-Washington Parkway (295). To improve the industrial area, the panel recommends landscaping the



Renderings of the panel's proposal to improve the sense of community in the Port Towns by adding landscaping, lighting, and banners to medians and planting trees along the roadways.



The panel recommends landscape and façade improvements to improve the industrial zones.

periphery of the industrial zones along the roadways and working with the industrial owners to make façade enhancements to their properties especially along 47th Street in the Bladensburg Town Center, and outside the boundaries along Baltimore Avenue.

Install Public Art & Wayfinding

The panel was impressed with the murals that graced the sides of a number of the Port Towns' buildings and encourages the Port Towns CDC to continue to incorporate public art into the redevelopment of the Bladensburg Town Center. The panel feels that additional murals, sculptures, paintings, and landscaping will help cultivate the identity of the Bladensburg Town Center. Increased public art will help to create an identity and an image for the community. New art projects should be fully integrated into the wayfinding scheme, help define key places, and soften edges. Short-term locations for the addition of new public art, such as murals, sculptures, or sidewalk art (such as decorative bricks or painting), include the Port Towns CDC's office to create a sense of identity, the Kenilworth Avenue underpass at Annapolis Road, and the soon-to-open pedestrian walkways under the elevated railway. In the long-term, the proposed new library, civic buildings, and new plaza grounds will be key places for public art.

Additional wayfinding improvements needed in the Bladensburg Town Center to better orient automobiles, bicyclists and pedestrians (primarily for residents and secondarily for local tourists) include the erection of gateway markers on all major entrances to the Bladensburg Town Center from both major arteries and trails. Gateways have a powerful psychological effect since they create a sense of arrival and enclosure at major entrances to a community. Signs indicating that there is an exit for the Bladensburg Town Center are needed on Kenilworth Avenue.

Conclusion

Built on the notion that *a rising tide raises all ships*, the towns of Bladensburg, Colmar Manor, Cottage City and Edmonston have been very proactive, deliberate, and successful in the work that they have accomplished together through the Port Towns CDC. Together they have elevated the profile of their communities. The towns are in a unique position to leverage the benefits of the Port Towns CDC, and the Port Towns CDC is in a great position to continue the revitalization of the community. Through the *People's Harbor* project and the Bladensburg Town Center, the Port Towns is in a position to give new life to the history and character that lies within the community.

The panel found the timing of this Technical Assistance Panel ideal in the sense that the panel was invited to work with the Port Towns CDC and the towns in the plan's infancy. The next steps that the Port Towns CDC takes will help to ensure the success of the Bladensburg Town Center. Through the maturation of the market and the continued growth and viability of the Port Towns CDC, the panel is confident that the Bladensburg Town Center will become the renewed community center of the Port Towns.

Appendix

Circulation & Connectivity Plan



- Black Dotted-line: Major Arterials**
- Green Dotted-line: Secondary Roads**
- Red Dotted-line: Pedestrian Paths**
- Pink Dotted-line: Streetscape Improvements**
- Orange Squares: Nodes**
- Red Stars: Gateways**
- Purple Hash Marks: Rail**

Land Use Plan for Bladensburg Town Center



Red: Mixed-Use

Brown: Medium Density

Yellow: Office (Commercial)

Purple: Civic space

Blue: Heritage / water

Light Green: Viewshed

Dark Green (unfilled): Open Space

Pink: Destination Use (Special)

Red Star: Gateway / Landmark

Red Circle: Gateway

About the Panel

Judith Meany, PhD
Catholic University of America
Waterford, VA

Dr. Meany is currently Adjunct Professor of Urban Planning in the School of Architecture and Planning at The Catholic University of America where she directs the newly created Real Estate Development Concentration. In addition, as an independent urban planner/real estate developer, she focuses on urban infill projects. As a land use advisor to real estate developers and financial institutions, she consults on land acquisition/disposition, environmental review, highest and best use development, infrastructure requirements and financing. Dr. Meany has extensive experience in real estate acquisition with over 300 million in closed real estate development transactions on behalf of clients.

Dr. Meany is also a real estate developer who focuses on urban infill projects as well as rural town land acquisition/disposition, environmental review, highest and best use development, infrastructure requirements, and financing. She currently is a managing partner with Lozier Partners, where she recently completed the construction and settlement of a 24 unit condo building in downtown Silver Spring, Maryland (Lofts 24). Project value equaled \$10.8 million. Dr. Meany was responsible for all phases of development including urban planning approvals, financing, engineering consultants and general contractor management as well as marketing and sales.

From 1998 through 2003, Dr. Meany was vice president of land acquisition for the Craftmark Group. In this capacity, she identified, negotiated, and evaluated the feasibility of a minimum 500-unit land acquisition program of detached and attached single-family housing, including condominiums. Representative projects include King Farm, the Villages of Waxpool, River Oaks, Potomac Greens, Clarksburg Town Center, and Eaglehead. Prior to joining the Craftmark Group, Dr. Meany was a broker for Fraser Forbes Real Estate. She also has worked for the National Association of Realtors as a research director; for Brownell, Inc., and Market Station Properties as a real estate acquisition/disposition manager; for Shannon & Luchs as a commercial real estate broker; and for the Maryland-National Capital Parks and Planning Commission as its principal planner.

Dr. Meany has been a Fulbright Teaching Scholar at the Polytechnical University of Tirana in Albania. She is a member of the Urban Land Institute as well as Lambda Alpha International, the honorary society for the advancement of land economics, and the American Institute of Certified Planners. She holds a PhD in urban geography from the University of Maryland, a master of city and regional planning from the Catholic

University of America, and a BA in political science from the George Washington University.

Mariela Alfonzo, PhD
Metropolitan Institute, Virginia Tech
Alexandria, VA

Dr. Mariela Alfonzo is an urban design researcher and consultant. She is an expert on commercial and mixed-use redevelopment, sense of community, walkability, and the economic value of urban design. Dr. Alfonzo utilizes evidenced-based design to help developers, designers, and public officials enhance the social and economic value of their development projects. Bridging the worlds of academia and practice, she translates the results of new and existing research into effective, viable, and sustainable planning and development solutions.

Dr. Alfonzo has a Ph.D. in Urban and Regional Planning with an emphasis in Urban Design and Behavior from the University of California, Irvine (UCI). She also has a Masters in Urban Planning from UCI and a BA in Psychology and Architecture from the University of Miami. She is currently a Post Doctoral Fellow at the Metropolitan Institute at Virginia Tech, in Alexandria, VA, in the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning.

Joseph Davis
Community Planning Solutions, Inc.
Silver Spring, MD

Joe Davis operates his own planning consulting firm, “Community Planning Solutions, Inc.” which he established in 2007. His practice is devoted to advising both public sector and private sector clients on planning, zoning and development related issues. Mr. Davis is a former Director of Redevelopment for Montgomery County, Maryland, where he led the County’s efforts to revitalize and redevelop downtown Wheaton. There, he initiated a major economic development program working with the existing small business community to help them to adapt to changing conditions in the downtown area. In leading this effort, he coordinated the work of several public agencies at the state and local levels, Montgomery College and non-profits in providing business training programs, business counseling, financial assistance and marketing for the small business community in downtown Wheaton. Mr. Davis also led the effort to improve zoning requirements for downtown Wheaton and to streamline the project review and approval processes to encourage new development projects.

Prior to his service with Montgomery County, Mr. Davis worked for the Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission for over 30 years as a planner, program manager and administrator, retiring as the Chief of the Development Review Division for the Commission’s Montgomery County Department of Planning.

Robert Eisenberg
Heritage Property Company
Chevy Chase, MD

Bob Eisenberg formed Heritage Property Company in 2006 to pursue value-added real estate development opportunities in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. The company's focus is on commercial and multi-family residential development, re-development and repositioning in growth-constrained markets. The company's development activities are carefully conceived to not only address market conditions, but also to enhance and complement the communities in which its projects are located.

Mr. Eisenberg brings to Heritage Property Company more than twenty years of extensive experience in Washington area real estate acquisition, development, financing, leasing, asset and property management and disposition. His career has centered on class-A, institutional grade assets with an emphasis on ground-up development. During his career he has acquired or developed nearly 2 million square feet of office, multi-family and flex properties with an initial valuation of nearly \$500 million.

Mr. Eisenberg holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Maryland and is a licensed real estate agent and CPA in Maryland. He is an active member of the Urban Land Institute where he serves as an officer on the Washington District Council's Executive Committee and is also a member of the Real Estate Group. His philanthropic endeavors include significant support of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society and numerous other charitable organizations.

Mr. Eisenberg resides in Bethesda, Maryland with his wife and three daughters. When not working, he enjoys a wide variety of physical activities and spending time with his family.

Linda Donovan Harper
Cultural Tourism DC
Washington, DC

Linda Donovan Harper is Executive Director of Cultural Tourism DC (CTdc), a coalition of more than 175 DC cultural and neighborhood member organizations with partners in tourism, hospitality, government, and business. CTdc offers an innovative model for maximizing the economic impact of cultural tourism in urban neighborhoods and helps residents and tourists discover and experience Washington's authentic arts and culture

Prior to coming to CTdc, Harper led LHarper & Associates, a consulting firm assisting nonprofit organizations, state and local government agencies, and corporations with organizational management and community development issues. She has worked with more than 200 communities, state agencies, corporations, and non-profits in 30 states and three countries. Clients included the National Association of Counties, the US Environmental Protection Agency, New Hampshire Main Street Center/NH Community Finance Authority, Maryland's Smart Growth Commission, and the Delaware Office of

Tourism, among others.

Since 2000, Harper has also served as Chair of the Board to The Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery. With her broad, day-to-day duties, Harper also acted as the organization's de facto Executive Director. During her tenure, she increased the organization's budget from \$60,000 to \$550,000 recruited 500 volunteers, and developed a fundraising strategy that has generated \$7 million. Located in Capitol Hill, the Cemetery has been a member of Cultural Tourism DC since 2002.

Previously, Harper was at The Countryside Institute in New York (now the Glynwood Center), where she expanded a professional exchange program to support economic, social, and environmental sustainability. As a part of the management team at the National Trust for Historic Preservation's National Main Street Center (between 1987 and 1994), Harper provided comprehensive training and support for program development staff in communities throughout the nation.

Todd Lieberman
CityInterests, LLC
Washington, DC

Todd Lieberman is a Development Manager for CityInterests, LLC, a Washington, DC based real estate development company focusing on urban revitalization. Todd currently is working on several projects for CityInterests, LLC including the mixed-use redevelopment of two aging strip shopping centers as well as the Parkside development in Washington, DC. Parkside is a 15 acre, three million square foot mixed-use, transit-oriented development that will break ground in late 2008.

Prior to joining CityInterests, LLC, Todd was a Vice President with Bank of America Community Development Banking's Real Estate Development Group, where he managed the Parkside development and the retail component of the \$85 million mixed-use Centerpoint development in Baltimore.

A past fellow with the Center for Urban Redevelopment Excellence at the University of Pennsylvania, Todd also received a Master's of City Planning from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a Bachelor of Arts in urban studies from the University of Pennsylvania. Todd is a member of the Washington, DC Urban Land Institute's 2008 Urban Marketplace steering committee.

Alvin R. McNeal
The McNeal Group
Washington, DC

Mr. McNeal specializes in land use planning, neighborhood economic development, transit-oriented and real estate development and management. He has extensive

experience in urban planning, transportation, research, real estate feasibility analyses, negotiations, and asset management, highest and best use analyses, value capture, public/private partnerships, housing, community outreach, transportation and transit-oriented development. He managed the successful completion of several real estate and transit-oriented development projects in Washington, DC, Maryland and Virginia.

In 2003, he founded The McNeal Group and became Senior Vice President at the Fraser Forbes Company, the largest real estate land brokerage company in the Washington area. The McNeal Group provides land use, affordable housing, and transportation planning and real estate development expertise to public and private landowners, universities and international agencies.

Prior to founding The McNeal Group, Mr. McNeal was a senior member of the staff at the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), where he was responsible for managing WMATA's public/private development program. His responsibilities included writing grant applications, conducting transportation research, preparing development solicitations, evaluating and selecting development teams and proposals, coordinating and securing the support of local officials and citizens during the proposal selection and entitlement processes and monitoring the successful completion of the selected development project.

Mr. McNeal received his Bachelor's degree from North Carolina Central University, and his Master's Degree in Urban Geography and Urban Planning from the University of Cincinnati. Mr. McNeal is a full member of the Urban Land Institute, where he serves as a member of the Executive Committee of the Washington District Council. He is Director of the Washington Architectural Foundation Board, and a member of Lambda Alpha Professional Land Use Society and the District of Columbia Building Industry Association. Mr. McNeal is also a member of the Technical Advisory Panel for the University of Maryland Urban Studies and Planning Program.

Jay Parker
ParkerRodriguez, Inc.
Alexandria, VA

Mr. Parker has over 34 years experience as the master planner and designer for master planned communities and resorts throughout this country and abroad. As president of HOH Associates and now his own firm, ParkerRodriguez, Inc. he has lead teams of planners on scores of master planned communities and new towns such as Vail, Colorado; St. Charles, Maryland; and others in Arizona, California, Florida, the Caribbean and Mediterranean. He is past president of the Urban Land Institute's Washington District Council and served in the Community Development Council for nearly twenty years. He has been guest speaker on numerous occasions at Urban Land Institute's national and regional meetings on community development design and served on ten ULI advisory councils across the country as "expert planner".

Jay was elected to Lambda Alpha International, an international honorary society of land economists. He graduated from the University of Colorado in 1968 with a Degree in Architecture.

Patrick Saavedra, OAA, RAIC, AIA, NCARB
Burt Hill
Washington, DC

As a professional with more than 17 years accomplished experience Patrick is currently Director of Urban Design at Burt Hill, a 1,100 person fully design-integrated and multi-disciplinary firm. Patrick brings a multi-disciplinary holistic approach to all projects. His well rounded and versatile experience has allowed him to work on a wide range of institutional, residential, retail, office and mixed use architectural and urban design projects here in the US, Canada and abroad.

With his dual education and training in Architecture and Urban Planning Patrick is able to undertake a variety of roles with projects varying in scale and complexity. He's been responsible for projects ranging from small interior design boutique projects to very large mixed-use urban design initiatives through out North America and internationally.

Patrick has participated in numerous international architectural and urban design competitions where he's been able to lead multi-disciplinary teams while exploring new concepts in urbanism and building design. He continues to be involved with the Architectural and Planning professions by being a member of a number of committees and tasks groups. He's been part of a number of award programs where he's been a member of the professional juries. He's also been a guest critic at a number of notable architectural schools in the US and Canada.

Patrick is currently an Adjunct Faculty/Visiting Lecturer in the Graduate Program at the School of Architecture and Planning at Catholic University of America in Washington, DC where he teaches about design, planning and real estate. Most recently Patrick was featured in the Washington Post "With an Eye Towards Development" June 11, 2006 for his work with the Urban Land Institute's "UrbanPlan" initiative. Patrick received his Master of Architecture and his Master of Urban Planning from the University of Michigan, an architecture and design certificate from the University of Copenhagen, and his Bachelor of Architectural Science from Ryerson University. Patrick is a member of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB), Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC), Ontario Association of Architects (OAA), Toronto Society of Architects (TSA), and the Urban Land Institute, where he is a member of the UrbanPlan Committee.