TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PANEL REPORT

Creating an Eastern Gateway in Falls Church

SPONSORED BY:
City of Falls Church, VA
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

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The objective of ULI Washington's Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) program is to provide expert, multidisciplinary, and objective advice on land use and real estate issues facing public agencies and nonprofit organizations in the Metropolitan Washington Region. 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. Learn more at http://washington.uli.org/TAPs.

Yolanda Cole, FAIA
Chair, ULI Washington
Sr. Principal, Hickok Cole Architects

Lisa W. Rother
Executive Director
ULI Washington

Robert Peck
Chair, Technical Assistance Committee
Principal, Gensler

Deborah Kerson Bilek
Senior Director, Community OutreachPanel
ULI Washington

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ULI Washington Panel & Project Staff

PANEL CHAIR

Andrew Brown
Stanford Properties
Bethesda, MD

PANELISTS

Elizabeth Baker
Walsh Colucci Lubeley & Walsh, P.C.
Arlington, VA

Rita Bamberger
The Holladay Corporation
Washington, DC

Michelle Chang
IMBY Community
Washington, DC

Sukirti Ghosh
Rhodeside & Harwell
Alexandria, VA

Edward W. Gosselin
Chesapeake Real Estate Group, LLC
Hanover, MD

David Kitchens
Cooper Carry
Alexandria, VA

Karl Moritz
City of Alexandria Department of Planning and Zoning
Alexandria, VA

Renan Snowden
District Department of Transportation
Washington, DC

Michael Workosky
Wells & Associates, LLC
Tysons, VA

PROJECT STAFF AND REPORT AUTHOR

Deborah Kerson Bilek
Urban Land Institute
Washington, DC

Kaushambi Shah
Urban Designer and Report Writer
Rockville, MD

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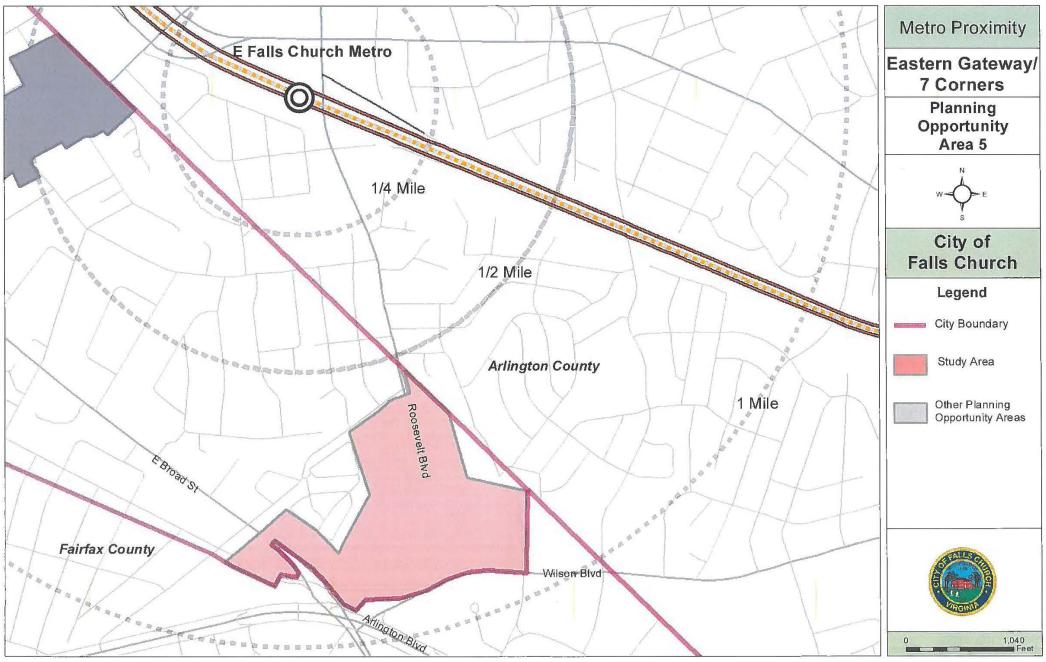
Susan Bell, Consultant
David Tarter, Mayor, City of Falls Church
Marybeth Connelly, Vice Mayor, City of Falls Church
Phil Duncan, Member, City Council, City of Falls Church
Wyatt Shields, City Manager
Jim Snyder, Director, Department of Community Planning & Economic Development Services
Kiran Bawa, Director, Finance
Paul Stoddard, Director of Planning
Gary Fuller, Deputy Planning Director
Akida Rouzi, Principal Planner
Cameron Gahres, Planner
Jeff Hollern, Planner
Shaina Schaffer, Planner

Executive Summary

Falls Church is an independent city lying approximately 7 miles from the Nation's Capital. This proximity has been a major influence on its development, especially over the last century. Falls Church is small in area (2 square miles) and population (estimated 14,200); its center remains at the junction of Route 7 (Broad Street/Leesburg Pike) and Route 29 (Washington Street/Lee Highway). The City is bounded by Arlington and Fairfax Counties, and is roughly equidistant (about 4 miles) from the major commercial centers of Ballston in Arlington County, and Tysons and Baileys Crossroads in Fairfax County.

Falls Church's Eastern Gateway is a 64-acre commercial and multi-family residential area located at the intersection of West Broad Street (Route 7/ Leesburg Pike), Wilson Boulevard, and Arlington Boulevard (Route 50) in the City of Falls Church, in Northern Virginia. It is approximately ¾ of a mile from the East Falls Church Metro Station (hub station for the Orange and Silver Lines). The study area abuts both Fairfax and Arlington Counties, and

Aerial Map showing the location of the study area in the City of Falls Church. Image source: Sponsor briefing material.



Map showing location of the study area in context with surrounding counties and the East Falls Church Metro Station. Image source: Sponsor briefing material.

is adjacent to a thriving commercial center – Seven Corners in Fairfax County. The proximity and similarity of the built environment to the Seven Corners Shopping Center in Fairfax County often leads to the misconception that this area is within Fairfax County rather than the City of Falls Church.

Existing development in Falls Church's Eastern Gateway is a mixture of commercial (69 percent) and multi-family and condominium residential (31 percent). The Eastern Gateway area is home to the Eden Center, one of the largest Vietnamese restaurant and shopping areas in the country. Other commercial uses include community and neighborhood-serving shopping centers. Three mid-and high-rise multi-family and condo developments lie to

Map showing location of the Eden Center, residential and other commercial developments within the study area. Image source: Sponsor briefing material.

Photo showing the Eden Center. Image source: ULI Washington.

Photo showing the Roosevelt Towers development as seen from Roosevelt Boulevard. Image source: ULI Washington.

Photo showing the Kastle buildings as seen from Arlington Boulevard. Image source: Google Earth Pro.

the north of the commercial area along Roosevelt Boulevard. As such, this area is relatively detached from the more densely developed commercial corridors in the City, Washington Street (Route 29), and West Broad Street (Route 7) and is more closely related to the Seven Corners commercial district in Fairfax County. In addition to being relatively disconnected from other commercial areas in the City, it is also buffered from lower density residential by Oakwood Cemetery and two 14-story office buildings in Fairfax County, which helps create an environment where redevelopment would be acceptable.

Overall, the land is underutilized with a lower FAR than comparable developments in Northern Virginia; existing development poses limitations in facilitating a mix of uses; different uses are segregated and lack connectivity; sidewalks are unsuitable for pedestrian culture; there is a lack of open spaces; and the district is in urgent need for strengthening its brand and building a unique identity.

The results of this Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) are intended to assist the City of Falls Church in the following ways:

- determine the best land use mix for the future of the study area
- plan for urban design features and gateway entry point enhancements that will boost the identity of this district
- identify redevelopment and reinvestment strategies to strengthen Eden Center as a prime economic generator in the City
- prioritize infrastructure elements and site design to better connect the study area to the East Falls Church Metro Station
- plan for a transportation grid to support multiple modes
- foster cooperation amongst Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City during the redevelopment process to ensure mutually beneficial growth.

During this process, the Panelists also emphasized the need to align planning and design with the recently adopted Fairfax County Small Area Plan for Seven Corners.

Panelists approached the TAP by dividing the challenges into five categories: Land Use, Design, Identity, Transportation and Cooperation. They studied the current conditions on the site, and formulated strategic recommendations for the site over a short-, middle- and long-term time frame as a chronological sequence of events. They defined short-term as 0 to 2 years, medium-term as 3 to 10 years and long-term as 11 to 30 years.

Background & Scope

FALLS CHURCH – A COG DESIGNATED ACTIVITY CENTER

The City of Falls Church was named an Activity Center by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) in 2013. According to COG, Activity Centers are "existing urban centers, transitional towns, transit hubs, as well as areas expecting future growth" and are viewed as "the next generation of metropolitan Washington's growth and development."[1] Activity Centers were identified by COG in cooperation with local jurisdictions through a combination of criteria that included:

Identification as a priority development area in a locally-adopted land use plan

- Above-average densities (relative to each jurisdiction)
- Mixed-use development
- Existing or planned high-capacity transit
- A grid of connected streets
- Combined housing and transportation costs of no more than 45 percent of Area Median Income

Using extensive data collected about Activity Centers throughout the Washington region, COG prepared a report entitled "Place + Opportunity: Strategies for Creating Great Communities and a Stronger Region."[1] The report analyzed over 90 Activity Centers in the region. Falls Church is classified as a "Suburban Multi-Use Center", which are described as "moderate-rent, suburban markets in established locations that have the potential to become the 'next generation' of denser, multiple-use Centers with the right strategies to encourage future development. These markets today likely support horizontal multiple-use development, but will not see mixed-use vertical development (multiple uses within buildings) without help, especially if structured parking is required." ("Place + Opportunity", Page 20). Other examples of Suburban Multi-Use Centers include Fairfax City, Gaithersburg – Metropolitan Grove, Greenbelt Metro and Rockville Town Center.

The Activity Center profile prepared for the City of Falls Church by COG suggests that, as a "Stable Center," it would be appropriate to have the following goals:

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[1] https://www.mwcog.org/documents/2014/01/08/place-opportunity-strategies-for-creating-great-communities-and-a-stronger-region-land-use/

- Encourage additional mix of uses
- Add parks and public space
- Add pedestrian features
- Leverage existing assets

According to the report, "Centers in this group have lower concentrations of low-income households, job access by transit, and housing affordability. While needs for Centers in this group vary, market-and place-based strategies to enhance quality of life are likely to be a higher priority than neighborhood stabilization or preservation efforts. Many have suburban Metro stations, commuter rail stations, or planned transit (such as the Silver Line) that could provide opportunities for increased transit-oriented development and enhancing accessibility" ("Place + Opportunity", Page 23).

The City of Falls Church and Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) partnered with the Urban Land Institute (ULI) to sponsor this Technical Assistance Panel (TAP). This TAP is intended to identify priority, catalytic strategies that maximize the impacts of investments in COG-designated Activity Centers.

FALLS CHURCH'S EASTERN GATEWAY

The Falls Church Eastern Gateway study area is a 64-acre area located in the south-east end of the City of Falls Church in Northern Virginia. The study area is bounded by North Roosevelt Street to the north, the Arlington County line to the east, Wilson Boulevard and the Seven Corners interchange of Route 50 to the south, and West Broad Street (also known as Route 7) and the Fairfax County line to the west. North Roosevelt Street becomes North Sycamore Street in Arlington, and leads to the East Falls Church Metro Station approximately ¾ of a mile away.

The study area represents a significant commercial node for the City. The Eden Center (15.6 acres) and Koons Ford parcels (9.6 acres) are the largest commercial parcels in the study area; the 12.2-acre Oakwood property on North Roosevelt Boulevard is the largest residential parcel.

The historic Oakwood Cemetery, a Fairfax Water Authority water tower, and stable single-family neighborhoods are located to the immediate north of the study area and separate the study area from the City's commercial core. These residential areas are planned to remain residential on the City's Future Land Use Map. Development to the east of the study area is characterized by single-family neighborhoods along Roosevelt Boulevard (Sycamore Street in Arlington County) and the Cavalier Club Apartments in Fairfax County. To the south, also in Fairfax County, is The Corner at Seven Corners, a shopping center anchored by Gold's Gym, Guitar Center, Castro's Bakery and an Enterprise Rent-A-Car outlet. To the east of the shopping Center are the East Falls Apartments, the Villages at Falls Church and the Seven Corners Apartments. Single-family

houses abut the western edge of the study area along with new townhouses, the Loren Apartments and two 14-story office buildings.

Aerial Map showing existing land use within and around the study area in the City of Falls Church. Image source: Sponsor briefing material.

Parcels in this area are predominantly zoned for business uses/activities: M-1, Light Industrial; R-M, Multi-Family Residential; C-D, Creative Design ; B-3, General Business; and B-1, Limited Business. The Eden Center and the commercial development along Wilson and Roosevelt Boulevards are zoned M-1 and occupy the majority of the study area land. The Future Land Use Map in the City's Comprehensive Plan designates the commercial properties as "Business"; the multi-family properties are designated "Mixed-Use" (west side of Roosevelt Boulevard) and "High Density Residential" (east side of Roosevelt Boulevard).

Aerial Map showing future land use within and around the study area in the City of Falls Church. Image source: Sponsor briefing material.

The core of the Eastern Gateway/Seven Corners area is Eden Center, one of the largest Asian shopping centers in the country. The shopping center was originally called Plaza Seven Shopping Center when it was built 40 plus years ago, but a gradual emergence as a center of Asian culture that began in the mid-1980's led to an expansion and renovation of the site in 1996, when it was renamed Eden Center. A lion arch gateway is located over the entrance to Eden Center from Wilson Boulevard, and the Eden Center Clock Tower, modeled after a clock tower in downtown Saigon, was erected in the shopping center to help recent immigrants feel more at home.

Photo showing the lion arch gateway of Eden Center. Image source: ULI Washington.

In 2015, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors adopted revisions to its Comprehensive Plan based on the work of the Seven Corners Task Force. Elements of the Plan include major infrastructure work to restructure the Seven Corners intersection and add a bypass road that would be partially in the City of Falls Church. Fairfax County envisions mixed-use redevelopment with up to 5,000 housing units in place of the shopping centers and walk-up garden apartments that currently dominate the area. The redevelopment of the three areas in Falls Church, Arlington and Fairfax County mutually support each other and should be planned in concert. The proposed "transit bridge" across Route 50 would require a joint effort by Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), Arlington and Fairfax Counties, and the City to secure funding.

Previous plans for the Eastern Gateway include an assessment and recommendations in the 2005 Comprehensive Plan and a study performed by graduate planning students at the Northern Virginia Campus of Virginia Tech in 2014. The City's Comprehensive Plan, in Chapter 4, titled Land Use and Economic Development, identifies this area and Planning Opportunity Area 5, Southeastern End/Seven Corners Area. It notes the importance of Eden Center as a center of Asian culture, but also recognizes the need for a coherent architectural and landscape design style that identifies the area as a gateway into the City of Falls Church. The Virginia Tech study presents

a conceptual plan that divides the area into pedestrian-oriented blocks with high density mixed-use buildings. Both plans suggest stronger connections to the East Falls Church Metro Station, Seven Corners in Fairfax County, and general roadway improvements to mitigate traffic congestion. The Seven Corners and Eastern Gateway redevelopment options should be planned in concert.

QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED BY THE PANEL

1. Land Use – what is the highest and best use of the City's "Eastern Gateway" (64 acres), including the large residential parcels, and how would this relate to the recently adopted Fairfax County small area plan for Seven Corners?

2. Urban Design – what design features, especially gateway features, could help identify this as a special area?

3. Cultural Identity – The Eden Center is one of the premier Vietnamese shopping centers in the country. How can redevelopment and reinvestment build and strengthen that identity?

4. Metro Connections – what elements of infrastructure (transit priority, sidewalks, bike lanes, etc.) and site design (entrances, alignment, etc.) can better connect the study area to the East Falls Church Metro hub station (Orange and Silver lines, numerous bus lines)?

5. Transportation and Walkability – how can the transportation grid be developed to support walkability and bike-ability in the immediate area while also supporting auto connectivity to larger roadways, such as 495, 66, 50, 29, and 7? How would this grid connect to the network included in the Fairfax County small area plan for Seven Corners?

6. Cooperation – East Falls Church Metro Station is a hub station that impacts Falls Church, Arlington, and Fairfax. At different times, all three jurisdictions have adopted plans for the areas that are near the station (East Falls Church Plan, North Washington Street Plan and Seven Corners Plan, respectively). What actions can the City and neighboring counties take to ensure that implementation of these plans is mutually supportive?

Photo showing the Technical Assistance Panel touring the study area. Image source: ULI Washington.

Photo showing the Technical Assistance Panel meeting with stakeholders. Image source: ULI Washington.

Photo showing the Technical Assistance Panel meeting with stakeholders. Image source: ULI Washington.

Site Analysis & Recommendations:

LAND USE, TRANSPORTATION, IDENTITY & DESIGN

In order to develop recommendations for the future of the study area, Panelists analyzed the opportunities and challenges in the existing development. At the onset of the TAP, they acknowledged that the study area is a thriving retail center in the City of Falls Church. There is a variety of commercial retail ranging from a large scale anchor business like BJs Wholesale Club, to the small-scale shops in Eden Center. This is a prominent economic generator for the City, and decision making towards shaping its future should entail strategic steps to retain this economic importance for the City. Also within the study area, there is relatively affordable multifamily housing including developments like Roosevelt Towers and Oakwood Apartments. These existing developments currently offer less expensive housing that newer residential developments are not able to offer. Furthermore, the Eden Center acts as a regional as well as national draw for its unique Vietnamese ethnic focus.

Photo showing BJs Wholesale Club, an anchor business in the study area. Image source: Google Earth Pro.

According to the Panel, the study area also poses multiple challenges. The land is underutilized with the FAR being far lower compared to similar commercial developments in Northern Virginia. There is a limited ability to provide a mix of uses. Everything is segregated, standing independently on their own – residential, large and small-scale retail and industrial uses like storage are not conducive to mixed-use. There are sidewalks in the study area, but they are not attractive or safe enough; and do not connect these various uses together to foster pedestrian culture. Moreover, there is very little open space. Adjoining the study area along its north-west edge is the Oakwood Cemetery, but it is private ownership and does not accommodate any passive recreation areas.

The Panel acknowledged the well-designed Broad Street in Downtown Falls Church and commended its streetscape design features like brick pavers,

Photos showing small-scale shops inside Eden Center - hair design, alterations, indoor sporting facility and karaoke bar. Image source: ULI Washington.

street lamps, signage and ornamental grasses. These features impart a unique identity to the City of Falls Church, and residents as well as visitors can easily identify their whereabouts while passing through this street. However, within the study area there is a complete lack of streetscape design, and effort will have to be made to introduce a continuous streetscape to tie the district together and impart a characteristic identity.

Panelists further added how the “let’s make the place and the people will come” development approach widely used in Northern Virginia is an opportunity and a challenge at the same time. They suggested the City determine the criteria for Placemaking that will make the study area a significant place, make it vibrant and exciting, and attract development, residents and businesses in the future. Moreover, Panelists also pointed out that in the current scenario Eden Center is

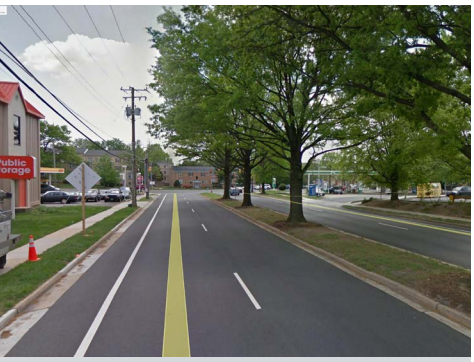


Photo showing lack of attractive sidewalks between the Public Storage and Eden Center developments along Roosevelt Boulevard. Image source: Google Earth Pro.

Photo showing lack of pedestrian connections between the Eden Center and Oakwood Apartments along Roosevelt Boulevard. Image source: Google Earth Pro.

Photo showing streetscape design features at 700 W Broad Street in Downtown Falls Church. Image source: Google Earth Pro.

the prominent feature of the study area. The City needs to strategically decide whether Eden Center remains the central focus of the district in the future, or choose a strategy where it enhances Eden Center, but sets it aside from being the central focus of the development.

Panelists enumerated opportunities with respect to transportation, and commended the City of Falls Church for multiple initiatives. They acknowledged the easy proximity to the East Falls Church Metro Station less than 1 mile away; availability of continuous bike routes with dedicated bike lanes and sidewalks along Roosevelt Boulevard; upgraded bus stops; dedicated shuttle to and from the metro station from Oakwood Apartments for its residents; signalized intersections with crosswalks and pedestrian signal-heads; recently installed bike-share system; planned bike lanes along Wilson Boulevard; easy access to the W&OD Trail; and central location for residents who may choose to work in DC, Tysons Corner, Alexandria and other parts of the DC Metro Area.

The Panel further identified transportation related challenges posed by the study area – the car-centric design; lack of inter-parcel access for vehicles, pedestrians or bicyclists due to presence of individually developed fences and incompatible topography; missing sidewalk connections along Roosevelt Street; and cut-through traffic traveling to and from I-66 that the residential community has to deal with and is currently regulated by signs with time-of-day restrictions.

SHORT-TERM SCENARIO (0 TO 2 YEARS):

The Panel recommended that the City of Falls Church engage in a city-wide community outreach and engagement process, and work with residents, business owners and other stakeholders in the community to create a Small Area Plan. Through this process, they should gather public opinion, set FAR and height limits for various properties within the study area and design a grid of streets. However, the long term lease of Good Fortune limits any major redevelopment changes in the short-term scenario. Creating a Small Area Plan that is adopted by the Town Council as part of the City's Comprehensive Plan would be of utmost importance in the redevelopment process.

Furthermore, the Panel emphasized the need to strengthen the identity of the district through a branding process. Whether emphasis is laid on Eden Center, the Eastern Gateway, site topography or any other characteristic feature within the study area, would have to be the City and the community's decision; and it will be very important to include streetscape features, wayfinding and signage in the branding process. Signage could potentially be added to the existing water tower.

Panelists recommended that the City annex three parcels on Wilson Boulevard that are currently a part of Fairfax County. These parcels are identified on the

Fairfax County tax maps as 51-3 ((1)) 32, 36, and 37. Annexation would allow these parcels to be planned, zoned, and redeveloped in keeping with the City's vision for the Eastern Gateway. The City should consider permitting changes to the adjacent water tower as a part of the annexation discussions with Fairfax County.

The City should explore the idea of forming a Business Improvement District (BID) in the study area, and facilitate shared conveniences and community events among residents and business owners. The BID could host community events, provide safety, security and maintenance for the community. According to the Panel, BIDs are an effective way to unify a district, can operate at a small-scale or large-scale, and can provide minimal or extensive services as desired. The amount of improvements and activities generated by the BID would depend on how its boundaries are drawn and what level of contributions will be made by the property owners. They pointed out that the Oakwood Apartments operate a series of shuttle buses to the East Falls Church Metro station for their residents. This service and cost could be shared among a number of property owners and the shuttle bus could make multiple stops at various residential and commercial properties, including the Metro station and nearby transit center.

Panelists addressed the parking situation in the study area, and pointed out that the City has not updated their parking requirement ratios for some time. Most of the jurisdictions in the surrounding area are updating their parking requirements to reflect the reduction in auto-ownership by Millennials and senior citizens living in apartments as well as houses. The Panel emphasized that the City of Falls Church needs to be consistent with current parking ratio trends to present the City with competitive advantage. Higher parking ratios than surrounding jurisdictions or current market trends would make the City less competitive when considered for future development projects.

The Panel acknowledged that the City of Falls Church is a special place appropriately called "Little City" with multicultural stakeholders. It is walkable, there is a sense of community, and Eden Center is a place by itself. However, the two identities need to be knit together. Panelists emphasized that the City will have to reach out to the Vietnamese community, who are already very active in a small section of the City, but often not recognized as a part of the City of Falls Church. It will be important for the City to engage with multicultural stakeholders, and this engagement process should include outreach to the business owners and customers of Eden Center. During this process it will be important to understand why visitors are coming or not coming to spend time in the City; and why residents as well as visitors are spending time in Eden Center or not. Panelists also recommended that the City have dedicated appointed staff for community outreach not only for the Vietnamese community, but the larger multicultural community present in the City.

Photo showing upgraded bus stop at the intersection of West Broad Street and Little Falls Street in Downtown Falls Church. Image source: Google Earth Pro.

Photo showing individual property fence at Oakwood Apartments, which disrupts inter-parcel connectivity. Image source: ULI Washington.

Photo showing a wayfinding sign pointing to cultural markers, transportation hubs and commercial in Belfast, Northern Ireland. Image source: https://www.geograph.ie/photo/5134945.

Photo showing a wayfinding sign in London. Image source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legible_London#/media/File:Legible_London.jpg.

Photo showing the Packers Heritage Trail in Green Bay, WI. Image source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/5d/Packers_Heritage_Trail_Plaza_Cropped.jpg.

This engagement process could also include the design of the physical cultural marker in Eden Center. Currently there exists a Gateway, and stakeholders mentioned there were ongoing conversations about a Vietnamese Peace Memorial within the Eden Center district. It will be critical to engage with the multicultural and inter-generational population to gather opinion and ideas for the physical marker, and visitors and tenants at large to shape the future of this district.

Panelists recommended adding a representative of the Vietnamese community to the Falls Church Arts & Humanities Council. The Vietnamese community should have a steward in this Council, representing their presence in the City at large, and Eden Center in particular. As the City Council is in the process of considering the formation of an Arts & Cultural District, the City should ensure that the Vietnamese community is a part of it. The City could also work with the property owner to program pop-up tent events at Eden Center to bridge the gap between the district and rest of the Falls Church community. This way, residents who generally don't visit the Eden Center might actually find a reason to do so. The City could co-sponsor Lunar New Year celebrations; ensure representation of Eden Center business owners in city-wide festivals like the local farmers' market and promote more Vietnamese artists in city festivals and programs. While the City could manage these programs in the short-term, programming of all such events could be managed by the BID in the long-term.

One of the challenges Panelists faced during the TAP workshop, was the inability to meet with tenants / business owners and the customers / visitors of Eden Center to learn of their concerns and desires. Panelists emphasized the need to combine the "Little City" brand of the City with that of Eden Center. To further boost a wholesome Falls Church identity, Panelists recommended designing and implementing a wayfinding system to direct drivers and pedestrians to key cultural, commercial and historic landmarks. The Falls Church community should be involved in determining these important markers. They recommended an enhanced Heritage Trail showcasing photos, historical facts and a walking tour, so residents and visitors could easily learn about the history of the City of Falls Church. According to the Panel, as neighborhoods and communities change over time with development, heritage trails are an effective way to keep the community knit together by acknowledging their history. The Panel emphasized that it will be important to bring all the resident and business stakeholders to the table during this process, to ensure everyone's history in the City is well represented.

MEDIUM-TERM SCENARIO (3 TO 10 YEARS):

Within the medium-term time frame, Panelists recommended redevelopment of parcels along Wilson Boulevard possibly including the Shell and BP gas stations, Eden Center strip-retail Public Storage, Koons Ford Body Shop, and Roosevelt Towers. Redevelopment of these parcels along Wilson

Boulevard should be mixed-use and include retail and potentially a hotel. This residential could be a variety of housing types – multifamily rental, senior housing, affordable housing. In terms of density, an overall FAR of 2.5 would be appropriate with some parcels having higher FAR values than others. The Panel anticipated a higher demand for 5-story stick construction buildings than high-rise construction in this time frame; however if the market did indicate demand for high-rise, it could be accommodated in the future.

In the context of transportation, the Panel recommended a few fundamental redevelopment changes – creation of a grid of streets; Roosevelt Boulevard modifications to include BRT connection with dedicated full-width bike-lanes; incorporation of neighborhood roundabouts and other traffic calming features to protect adjacent communities who may be sensitive to traffic; consolidation of access points where feasible; acknowledging access management or limited access constraints in certain locations; and completing missing sidewalk segments like parts of Roosevelt Street. Furthermore, Panelists recommended that the walk score be improved from “Very Walkable” to “Walkers Paradise” by including a variety of services in the redeveloped parcels by mixing land use. This way, there is a higher chance of day-to-day tasks being performed by residents by walking instead of driving. Moreover, a mix of land uses also helps create internal trips.

They also recommended that there be designated on-demand car service areas for Lyft/Uber with a number of drop-off and pick-up zones at appropriate locations in the redevelopment process. In some places, curb-side parking could be reduced to accommodate queues formed by these vehicles.

The Panel recommended a mandate for transportation demand management (TDM) policies for new developments including car sharing, non-auto mode sharing, bike facilities and showers for users. They re-emphasized the “Right Size” of parking ratios, providing a process for parking space reductions where appropriate; and requiring “parking management” – like shared parking and employee parking policies. Implementing such parking strategies facilitate meeting TDM goals and trip reduction goals, and allow more dense development during the redevelopment process without the subsequent traffic impacts.

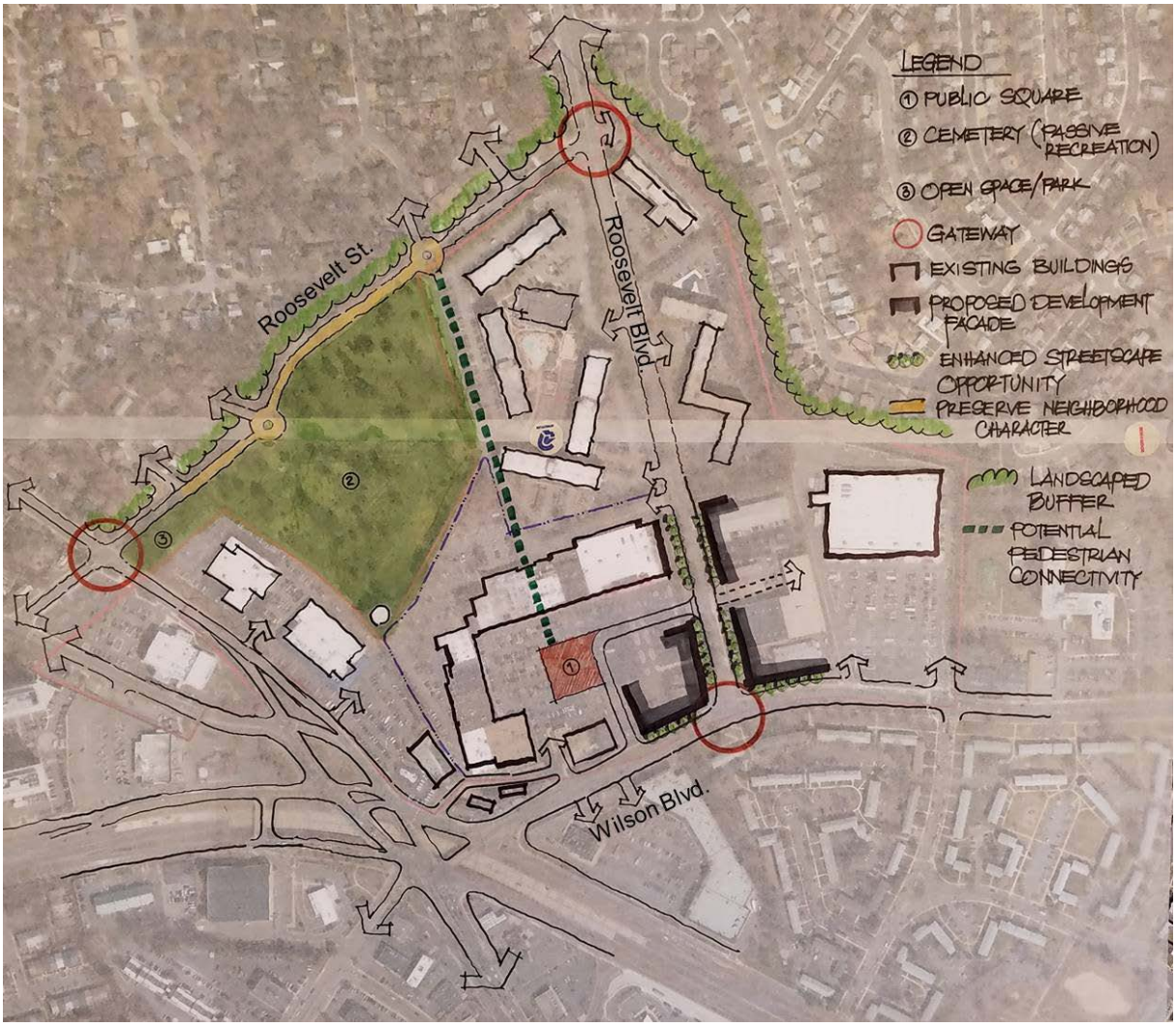
With respect to the East Falls Church Metro connection, Panelists recommended enhancing the First-mile and Last-mile connection by coordinating the shuttle service amongst various land owners. Considering Oakwood Apartments have existing service in place, it might mean having several other land owners connect to them, or relocate shuttle service to a more central location on the redevelopment plan. This shuttle service could also connect with the BRT stations in the future. The Panel further recommended making full use of available technology like apps and webpages to connect private vehicles and transit users in the near future, and anticipate autonomous vehicles and shuttles in the distant future.

Panelists acknowledged the water tower located in the Oakwood Cemetery and emphasized its importance not only as a water supply resource, but as a high point in the community. They added that this water tower had also been an observation area historically during the Civil War. Thus the study area has a geographical history attached to it, and in the long run, it would be important to commemorate this history of Falls Church in the study area.

Panelists shared what they had learned from the owners within the study area – that some were very long-term ownerships, while others were short-term ownerships. The Panel thought some properties had long-term value, while others had a mid-term value. Given the right incentives, a well-conceived Small Area Plan, and development of a framework plan, the Panel envisioned considerable development opportunity in the study area, particularly in combination with the plans of Arlington County and Fairfax County. They anticipate development growth to span the next 50 years.

At the onset of the design process, the Panel demarcated a cultural and commercial "Town Center" for the Eastern Gateway on the largest

Illustrative plan showing the 0 to 2 years short-term and 3 to 10 years medium-term conditions plan. Image source: ULI Washington.



single-ownership parcel – the Eden Center. They designed a flexible framework, where the prosperous Eden Center would remain as is, and surrounding parcels would start evolving.

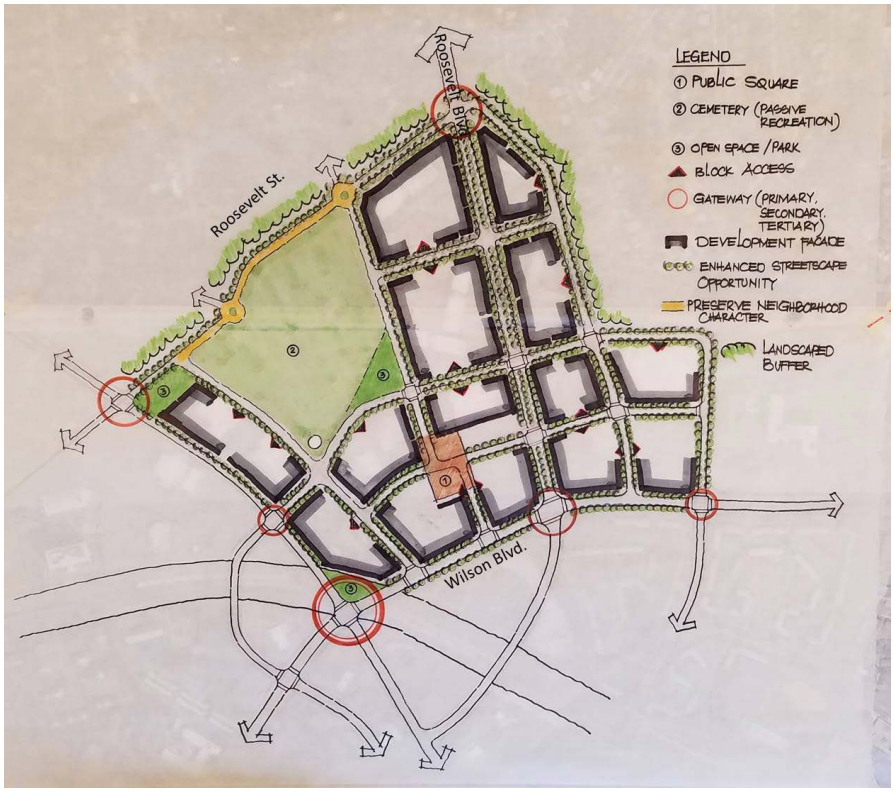
Panelists elaborated on the Oakwood Cemetery along the north-west edge of the study area, which is not only a historical element of the City, but also a large open space. Historically, people would go to cemeteries with their families for strolls or picnics. Thus it would be important to preserve the character of that open space. Moreover, having the cemetery as a preserved open space will also provide for an essential buffer/transition between the existing single-family residential and the proposed redevelopment of Eden Center and adjoining parcels. Furthermore, the Panel added that single-family neighborhoods had contributed towards the character of the City for a long time, and recommended preserving the character of such neighborhoods, especially along Roosevelt Street. In their framework plan, they recommended these areas to be preserved during the redevelopment process.

Roosevelt Boulevard was identified as the main street of the future, providing access to the metro station and setting the stage for long-term development along this street. The Panel recommended that the City start by encouraging the temporary conversion of parking lots into weekend markets in the short-term, with picnic tables and vendors, similar to Pike & Rose in North Bethesda, Maryland. They also recommended designating the two ends of Roosevelt Boulevard as gateway entry points; one at the Arlington County/City of Falls Church border where Roosevelt Boulevard merges into Roosevelt Street, and a second where Roosevelt Boulevard intersects with Wilson Boulevard in the south. Furthermore, they recommended a pedestrian pathway parallel to Roosevelt Boulevard, connecting Roosevelt Street to Wilson Boulevard, abutting the Oakwood Cemetery's eastern edge and passing through a market square in Eden Center. The interior mall in Eden Center could potentially be connected to this pedestrian pathway.

A Small Area Plan including all of the above would be crucial in moving forward, so that all the property owners could enhance their properties and provide better inter-connectivity between different parcels.

LONG-TERM SCENARIO (11 TO 30 YEARS):

In the 11 to 30 year time frame, the Panel envisioned a more fully developed framework plan, including changes to the Eden Center property. It was recommended that the four residential parcels along Roosevelt Boulevard could be retained or redeveloped as residential properties, while the commercial parcels along Wilson Boulevard and Eden Center could be redeveloped as mixed-use properties. A street and block pattern was designed that is appropriate in size, allows for a variety of density and uses, and facilitates maximum flexibility. They also recommended creation of a "public



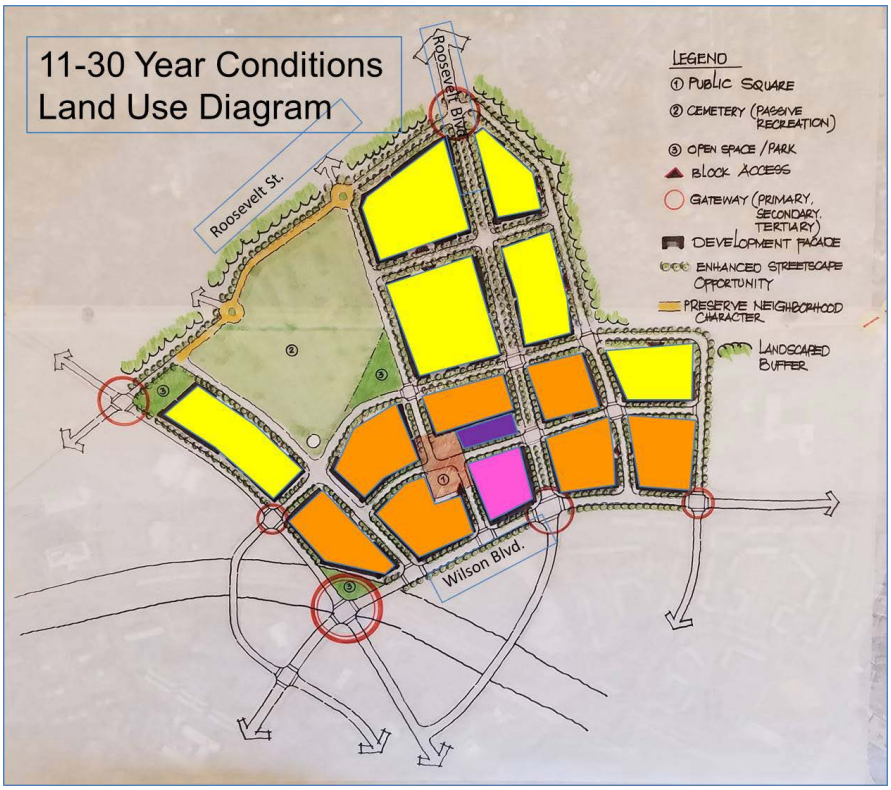
Illustrative plan showing the long-term 11 to 30 year framework plan. Image source: ULI Washington.

square" and a potential community center to create a public gathering place as a social heart of the revitalized area.

In the recommended framework plan, Panelists incorporated the cemetery as an important preserved open space in the redeveloped district, transformed parcels with odd geometries, and consolidated leftover spaces into multiple parks in the study area. They recommended refining the intersection of Broad Street and Wilson Boulevard, and creating a primary gateway which could potentially house large-scale artwork. Three other secondary gateways identified in the earlier phase at the intersections of Roosevelt Boulevard and Roosevelt Street, Wilson Boulevard and Roosevelt Street and Broad Street and Roosevelt Street would also demarcate the district. During this redevelopment process, Panelists also recommended enhanced streetscape along Wilson Boulevard, Roosevelt Boulevard, Roosevelt Street, and the newly created internal street grid. It would be important that these enhancements provide better connectivity/walking experience and instill a sense of place in the public realm of the district.

Panelists pointed out, that with the recommended overall FAR of 2.5, there would be considerable density available to work within the study area; and this district could be designed as an Eastern Gateway to the City, or a more prominent economic contributor to the City.

The Panel believes that with proper incentives and planning policies, as well as strong City leadership, the study area can transform into a walkable



Illustrative plan showing the long-term 11 to 30 year framework plan. Image source: ULI Washington.

neighborhood with a mix of businesses and residences designed to form an attractive Eastern Gateway. The 11-30 Year Conditions Land Use Diagram shows the recommended land uses. Panelists recommended that the areas demarcated in yellow would be residential – and could include a mix of market rate housing, affordable housing, workforce housing, and/or senior housing. Parcels in orange would be mixed-use development with retail below and residential above. The parcel marked in purple color would be hospitality; and across from the hotel adjoining the market square would be a cultural facility.

To implement a plan like this, there will need to be consensus amongst the landowners and the City will need to have a vision. With respect to height, to be compatible with planned buildings in Seven Corners, buildings along Wilson Boulevard could approximately be 120 feet, and then scaled back with distance from Wilson Boulevard.

COOPERATION

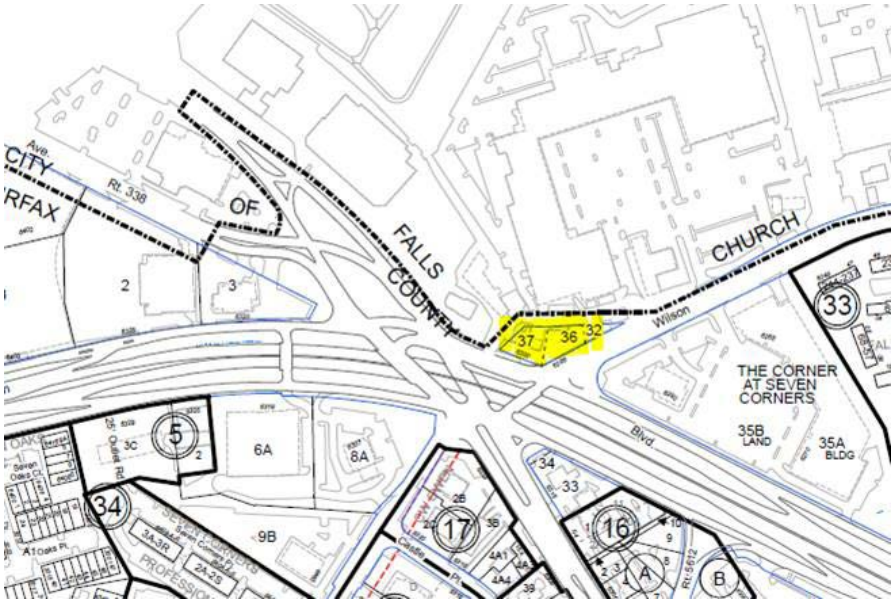
The Panel joked how “everyone protects their western border and builds on their eastern border around here!” and shared examples of contrasting development pattern trends along the western and eastern borders of Arlington County VA, Fairfax County VA and Loudoun County VA. They pointed out how a similar situation had arisen in the City of Falls Church, where the western border was low density, and eastern border was available to accommodate more intense development.

Panelists emphasized the importance of jurisdictional cooperation as the study area lies at the confluence of City of Falls Church, Fairfax County and

> "Everyone protects their western boarder and builds on their eastern border around here."
>
> – ULI Washington Panelists

Arlington County. They pointed out that while this district was an appropriate location for increased density and mix of uses; it would be very important to respect each jurisdiction's planning objectives and documents; and at the same time recognize the unique opportunity to redefine the Eastern Gateway of the City of Falls Church.

The Panel strongly recommended that as development continued through various phases, partnerships amongst key players was crucial – land owners, existing businesses, Arlington and Fairfax County leadership and planning departments, VDOT and Fairfax Transportation, Fairfax Water Authority regarding water tower needs, and potential developers. During this process, it will be important to conduct outreach with landowners and businesses to identify their needs, concerns and time frames; include all the stakeholders in the Small Area Plan; test-fit planning concepts with potential developers to guide the Small Area Plan; adjust the boundary line with Fairfax County; resolve the future of the water tower; and coordinate the Roosevelt Boulevard street section with interchange design and the BRT.



Illustrative plan showing parcels that could be annexed by the City of Falls Church, in exchange for allowing the City of Fairfax to raise the height of the water tower.

Conclusion

Panelists are optimistic about the future of Falls Church's Eastern Gateway, and emphasized the importance of maintaining this thriving commercial center as one of the prime economic contributors to the City. With its unique and ethnic Vietnamese focused retail component, it will be very important for the City to conduct public outreach and engage with the multicultural community present in the City. Residents, business owners and visitors will provide valuable inputs to shape the future of the district. Moreover, the community should create a Small Area Plan, and use the document to guide the FAR, height limits and road framework during the redevelopment process.

According to the Panel, the City and the community are presented with a timely opportunity to redevelop this district, and made recommendations for its growth. They advocated for increased representation and participation of the Vietnamese and other multicultural stakeholders in the City's councils and events, and made recommendations with respect to land use, transportation, design, identity and cooperation to shape the future of this district.

Panelist Bios

ULI Panel embarks on tour of Falls Church's Easter Gateway. Image source: ULI Washington.

Andrew Brown, CHAIR

Stanford Properties

Bethesda, MD

Mr. Brown directs all activities of Stanford Properties, LC, a real estate investment and development firm based in Bethesda, Maryland. Mr. Brown has acquired and developed over thirty residential and commercial projects with an aggregate value in excess of $300 million since the company's founding in 1992. His recent projects include conversion of an underperforming retail big-box center into a high density residential condominium project; development of a 50 acre mixed-use residential and retail town center; and redevelopment of a church and independent school into a urban townhome community. In 2013, Mr. Brown led the successful rezoning of the 1.8 million sq. ft. Tysons West mixed-use project at the new Spring Hill Metro station. Mr. Brown directs site selection, acquisition, governmental entitlements, financing, construction, leasing, and ongoing asset management of completed projects.

Prior to founding Stanford Properties, Mr. Brown was the Director of Retail Development for Baier Properties, Inc. where he oversaw development of numerous retail and residential land development

projects, and prior to that held positions in acquisition and project management with two Washington based real estate firms. He started his career as an Acquisition and Portfolio Manager for the Woodmont Companies in Belmont, California, where he supervised the acquisition and management of a $100 million portfolio of apartment, office, industrial, and retail properties.

Mr. Brown received his B.A. in Economics from Stanford University in 1983. He is an active member of the Urban Land Institute where he is a member of the Washington District Council's Advisory Board and was previously Co-Chair of the TAP Committee. He is also a guest lecturer at the Schools of Architecture and Engineering at the University of Maryland and the Washington College of Law at American University. He has served on the boards of several local educational and philanthropic organizations, including Greater D.C. Cares, Inc., which Mr. Brown helped found in 1989 to promote volunteerism throughout the Washington area and the New Community Foundation which Mr. Brown founded in 2000 to provide scholarships to low income students of the Shaw neighborhood of Washington to attend college and independent schools. He lives in Bethesda, Maryland with his wife, Robyn. They have three adult children scattered across the country.

Elizabeth Baker

Walsh Colucci Lubeley & Walsh, P.C.
Arlington, VA

Elizabeth has been a planner with WCL&W since 1990. Prior to joining the firm, she was the Vice President of Planning for the Milton Company, a homebuilder in Northern Virginia. Her public sector experience has included working as a Land Use Planner for Fairfax County and as Economic Development Coordinator for the City of Falls Church. Ms. Baker specializes in Fairfax County, City of Fairfax, and Town of Herndon matters, helping clients achieve comprehensive plan amendments and zoning approvals and assisting them in the resolution of land development/site plan issues. She has worked on numerous residential, commercial and large scale, mixed-use projects as well as redevelopment transit-oriented projects. Most recently, Ms. Baker has focused on transit-oriented developments for the extension of Metro's Silver Line through Tysons Corner to Dulles Airport.

Rita Bamberger

The Holladay Corporation
Washington, DC

Ms. Bamberger is a Principal and Senior Vice President of The Holladay Corporation, responsible for acquisition and development projects in the Washington metro area. She joined Holladay in 1995 and has over 30 years of residential development experience in the Washington area, specifically focused on the development of high density urban infill projects.

Earlier in her career, Ms. Bamberger was Director of Residential Development at The Charles E. Smith Companies and a partner at Trammell Crow Residential, where she completed 1,400 apartments and condominiums in Washington, Richmond, and the Tidewater areas of Virginia. She started her career as an associate in the Public Finance Group of the Urban Institute where her research focused on municipal infrastructure investment.

She serves on the Advisory Board of the Washington District Council of the Urban Land Institute and has been a member of the Board of Directors of the Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing for the last 17 years. Rita has a B.A. degree from the University of Colorado and a Masters Degree in Urban and Regional Planning from The George Washington University.

Michelle Chang

IMBY Community

Washington, DC

Michelle Beaman Chang cut her real estate teeth in Philadelphia at a boutique real estate development firm on projects like a Robert Venturi designed condominium and the Curtis Institute of Music's Lenfest Hall. Her passion for social justice intersected with global forces to land a role developing affordable housing in New York City in 2008 - and move to be near the love of her life. Luck & spunk were again on her side when she moved to D.C. at three months pregnant to be near secure and cheap daycare (aka her husband's parents). After a stint at AHC, Inc. developing and renovating affordable, mixed income, and historic preservation apartments she spent a year home with two kids under three (toughest job ever) followed by two years at Vornado/Charles E. Smith on their residential development team. Michelle founded Imby Community, a hybrid grassroots/digital platform, to bridge conversations between real estate developers and the community. Imby's focus on early, non-confrontational communication from a neighborhood perspective flips the paradigm and makes it easier for a developer to understand and manage pre-development risk, while accessing ideas and opinions that build project support and meet hyper local demand. The platform launched in 4 D.C. neighborhoods and is targeting to double that by the end of 2018.

Sukirti Ghosh

Rhodeside & Harwell

Alexandria, VA

Architect -turned-urban designer believes that designing places begins with people - and an understanding of context.

In a career that spans continents, sectors, and diverse contexts and scales of design, Sukirti's work is driven and united by his passion for urban life, "people places," and research-informed design. Trained as an architect in his native India, Sukirti has since devoted his career to planning and urban design, as both a public sector planner and private sector consultant. His work is grounded in his belief that learning is a lifelong endeavor, and that a successful planning and design process must begin with understanding—and learning from—the people and particular context of each place. He has managed diverse and award-winning projects, ranging from citywide comprehensive plans, downtown and corridor plans, and transit-oriented development strategies, to design guidelines, streetscape master plans, site redevelopment, and architectural design. In particular, much of his work has explored the intersection between physical design interventions and economic development strategies for rejuvenating cities, towns and urban districts.

With an educational background in both architecture and planning, Sukirti excels at making connections between micro-level design details and broader, multidisciplinary considerations at the neighborhood, city and regional scales. He is also noted for his creativity and ability to express ideas through graphics.

Whether he is preparing sketches and 3D visualizations to communicate urban design visions, or producing oil paintings, watercolor renderings and graphic designs in his spare time, his graphics are infused with a visual artist's perspective. A regular participant in design competitions, Sukirti has received a number of honors in such competitions in recent years.

Edward W. Gosselin

Chesapeake Real Estate Group, LLC
Hanover, MD

Ed has been a partner with Chesapeake Real Estate Group since 2013. He is responsible for partnership/JV negotiations and management, investor relations, debt and equity financing, and project entitlement. Since partnering with Chesapeake, Ed has entered into 3,500,000 SF of industrial development joint ventures throughout the Washington/Baltimore market with institutional partners including USAA, Prudential, and EverWest Advisors along with high net worth individuals. He serves on Chesapeake's management and investment committees.

Prior to joining Chesapeake, Ed was Partner/Executive Vice President of Intrepid Real Estate since its founding in 1998, to disposition of its assets in 2012. During this period he completed $250,000,000 in office and multi-family investments, along with student housing and historic renovations in the Washington region. He was also responsible for asset and organizational management. Investment partners included family offices, as well as Northwestern Mutual Life and Lowe Enterprises. Since entering commercial real estate in 1984 Ed has primarily had roles on the principal side, responsible for leasing, management and investment with Akridge Companies, HMB Partner of Denver and the Vantage Companies. Over his career Ed has developed, leased or acquired over 7,000,000 SF of commercial assets in Washington/Baltimore, Denver and Chicago.

Ed has a BA from Colorado State University and a MBA from DePaul University. He is immediate past Chairman of the Board of Trustees for the Anne Arundel Health System and Medical Center. Prior civic boards include; Anne Arundel Medical Center Foundation, Boys and Girls Club (awarded Director of the Year), and the MS Society of Maryland.

David Kitchens

Cooper Carry
Alexandria, VA

David Kitchens, AIA, serves as Principal-in-Charge of Cooper Carry's Alexandria, Virginia office. Cooper Carry is a dynamic, context-driven architecture and design firm focused on the creation of exceptional places.

In 30 years of service with Cooper Carry, Mr. Kitchens has led mixed-use design efforts on a variety of award-winning projects including Mizner Park in Boca Raton, Florida. This mixed-use development has been recognized by a variety of organizations including the AIA, which bestowed upon it the Excellence of Design Award. Mr. Kitchens lead the design of the master plan and many of the buildings that make up Bethesda Row. The project was awarded the Best Block in America 2002 by The Congress for New Urbanism, the Excellence Award from the Urban Land Institute and the Maryland/DC NAIOP Award of Excellence for Best Smart Growth Master Plan. Most recently, Mr. Kitchens has participated in the

development of the White Flint Sector plan which also includes the master plans for the North Bethesda Center and the White Flint Mall. He is also leading the design of redevelopment efforts for Landmark Mall in Alexandria, Virginia and Ballston Mall in Arlington, Virginia.

Through his leadership, the Alexandria, Virginia office of Cooper Carry is recognized as a regional and national innovator in mixed-use urban design and architecture that creates walkable community environments and takes advantage of sustainable modes of connectivity and transit.

Karl Moritz

City of Alexandria Department of Planning and Zoning
Alexandria, VA

Mr. Moritz is Alexandria's Director of Planning and Zoning, named in February 2015 after serving as acting Planning Director since July, 2014. Major planning issues include: integrating land use and transportation (particularly transit, pedestrian and bike), zoning, maximizing new development's preservation/creation of affordable housing, "retrofitting" suburban patterns of development, neighborhood revitalization, sensitive infill development, planning for successful retail, parking, and continually broadening civic engagement.

Prior to his work in Alexandria, Karl served for 16 years with the Montgomery County (MD) Planning Department and eight years with the Northern Virginia Regional Commission. He's been a speaker at national planning conferences on topics such as growth management and infrastructure financing, affordable housing, and planning for urban schools. He holds a bachelor's degree in geography from Johns Hopkins University and a master's degree in urban and environmental planning from the University of Virginia.

Karl has been a resident of the Seven Corners area of Fairfax County since 1993 and served a resident member of the Seven Corners Land Use and Transportation Task Force from February 2012 to July 2014.

Kaushambi Shah

Urban Designer and Report Writer
Rockville, MD

Kaushambi Shah is a LEED accredited Urban Designer/Planner with a background in Architecture. She has 12 years of experience in the private sector, including design and planning in the domestic as well as international realm. Besides working on projects in U.S. cities like Philadelphia, Washington D.C., Baltimore, Boston, Fairfax and smaller towns in New York, she has also worked on projects in India, China, Saudi Arabia and Abu Dhabi. Her project experiences range from design of Entertainment Cities, Mixed Use Town Centers, Campus Plans and Redevelopment, Resort Communities, Residential Communities, Waterfront Developments and Transit Oriented Development.

She has a Bachelors in Architecture form the University of Mumbai, India and a Masters in Urban Design from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. She is a member of the American Planning Association and Urban Land Institute, and an enthusiastic supporter of the Urban Land program by ULI, and has served as a TAP report writer for previous ULI Washington TAPs, including: "Research Boulevard: It's Not An Office Park!" and "What's Next For Westfields?"

Renan Snowden

District Department of Transportation

Washington, DC

Renan Snowden is the Special Assistant for Economic Development in the Office of the Director at the District Department of Transportation (DDOT). In this role, Renan serves as an agency liaison to the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development, business improvement districts, and the business community. Prior to joining DDOT in March, Renan served as the Vice President of Planning & Development at the Capitol Riverfront Business Improvement District in Washington, DC, where she managed the BID's economic development, research, transportation, and public art programs. Renan is also active in ULI. She is the co-chair of the Young Leaders Group's Education Committee and serves on the Young Leaders Group Steering Committee, the Technical Assistance Panel Committee, and the Baltimore-Washington Transit Oriented Development Product Council. Renan holds an M.A. in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities and a B.A. in Political Science from the University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill.

Michael Workosky

Wells + Associates, LLC

Tysons, VA

Mike has over 30 years of experience in traffic, parking, and transportation planning and engineering. He has worked for both private real estate developers and public sector clients in the preparation of site traffic impact studies, shared parking and design studies, town center studies and design, master plan design and evaluation, feasibility analyses and site assessments, Transportation Demand Management plans, and transit, pedestrian, and bicycle analyses. Mr. Workosky has worked on TOD projects and town centers in the Greater Washington Metropolitian Region as well as several other states. These projects included preparing detailed traffic impact studies, parking demand studies, traffic signal warrant analyses and design, parking design and operations, expert testimony, and coordination with other architects, engineers, and public agencies. Many of these projects were located adjacent to Metrorail stations and included TOD planning and design elements. He also prepared and contributed to shared use parking case studies on behalf of Wells + Associates, several of which have been published in the Urban Land Institute's (ULI) Shared Parking manual.

Urban Land Institute
Washington

ULI Washington
2001 L Street, NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: (240) 497-0550
www.washington.uli.org