

# Glen Echo Maryland

A ULI Advisory Services Panel Report

March 8–11, 2022



# Glen Echo, Maryland

Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture

A ULI Advisory Services Panel Report

March 8–11, 2022



Urban Land Institute  
2001 L Street, NW  
Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20036-4948  
[uli.org](http://uli.org)

# About the Urban Land Institute

**THE URBAN LAND INSTITUTE** is a global, member-driven organization comprising more than 45,000 real estate and urban development professionals dedicated to advancing the Institute's mission of shaping the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide.

ULI's interdisciplinary membership represents all aspects of the industry, including developers, property owners, investors, architects, urban planners, public officials, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, and academics.

Established in 1936, the Institute has a presence in the Americas, Europe, and Asia Pacific regions, with members in 80 countries. The extraordinary impact that ULI makes on land use decision-making is based on its members sharing expertise on a variety of factors affecting the built environment, including urbanization, demographic and population changes, new economic drivers, technology advancements, and environmental concerns.

Peer-to-peer learning is achieved through the knowledge shared by members at thousands of convenings each year that reinforce ULI's position as a global authority on land use and real estate. In 2021 alone, more than 2,700 events, both virtual and in person, were held in cities around the world.

Drawing on the work of its members, the Institute recognizes and shares best practices in urban design and development for the benefit of communities around the globe.

More information is available at [uli.org](http://uli.org). Follow ULI on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram.

**COVER PHOTO:** The Glen Echo Park sign marks the historic entrance to the grounds. (ULI)

© 2022 by the Urban Land Institute

2001 L Street, NW | Suite 200 | Washington, DC 20036-4948

All rights reserved. Reproduction or use of the whole or any part of the contents this publication without written permission of the copyright holder is prohibited.

# About ULI Advisory Services

**THE GOAL OF THE ULI ADVISORY SERVICES** program is to bring the finest expertise in the real estate field to bear on complex land use planning and development projects, programs, and policies. Since 1947, this program has assembled well over 700 ULI-member teams to help sponsors find creative, practical solutions for issues such as downtown redevelopment, land management strategies, evaluation of development potential, growth management, community revitalization, brownfield redevelopment, military base reuse, provision of low-cost and affordable housing, and asset management strategies, among other matters. A wide variety of public, private, and nonprofit organizations have contracted for ULI's advisory services.

Each panel team is composed of highly qualified professionals who volunteer their time to ULI. They are chosen for their knowledge of the panel topic and are screened to ensure their objectivity. ULI's interdisciplinary panel teams provide a holistic look at development problems. A respected ULI member who has previous panel experience chairs each panel.

The agenda for an advisory panel assignment is intensive. It includes an in-depth briefing day composed of a tour of the site and meetings with sponsor representatives, stakeholder interviews and a day of formulating recommendations. Long nights of discussion precede the panel's conclusions. On the final day on site, the panel makes an oral presentation of its findings and conclusions to the sponsor. A written report is prepared and published.

Because the sponsoring entities are responsible for significant preparation before the panel's visit, including sending extensive briefing materials to each member and arranging for the panel to meet with key local community members and stakeholders in the project under consideration, participants in ULI's Advisory Services panel assignments can make accurate assessments of a sponsor's issues and provide recommendations in a compressed amount of time.

A major strength of the program is ULI's unique ability to draw on the knowledge and expertise of its members, including land developers and owners, public officials, academics, representatives of financial institutions, and others. In fulfillment of the mission of the Urban Land Institute, this Advisory Services panel report is intended to provide objective advice that will promote the responsible use of land to enhance the environment.

## ULI Program Staff

### **Mary Beth Corrigan**

Executive Vice President, Global Leadership

### **Thomas W. Eitler**

Senior Vice President, Advisory Services

### **Lauren McKim Callaghan**

Director, Advisory Services

### **Kelsey Steffen**

Director, Advisory Services

### **David Zehr**

Senior Associate, Advisory Services

### **Barbra Gustis**

Director, Advisory Services and Key Leaders

### **James A. Mulligan**

Senior Editor

### **Laura Glassman, Publications Professionals LLC**

Manuscript Editor

### **Brandon Weil**

Art Director

### **Kurt Wisthuff, Arc Group Ltd**

Graphic Designer



## Acknowledgments



On behalf of the Urban Land Institute, the panel would like to thank the sponsor organization, the Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture, for this effort.

The panel would especially like to recognize the entire Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture staff, with special thanks to Katey Boerner, executive director; Emily Mah Rogers, site operations manager; and Clara Ferrari, operations assistant manager. The panel also thanks the Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture Board of Directors Executive Committee, without whom this panel would not have been possible:

Martha Morris, President

Ronda Keys, Secretary

Irena Savakova, Vice President

David Greenbaum (At Large)

Dan Hanlon, Treasurer

Bonnie Casper (Past President)

The panel would also like to thank the more than 40 community representatives and leaders who shared their perspectives, insights, and experiences during the panel.

The Urban Land Institute is grateful for the support of The JPB Foundation.

# Contents

2

**ULI Panel and Project Staff**

20

**Revenue and Resources**

3

**Introduction and Panel Scope**

22

**Conclusion**

5

**Organization and Partnerships**

23

**About the Panel**

10

**Place and Programs**

# ULI Panel and Project Staff

## Panel Chair

### **Michael Stern**

Principal  
MAS Places  
Jackson, Wyoming

## ULI Project Staff

### **Kelsey Steffen**

Director, Advisory Services

### **Michaela Illar**

Senior Associate, Meetings and Events

## Panel Members

### **Billy Grayson**

Executive Vice President, Centers and Initiatives  
Urban Land Institute  
Washington, D.C.

### **Juanita Hardy**

Founder and Managing Principal  
Tiger Management Consulting Group  
Silver Spring, Maryland

### **Aileen RG Horn**

Director of Hospitality  
KGD Architecture  
Bethesda, Maryland

### **Paul Moyer**

Principal  
Jacobs Advancing Planning Group  
Washington, D.C.

### **Jamison “Jamie” Weinbaum**

Executive Vice President  
MidCity  
Washington, D.C.

### **Audrey Wennick**

Director of Transportation  
Metropolitan Planning Council  
Chicago, Illinois





## Introduction and Panel Scope

**GLEN ECHO PARK** has been part of the Washington, D.C., region's history for the past 130 years, and this history is reflected in the architecture of its landmark buildings. A scenic asset along the Potomac Palisades, Glen Echo Park became part of the National Park System (NPS) in 1976 through a land exchange in part to protect the Potomac Gorge from visual impacts and is now part of the George Washington Memorial Parkway under NPS. The preservation of the historic buildings, conservation of the natural environment, and education about the park's history and environment is an integral part of the Glen Echo Park mission. The history encompasses a variety of programs, including an early Chautauqua (educational assembly), a popular amusement park, the site of a civil rights demonstration, and the home to treasured arts programs.

### Panel Scope

The Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture (the Partnership) manages and nurtures the many resident arts, cultural organizations, artist studios, a thriving social dance program, a historic carousel, and numerous outdoor spaces while preserving and managing historic facilities within Glen Echo Park. The park is home to 13 resident artists and arts organizations, two award-winning children's theaters, and a nature program. Classes include ceramics, painting, photography, glass, music, dance, and more. These activities, as well as free summer concerts, festivals, and special events bring over 350,000 visitors to the park each year.

The current vision for Glen Echo Park is to foster creativity and community well-being through the power of the arts and nature. The Partnership seeks to

- Become a premier arts and cultural destination in the region and a national model;
- Increase its capacity to serve a broad and diverse population reflecting the demographics of the region;
- Develop and maintain Glen Echo Park to be environmentally, economically, and functionally sustainable; and
- Offer and support innovative programs that serve the greater community.



In coordination with Montgomery County (MoCo) and the NPS, the Partnership approached the Advisory Services program to bring together a cross-disciplinary panel of national and local experts. The charge for this panel was to discuss the future planning and expansion of facilities to meet the needs of the community and resident organizations to assist with the following goals:

- Fundraise for the Park Enhancement Plan, which will outline the long-range improvements to the park and its facilities.
- Forecast the future of arts organizations and their anticipated needs to attract new diverse audiences both regionally and nationally.
- Examine resilience strategies and partnership models from an environmental, organizational, and economic perspective.
- Evolve a management and partnership structure by improving the agreement between NPS/MoCo to allow for investment from donors, government, and potentially historic tax credit investment or business investment in functions on site.

Specifically, the Partnership asked the ULI panel the following questions:

1. What types of activities will we need to attract new, diverse, and multigenerational audiences in the future?
  - a. What are good benchmarks for comparison?
  - b. What is the ideal mix of program space, event space, retail, and other uses for revenue generation to help offset operating costs?
2. What targeted essential environmental strategies should we include in the future park master plan for development to improve the environmental sustainability and resilience of the park infrastructure and building operations?
3. What type of partnership structure would support a capital facility expansion campaign with multiple governmental and program partners and community stakeholders?
  - a. Are there successful models that differentiate capital development and ongoing maintenance responsibilities within the same site?
4. What are good precedent examples of projects that densify an existing historic park setting with new buildings and landscape features?
5. What core principles need to be implemented to create a vibrant destination that is essential for reinventing a memorable place?



*The Crystal Pool is one of Glen Echo Park's iconic structures.*

## Core Recommendations

The panelists were briefed by members of the Partnership, MoCo, and NPS, as well as more than 40 stakeholders, and spent time touring the Glen Echo Park site and surrounding area to develop the recommendations found in this report. At a high level, the panel gave the following three core recommendations to the Partnership to begin to address the vision and questions it posed to the panel.

1. Rethink the Partnership's organization and the board and the entity's relationship with partners.
2. Elevate the importance of the park to the same level as the programs.
3. Grow visitation to expand the potential for new revenue streams.

The following sections include the specific steps and recommendations the Partnership and its partner organizations (MoCo and NPS) should take in relationship to these three core recommendations.



## Organization and Partnerships

**THE PARTNERSHIP** has many extraordinary accomplishments over the past 20 and more years of its history that it should be proud of, such as the following:

- Maintaining the historic character of the park;
- Facilitating and supporting the multiple arts organizations;
- Moving forward with future strategic and master planning with bold vision;
- Benefiting from the strong commitment and technical capability of the current board; and
- Retaining a group of committed and hardworking, longtime staff with strong institutional history and knowledge of the park.

After nearly two full years of the pandemic, in which the Partnership was seeking emergency funding while all programs were closed, program operators received rent relief, and the Partnership's partners were occupied with emergency pandemic response, it is ready and positioned to reset and jump-start its organization with a strategy for the future.

### The Glen Echo Park Partnership Organization

Looking to the future, after a few very difficult pandemic years, it is time to rethink the makeup of the Partnership so that the organization can reach its desired goals for the park and its community. Its staff—dedicated and hardworking as they are—is beyond capacity, and new membership is needed on the Partnership's board for new perspectives and new champions.



The park needs to increase its audience base and diversify its offerings to expand revenues and reach new participants from a wider region. Updates to the park grounds and its facilities are necessary as they continue to age. The partnership between the Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture and its collaborators could function more effectively under a different structure. The Partnership has limited fundraising capacity, and its current revenue streams are not meeting growing operational needs or generating the income needed for long-term fiscal sustainability.

To provide a broader appeal to the public and launch growth in fundraising, the Partnership should promote and develop a new cultural identity for Glen Echo Park that

- Is based on a holistic focus on the park as place;
- Embraces the identity of the historic park while redeveloping for the future;
- Focuses on the park landscape as the unifying place that brings everyone together (“One Glen Echo Park”);
- Builds a new collaborative culture upon existing relationships;
- Enables synergies of overlapping uses and activities to create a larger whole; and
- Focuses on leveraging its partnerships with NPS and MoCo to move initiatives forward.

### Pick Up Where You Have Left Off

In December 2020 the Partnership engaged a consultant to devise a Development Assessment Plan. The plan included specific recommendations with respect to a philanthropic culture shift, and it advocated for new, donor-centered fundraising (including the cultivation of major donors and the creation of an advisory group to lead fundraising efforts, such as a Friends of Glen Echo Park program and an enhanced membership program. The report also made suggestions for organizational leadership adjustments and proposed various development infrastructure changes.

Overall, the report laid out a set of sound recommendations and advocated that the Partnership select the strategies it would implement. The panel agrees with the assessment produced by the consultant in the 2020 Development Assessment Plan and recommends that the Partnership’s leadership (board and staff) prepare to do the heavy lifting to make these changes, including the future execution of a significant capital campaign (to be discussed in the “Revenue and Resources” section of this report).



*Glen Echo Park is located in a natural terrain that adds to the overall character of the park.*

### Reorganize the Glen Echo Park Partnership

The first step is to reorganize the Partnership itself to be more efficient, increase resources, and build capacity to achieve the goals set out by its current staff and board.

**Reorganize the Partnership’s board.** The Partnership must restructure its board. To do this the panel recommends the current board take the following steps:

- Hire a consultant to analyze by-laws and organizational structure to determine recommended adjustments to align with the goals of the organization (consider hiring a consultant from the [Nonprofit Board Governance Consultants](#)).
- Think through whether there should be two classes of directors. One class would comprise a broader coalition than the designated seats that exist currently (including the town of Glen Echo, Bannockburn, etc.), and a second, smaller executive class would drive strategic and financial planning for the Partnership. (This would require a by-law adjustment.)
- Consider more stringent parameters for the new executive class, including a requirement to donate or raise more substantial funds for the park.
- Increase pathways to being part of the board to help diversify the makeup of the board and increase its reach to new communities.

## Recommended Staff Structure



Recommended organizational structure for the Partnership.

**Reorganize the Partnership staff.** The Partnership should strengthen staff capacity through a reorganization that appoints a chief executive officer who can focus on the tasks of fundraising, external relations, and advocacy while overseeing park operations and planning/finance. The organizational chart above provides a recommended staff leadership structure to achieve the vision of “One Glen Echo Park.”

The descriptions of these new positions are as follows:

- CEO: reports to the board of directors and oversees the organization and partnerships with NPS and MoCo, and the two major operating arms of the Partnership, Operations and Planning/Finance.
- Operations director: oversees site operations and programming.
- Planning/finance director: oversees business, partnerships, development/fundraising, and marketing.

## Partnerships

The existing partnership agreement between Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture, MoCo, and NPS needs to be clarified before any future master development plan for Glen Echo Park can be executed.

### Existing Partnership/Cooperative Arrangement

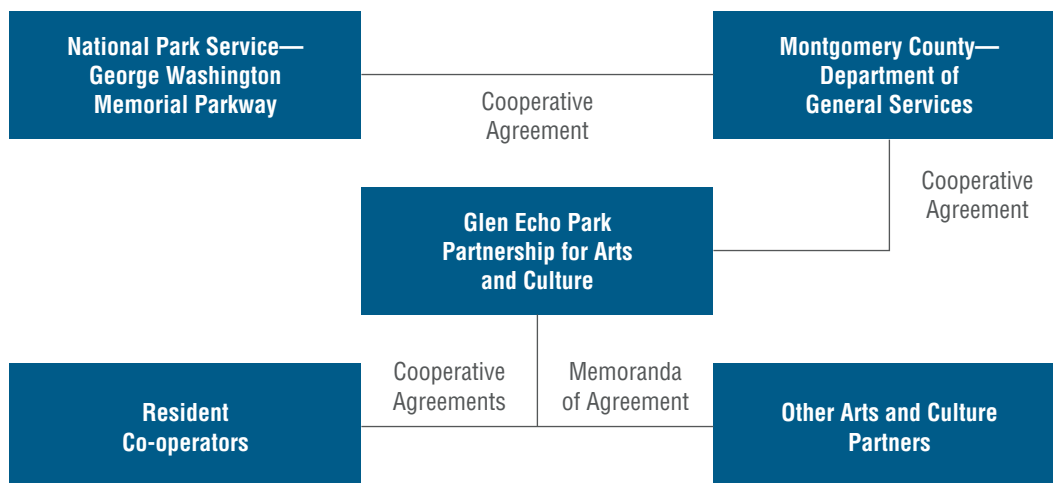
The Glen Echo Park of today was established through the Cooperative Agreement between NPS, Montgomery County, and the Glen Echo Partnership for Arts and Culture. The agreement sets out the roles and responsibilities for each partner. The agreement was renewed in 2018 for a term of 10 years.

The panel heard extensive feedback from staff, board members, partners, and stakeholders that indicated differing perspectives exist about the success of the agreement. Most notably the panel heard that it would be helpful to transfer the property to the county from NPS to simplify the partnerships and processes to implement change. The panel also learned that this may be easier said than done. From the panel’s own knowledge of this potential transfer here in the D.C. region, enacting that kind of change tends to take considerable time and political will. This could mean a potentially 10- to 20-year timeline to implement and ultimately may not even be feasible, depending on the value established for the park according to NPS procedures.

### The Recommended Path Forward

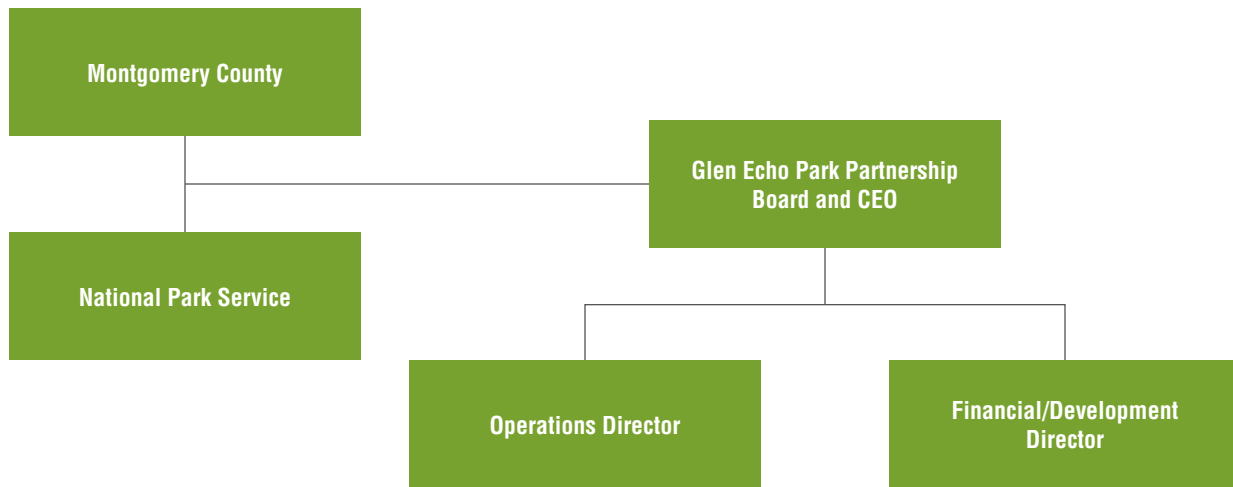
While simplification of the existing partnership to remove NPS and transfer the land to MoCo may be the long-term strategy preferred by many, it is unlikely to be implemented in

## Existing Organizational Structure



The existing partnership structure between the National Park Service, Montgomery County, and the Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture has created challenges among the involved parties.

## Proposed Organizational Structure



*The panel recommends the partnership structure be reorganized to allow for increased collaboration among the parties.*

the near term. For this reason, the ULI panel recommends that a near-term focus should be placed on how to improve the working relationship between the partners. The panel believes that attention to the future transfer of land from NPS and discussions about the existing challenges of collaborating with NPS would be better used to develop feasible solutions and improved relationships in the near term.

**Work on relationships and communications among all partners.** The panel recommends that the NPS, Montgomery County, and the Partnership (including the board) have a focused work session to review the goals and objectives of each partner, the Cooperative Agreement, and other applicable documents, and discuss ways they can improve their working relationship and communication to better align their roles and expectations about supporting the park.

The rest of this report makes other recommendations and suggests ideas that may not be consistent with the existing Cooperative Agreement. The Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture and MoCo will need to work with NPS to see whether they can find ways to implement these recommendations and ideas under the current agreement structure and adjust the ideas to allow them to be implemented or look for other alternatives.

Key to this approach and process will be establishing an improved, proactive dialogue among the partners. What is needed is a discussion of the reasons for pursuing specific ideas and a discussion of how to expedite the process of gaining approvals. A great example of this is the discussion about providing HVAC in the Spanish Ballroom to create a year-round venue for the many programs that occur (or would

like to occur) there. To achieve this goal, collaboration will be required with a careful understanding of the costs and benefits, along with a deep technical knowledge of the requirements for making such changes to a historic structure. This will require detailed studies and a technical report that will help support the best solution that all partners can rally around.

**Redefine the roles in the Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture.** In the Cooperative Agreement, the NPS designates Montgomery County to maintain the park in a manner that follows NPS guidelines and allows the county to assign those responsibilities to co-operators, such as the Partnership. Based on observations from the ULI panel, the representatives from the county were from the Department of General Services and focused mainly on maintenance of the buildings, rather than acting as co-operators of the park. The panel encourages the county to further engage the county's parks department since ultimately Glen Echo is a park and should be considered in the context of the county park system.

The current partnership structure is linear, granting responsibility from NPS to MoCo, then to Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture. The panel recommends that the partnership structure be reoriented among the three parties to be more collaborative in nature, as shown in the figure above.

This proposed structure realigns Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture, NPS, and MoCo as equal partners, focused on the success and sustainability of the park. All three partners have individual strengths that should be leveraged to ensure that the Partnership can reach its revenue, fundraising, and amenities goals.



## SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS



*The Yards Park in Southeast Washington, D.C.*

### **The Yards Park, Washington, D.C.**

The Yards Park in Southeast Washington, D.C., is the center of development of the Washington Navy Yard neighborhood. As part of Forest City's redevelopment of this neighborhood, the developer built a world-class five-acre park on land originally deeded from the federal General Services Administration to the Washington, D.C., Department of Parks and Recreation. However the District did not have the capacity to adequately maintain and program such a valuable asset. As a result, the District, Forest City, and the Capitol Riverfront BID (business improvement district) formed a three-party agreement, with structured terms, around funding, personnel, oversight, and maintenance. To learn more, visit:

**History of the Yards Park.**

### **Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture, San Francisco**

The Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture in San Francisco is a nonprofit operating the historic Fort Mason campus of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, part of the National Park System. The nonprofit hosts over 1.2 million annual visitors through a variety of on-site arts and cultural programming. To learn more, visit: <https://fortmason.org/about/>.



## Place and Programs

**GLEN ECHO PARK** is in a geographically unique location, perched on the palisades overlooking the Potomac River. The location is undoubtedly beautiful, but the assets that make the park so distinctive are also what isolate it from the surrounding region.

The park is in the middle of several large population centers and clearly within the boundaries of the D.C. metropolitan area; however, the nature of the geography and existing transportation infrastructure limits who can get to the park and how they can get to the park. Increasing access is one piece of the larger puzzle of creating a larger user base needed to support the park sustainably.

### Access

Glen Echo Park's location is challenging to access if you do not have a car. The current infrastructure around the park is automobile-centric with poor transit, pedestrian, and bicycle access, which is a barrier for many users and limits the diversity of users in the park. A large share of the local and regional population does not have or has only limited access to cars. A significant number of households, particularly in

D.C., have chosen not to have cars. In addition, large groups of the population do not drive for reasons such as age or disability. Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture and its partners need to think about this as they consider and work toward widening the list of transportation options for Glen Echo Park.



*Access to the site is limited by its geographic features and location.*





*Glen Echo Park is located in a population-rich part of the D.C. metropolitan area.*

## Driving and Parking

Significant work needs to be done by Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture, in partnership with MoCo and NPS, to increase the ease of access from more transportation options (cycling, transit) and disincentivize driving when possible. Building more parking is not in line with the goals of MoCo, NSP, or Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture in terms of being environmentally sustainable. This is not a small task, however, given the long list of access constraints. It is important that even small interventions be pursued and a new perspective on who Glen Echo Park is designed for is adopted.

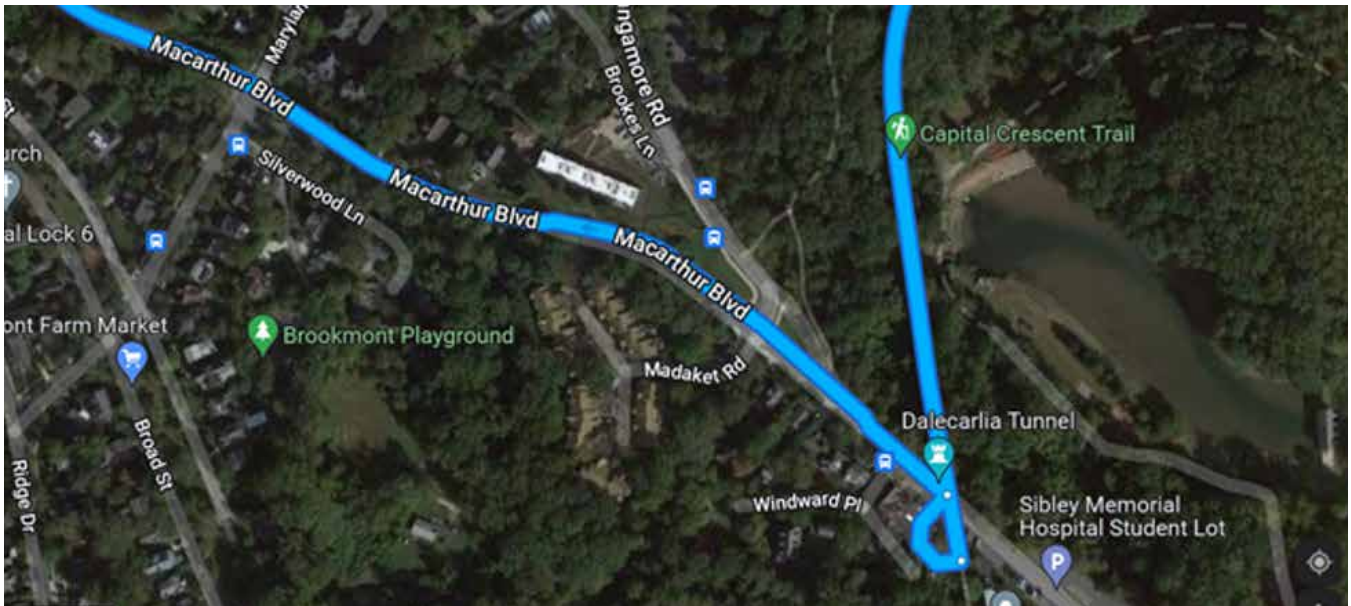
**Evaluate daily parking needs.** The Partnership should conduct a parking study to determine the actual daily parking needs for the site to avoid building additional parking for the park. The panel was told that parking demand is only high enough to require all the spaces Glen Echo Park currently has—including the overflow space on the lawn—during special events at the busy season of the year. For the majority of the year, parking needs are currently low, based on observations and discussions with staff who are at the site daily. This already accounts for much of the site’s impervious surfaces, which contributes to many of the stormwater issues the park experiences today.



*Parking at Glen Echo Park is often underused.*

For the known days each year where excess parking is needed for events, the Partnership should find alternatives, as it has done in the past, for off-site parking, transit connections, and the promotion of alternative modes to access the park.

**Disincentivize driving to Glen Echo Park.** NPS is working to decarbonize parks, which would include Glen Echo. Now is the time for Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture to work with its partners at MoCo and NPS to increase the ease of access from more transportation options (cycling, transit) and disincentivize driving when possible. The Partnership should also consider charging for parking on site once it has successfully begun to phase in other transportation mode options.



GOOGLE MAPS

The Capital Crescent Trail has 850,000 users per year.

### Multimodal Access to the Park

Given the conditions described, the following are recommendations for Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture, in partnership with Montgomery County Parks and the National Park Service, to incentivize other modes of transportation.

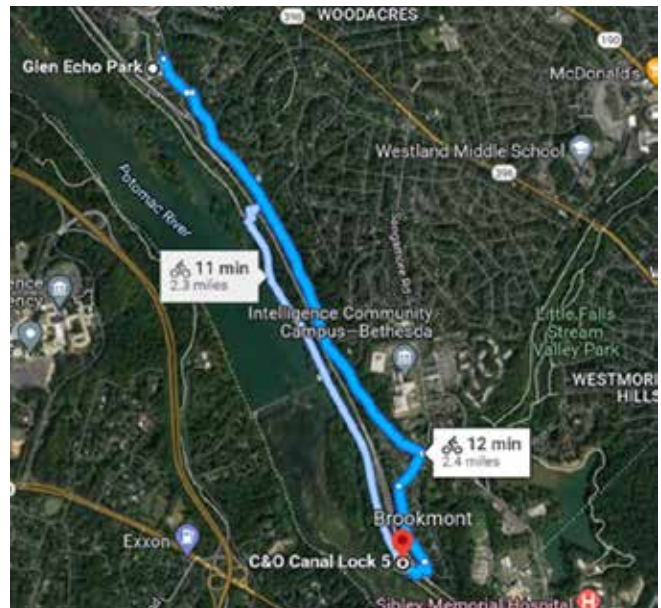
#### Leverage the existing cycling network and community.

Glen Echo Park is located at the intersection of multiple cycle paths and trails with millions of visitors each year. A huge opportunity exists to connect to these existing networks and integrate the park into the cycling community.

- Capital Crescent Trail—850,000 users per year; and
- C&O Canal towpath—5 million visitors per year.

Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture needs to partner with NPS and MoCo to provide improved trail signage, invest in trail improvements that would enhance bicycle access to the site (MacArthur Boulevard side path to park entrance), and reach out to the cycling community so that people know the park is there and has access to and from these networks.

The Partnership also needs to work with MoCo to advocate for the implementation of the MoCo Bike Plan to ensure the bicycle network in the region continues to build and include Glen Echo Park as an asset and destination to the bicycle network in the community.



GOOGLE MAPS

The C&O Canal towpath has 5 million users per year.





01

*Entry points to Glen Echo Park are steep at the front entrance and run along a busy, narrow roadway.*

**Enhance the pedestrian experience.** Walkability is critical to successful placemaking. As the Partnership and users are aware, the entrance to the park from both the original front entrance along MacArthur Boulevard and the parking areas is not clear, and improved ADA access is needed along with overall site safety and access for pedestrians.

Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture needs to work with NPS and MoCo to advocate and improve the pedestrian facilities to and from the park to ensure better access in and around the site and improved overall pedestrian safety. The three partners also need to add wayfinding signage to the entrances and throughout the site to improve the site experience. The panel also recommends updates to the entrance routes as part of the larger pedestrian improvement project to provide a sense of place and excitement as one enters the park.

Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture, with its partners, should also consider holding a pedestrian audit exercise to better understand the pedestrian experience from their users and identify short-, mid-, and long-term improvement projects.

**Link to transit.** Adding additional links to transit is one of the many strategies to increase usership and diversify the audience of Glen Echo Park. The panel recommends the following to make access to Glen Echo Park a viable option via Metro:

- Move the county bus stop onto the property at the Glen Echo Park original signed entrance.
- Develop a branded electric shuttle to the Bethesda Metro station.
- For peak volume days, continue to use a satellite parking/shuttle model.

**Consider shared mobility partnerships.** Shared mobility is another strategy for the Partnership and its partners to pursue as additional options to help increase access opportunities to the park, independently, or as first/last-mile connections to other modes of transportation, such as Metro.

The Partnership should promote Lyft/Uber or other ride-share companies to come and visit the park and pursue partnerships with these companies to provide discounts to users who wish to access the park. The Partnership should also work with MoCo and NSP to advocate for a Capital Bikeshare station that would serve Glen Park Echo and include signage from the trails to notify users of a docking station at Glen Echo Park.





*The existing central grounds of Glen Echo Park.*

## Climate Mitigation and a Path to Net Zero

Glen Echo Park's federal (NPS) and county (MoCo General Services) partners have legislative climate goals and a timeline to get to net zero. The federal government has made a commitment by executive order to get to net zero. Every procurement decision will be made with an eye to decarbonization, and every agency, including NPS, is being asked to develop climate plans. MoCo has an aggressive climate action plan. Its goals are set for an 80 percent reduction by 2027 and carbon neutrality (net zero) by 2032.

President Biden's executive order, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/12/08/fact-sheet-president-biden-signs-executive-order-catalyzing-americas-clean-energy-economy-through-federal-sustainability/>

MoCo Department of Environmental Protection, Climate Action Portal, <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/green/climate/index.html>

Every federal agency has also been asked to develop climate adaptation plans, to help prepare for the increasing impacts of climate change on stormwater, wind, extreme heat, wildfires, hurricanes, and other climate-exacerbated natural disasters (<https://www.sustainability.gov/adaptation/>).

The biggest climate-related threats that will impact Glen Echo Park are stormwater and extreme heat. Stormwater threatens the physical infrastructure of the park, and extreme heat hurts the people and the programming. Extreme rain events threaten the long-term viability of the park itself (buildings and infrastructure), while extreme heat threatens the success of programs, and the health and happiness of parkgoers.

### Adopt a Strategy for a Path to Net Zero

Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture and its partners, specifically NPS, should map out the steps to take to begin to plan for a future where Glen Echo Park is a decarbonized facility and in line with the NPS's and MoCo's climate plans.

The path to net zero for Glen Echo Park would include the following actions:

- Invest in energy efficiency for existing buildings and plan for energy efficiency of future buildings.
- Electrify anything that is not already electric (gas infrastructure is not the answer), recognizing specific activities (like glass blowing) will need to stay on propane in the short term. Electrification can extend beyond the buildings to electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure.

- Invest in renewable energy, on site and off site (on the administration building and flat roofs, and in the existing parking area).
- Connect this new clean energy infrastructure through a microgrid, and federal and county partners (and the town of Glen Echo) might provide some interesting energy infrastructure partnership opportunities.

## Integrate Climate Adaptation and Resilience Strategies into the Park and Its Mission

Glen Echo Park can and should tackle climate adaptation and resilience through the following strategies:

- Stormwater: permeable surfaces, rain gardens, channeling, including channeling water toward the lower Minnehaha Creek; and
- Extreme heat: benches and tents become seasonal cooling stations and a splash pad, air-conditioning upgrades in existing buildings, such as the Spanish Ballroom.

More important, climate adaptation and resilience strategies can be part of the arts and culture, educational mission, and enhanced programming of Glen Echo Park. Examples of how this could work include the following:

- Solar panels in the parking lot are a visible commitment to net zero and climate action.
- Bioswales are an educational opportunity and can enhance park aesthetics if done right and could be integrated into temporary art installations.
- Understanding hydrology of the site helps with broader regional education on the Chesapeake Bay watershed, George Washington Memorial Parkway conservancy mission, connecting the site to the C&O Canal and the Potomac River, and possibly to an on-site aquarium and activating the Minnehaha Brook as part of the park.
- A semi-permanent outdoor theater space uses minimal energy, activates the field near the Crystal Pool, and expands areas for theater and dance programming.
- Heat mitigation enhances park visitor experience and creates more space and more time for centers of excellence to engage and grow.



SHUTTERSTOCK

*Creating on-site renewable energy sources is one piece of the puzzle for Glen Echo Park and the resilience goals of the Partnership, the National Park Service, and Montgomery County.*



SHUTTERSTOCK

*Hydrology on site could be improved with bioswale integration, which also offers opportunities for outdoor education and programming.*



ULI

*The park's hydrology is impacted by the site's slope and impervious surfaces.*



## Finance Glen Echo Park's Development Concept with Sustainability

A focus on climate mitigation and resilience can potentially fund major capital needs (buildings and infrastructure) and may expedite the development process (given federal and county priorities). Funding opportunities include the following:

- Federal funding for climate mitigation and resilience;
- State/county funding for infrastructure enhancements;
- State/county funding for energy efficiency and renewable energy (rebates, renewable energy credits, and C-PACE); and
- Fundraising campaigns for sustainability interventions through major donors, foundations, and corporate giving.

These agencies have money for these types of projects, and this could be a strategy for the Partnership to get money more quickly for capital and maintenance expenses needed for the park. For example, the federal infrastructure bill can pay for decarbonizing transportation infrastructure, investing in EV/solar parking for the NPS lot, and possibly

for microgrid and stormwater infrastructure enhancements. Federal agency climate action plans will come with money to decarbonize federal buildings and the federal fleet. If Glen Echo Park's buildings and fleet can be classified as federal, then federal funds could underwrite these renovations and on-site renewable energy.

The Partnership and its partners also have opportunities to use county funding to fund on-site renewable energy (renewable energy credit market, C-PACE, state renewable portfolio standard) projects. The partners can also do a small capital campaign for on-site solar, bioswales, or other climate mitigation strategies or obtain grants from local environmental organizations like the Chesapeake Conservancy.

## Creative Placemaking

Enhancing Glen Echo Park's sense of place to achieve the strategies described in this report will require that the Partnership find ways to leverage what the park already has to offer to increase and diversify the audience, in both demographics and geography.



*The Glen Echo grounds are known for their yurts, which currently house pottery studios.*



*The pottery programs at Glen Echo Park are one of the key arts programs that bring users to the park.*

### Elevate Arts and Culture to Activate the Park

The existing arts and cultural programs at the park are alive and well; however, their audience is limited to those who know they exist, and these programs are not obvious to new users or visitors to the park who may not know all the incredible work that is happening on the park grounds every day.

The Partnership needs to focus on ways to better foster collaboration between the various arts and culture groups to better streamline the promotion of the programs, their presence and importance to the site, and to create opportunities to invite the larger community to be a part of offerings that are special and unique to Glen Echo Park. Some initial ideas the Partnership could pursue include the following:

- Central gallery store representing Glen Echo Park Arts;
- Regular arts events throughout the year;
- Shared marketing campaign efforts and resources;
- Coordinated fundraising for the different arts organizations; and
- Coordinated program development, such as mentorship between the different groups to increase visibility of programs whose audiences are limited.

The Partnership also needs to leverage the arts community to better expand the community and invite newcomers to experience the park's programming and diversify the park's users. Following are some ideas to consider:

- Entering into partnerships with community service and arts organizations in the District of Columbia and the region;
- Increasing/coordinating outreach/instruction in underserved neighborhoods;
- Transporting school students; and
- Engaging teenagers/young adults.



*Adventure Theatre calls Glen Echo Park its home, as does a long list of other art and culture programming.*





*Glen Echo has a mix of indoor and outdoor performance spaces.*

The following sections provide ideas of the kinds of offerings the panel believes will attract visitors to experience the unique offerings of Glen Echo Park.

**Near-term activation strategies.** The panel proposed the follow possible near-term strategies for the park:

- Sheltered, flexible outdoor spaces infused with arts;
- Outdoor spaces that allow for an expansion of programming from centers of excellence;
- Community-based art projects;
- Rain garden with artistic elements;
- Digital murals to add to nighttime experience; and
- YouTube channel to share demonstrations of arts and culture, and online classes connected to the centers of excellence.

**Long-term activation strategies.** The panel suggests the following as possibilities for the longer term.

- Enhancing facilities to have more arts and culture for more of the year (HVAC in the ballroom, a better gallery to sell all the physical art);
- Building new facilities that provide more and better space to grow the centers for excellence (new studios for visual arts, new performance spaces for more dances, more theater companies);
- Increasing accessibility and the experience to make the arts and culture more accessible to all;
- Infusing the outdoor space with arts and culture, from benches and rain gardens to existing and new outdoor arts and culture spaces; and
- Potentially leveraging the Clara Barton House to expand and enhance Glen Echo Park's connection to history and to space for arts and culture.

### Focus on the Park as a Place for Amusement

Build upon the physical presence of history as an amusement park to create more entertainment and visitor excitement. The ability to expand the facilities and bolster the centers of excellence will rely upon enhancing the park's identity, welcoming more visitors more often, and generating more revenue. This is in addition to enacting a robust fundraising structure.



*Creating more passive activities for parkgoers could increase the number of people who use, love, and support Glen Echo Park for many years to come.*





Flickr

*Unique offerings from Glen Echo Park, such as an accessible playground, could help bring more users from the region to the park.*

The following section provides ideas of the kinds of offerings the panel believes will attract visitors and enhance the financial bottom line for the park. Keep in mind that if more people are drawn to the park, the Partnership will want to ensure that vendors and operators are charging money to monetize the enhanced number of visitors.

**Near-term activation strategies.** The panel suggests picking several of the following strategies to explore.

- Regular recurring yoga in the park with an instructor;
- Bark socials for dogs and their owners;
- Pop-up beer gardens in cordoned-off areas, sponsored by local breweries;
- Pop-up stands for vendors to use;
- Pop-up stages for performance artists;
- Food truck-a-paloozas near the park’s front entrance;
- Trivia nights or bingo nights in the bumper car pavilion;
- Weekly summer movie nights in the park;
- Life-sized games in the park (e.g., cornhole, movable chess);
- Large-format toys that could be brought out on the lawn for children to enjoy;
- Trails and gardens to experience the nature of the site;

- Food trucks to activate the space and get people to stay longer (could be culturally themed to reflect diversity of Montgomery County);
- Coffee shop and bike station oriented toward cyclists;
- Community kitchen/catering facility (possibly for startup businesses).

**Long-term activation strategies.** The panel suggests the following may be successful long-term strategies.

- First-in-class accessible playground modeled after Clemyjontri Park that can be a regional draw for families in Montgomery County, D.C., and Arlington;
- Splash park to provide summertime relief for children;
- Destination restaurant/bar that is a regional draw, perhaps with an entertainment component;
- Pinstripes (food and beverage plus bowling), ax throwing, boardwalk bar and arcade (harks back to history of Glen Echo Park as an amusement park); and
- Catering facility with indoor/outdoor component that could host events or conferences 365 days/year that would not compete with arts/cultural offerings and would allow for significant recurring revenue.



## Revenue and Resources

**ENHANCEMENTS THAT FURTHER THE CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE** and ensure the sustainability of Glen Echo Park will be paid for through three main mechanisms: a fundraising campaign, revenue through park activation, and federal and state resources.

### Fundraising Campaign

If the Partnership wants to achieve long-term aims of expanding the facilities and having greater impact related to its centers of excellence, it will need a significant capital campaign. As mentioned earlier in this report, the Partnership should use the Development Assessment Plan from 2020.

The plan includes specific recommendations with respect to a philanthropic cultural shift that should be used by the Partnership now, including advocating for donor-centered fundraising (including a Friends of Glen Echo Park program

and a much-enhanced membership program) and suggestions for organizational leadership adjustments.

The recommendations in the report are sound, and resources should be devoted to its implementation as quickly as possible, prioritizing the naming of a CEO and a full-time staff person who should execute the plan in concert with the CEO. The Partnership also needs a subcommittee that owns the capital campaign. This will require restructuring its board, including consideration of a distinct class of board members who have fundraising expertise and provide needed executive leadership.





*The Spanish Ballroom is one of Glen Echo Park's biggest attractions and vital to the local dance community.*

10

## **New Revenue through Park Activation**

The preceding recommendations about placemaking and site activation will also create opportunities for the park to increase revenue. This includes the Partnership synergizing the centers of excellence and programming the park with short- and longer-term amenities and programs that harken back to the “amusement” component of Glen Echo Park and drive visitors from across the region to visit and spend money at the park.

## **Federal and State Resources**

The Partnership should deploy its restructured staff as soon as possible to leverage federal infrastructure and climate mitigation funding for new facilities and necessary infrastructure. In the near term, the Partnership should task its partner at MoCo Department of General Services and Montgomery Parks to assist with tasks as part of their reconfigured and delineated partnership.



*Underused space at Glen Echo offers new opportunities for activation, fundraising, and investment.*

11



## Conclusion

**THE GLEN ECHO PARK PARTNERSHIP FOR ARTS AND CULTURE** board and staff have accomplished much over the past several years, creating a dynamic arts and cultural destination, and a one-of-a-kind place in the D.C. region and the country. After more than two years of delayed progress because of the COVID-19 pandemic, now is the time to reinvigorate the Partnership's goals through a strategic reorganization of staff and the board of directors.

The Partnership is set up for success in this endeavor with the consultant recommendations from the 2020 Development Assessment Plan it already has in hand. It should make these changes and begin to lay the groundwork for the future.

The ULI panel is confident that the Partnership's board and staff will be able to use the recommendations in this report to leverage their existing partnerships, their existing patrons, and champions of the park to achieve its fundraising, operational, site development, and park management and programming goals.



# About the Panel

## Michael Stern

Jackson, Wyoming

Panel Chair

Stern is an independent urban and landscape design consultant, guided by the mission of creating compelling places for people's everyday lives. Working collaboratively with other design firms and public and private clients, he brings a broad outlook and extensive experience to each design or planning assignment.

Before establishing MAS Places in 2017, he was a founding principal of Strada, a cross-disciplinary design firm in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Stern led the firm's urban design and landscape architecture efforts, working closely with architects and designers on projects from riverfront parks to district master plans. Before founding Strada, he was involved in many of Pittsburgh's major urban design and planning efforts. He led the Pittsburgh Downtown Plan, the first comprehensive master plan for the greater downtown area in 35 years, and the Pittsburgh Regional Parks Master Plan; these documents are still touchstones for planning in that city, years after their completion.

A native New Yorker, Stern has professional experience in the New York firms of Cooper, Robertson & Partners and Quennell Rothchild & Partners that gave him broad training in the various aspects of planning, design, and construction of private and public urban precincts and landscapes. His subsequent teaching and research while a full-time faculty member at the University of Virginia School of Architecture focused on understanding the changing nature of urban form and organization in the face of new technologies and economies.

He has lectured widely, and he has published and edited numerous articles and journals on planning, urban design, and landscape design theory. He is an active member of the Urban Land Institute and has participated in the national Urban Revitalization Council, as well as on numerous Advisory Services panels across the country. He holds a BA in anthropology from Grinnell College and a master of landscape architecture from the Harvard Graduate School of Design.

## Billy Grayson

Washington, D.C.

Grayson is the executive vice president (EVP) of centers and initiatives and the executive director for the Center for Sustainability and Economic Performance at the Urban Land Institute, a nonprofit education and research organization that focuses on land use, real estate, and urban development.

As executive director for the Center for Sustainability, Grayson manages a team leading programs on climate risk and resilience, health and wellness, and building energy and environmental performance. ULI works with members, community leaders, coalition partners, and other key stakeholders to build awareness around sustainability issues in the built environment, and to provide its members with the tools and resources they need to cost-effectively drive sustainability into their projects and operations. As the EVP for centers and initiatives, Grayson also oversees ULI's Housing, Infrastructure, and Real Estate Economics and Capital Markets programs.

Grayson's previous experience includes leading sustainability and environmental, social, and governance efforts in real estate (Liberty Property Trust), the industrial supply chain (WESCO), and the electronics industry (the Electronics Industry Citizenship Coalition). He has a BA from Claremont McKenna College and an MBA from the Robert H Smith School of Business at the University of Maryland and is a LEED AP.

## Juanita Hardy

Silver Spring, Maryland

Hardy has a passion for fostering healthy, thriving, and equitable places to live, work, learn, and play through her work with individuals and businesses. She has over 45 years of business experience, including 31 years with IBM, where she retired in 2005, and nine years in the real estate industry. She also has over 35 years' experience in the arts as a nonprofit leader, trustee, and patron of the arts.



Hardy was ULI senior visiting fellow for creative placemaking (2016–2018). Since that position, she has served as a ULI consultant on creative placemaking and equity adviser.

With IBM, Hardy held leadership positions that spanned software development, systems engineering, and management consulting. After retiring from IBM, she founded Tiger Management Consulting Group, an executive coaching and business consulting services firm. Hardy's client portfolio includes both for-profit and nonprofit organizations, including Right Management, a global human capital development firm, where she has served as an executive coach since 2006.

Hardy is the former executive director of CulturalDC (2013–2015), a nonprofit that provides space for artists and creative placemaking services for real estate developers. She co-founded Millennium Arts Salon, an art education initiative, in 2000. She has been an avid collector of fine art since 1985.

Hardy was recognized as a Minority Business Leader by the *Washington Business Journal* in 2010. She is an accomplished writer and public speaker. Her articles and essays have appeared in magazines and journals in the United States and abroad. Her recent writing includes a pentalogy of articles on creative placemaking in *Urban Land* magazine. She is one of the authors of ULI's 2020 publication *Creative Placemaking: Sparking Development with Arts and Culture*.

Hardy is a member of the ULI Placemaking Council and served on the leadership team for the 2021–2022 fiscal year. She is a member of the board of directors of the Mosaic Theatre Company based in Washington, D.C., and the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation based in Baltimore. Hardy received a BS in mathematics from Livingstone College in Salisbury, North Carolina (1973). She did graduate work in operations research at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. (1974–1975) and in business entrepreneurship at the University of Maryland Baltimore County (2005–2006).

## Aileen RG Horn

Bethesda, Maryland

Horn, an architect in practice for over three decades, imbues all her works with the spirit of hospitality essential to hotel design. She collaborates with owners and developers throughout the entitlement and design process. Her portfolio includes hospitality, institutional, urban infill, historic adaptive

use, and community-focused residential projects. Notable and successful projects for major brands and independent hotels include some of the first multiple-brand hotels for Marriott and Hilton in the Mid-Atlantic region. Her broad regional experience is a strong foundation for the national expansion of KGD's hospitality practice.

As a project director in multiple practice areas, she is responsible for maintaining client relationships, sharing and preserving the institutional memory essential for exceptional customer service and high-quality, responsive design. Horn orchestrates the delivery of complex projects across dedicated project teams. She is deeply committed to sustainable and resilient practices and has been working with these industry tools for over 10 years.

Horn is a painter, textile and fashion designer active in the local arts community and passionate about the role of the arts in creating and engaging community. New development done well invigorates existing communities, enriches the urban fabric, and enhances the vitality of local culture. Horn leads charrettes, presents LEED and AIA Continuing Education courses, and speaks at national conferences. She serves on advisory and planning committees for USGBC and the Urban Land Institute. She is a past board member of Silk Painters International.

## Paul Moyer

Washington, D.C.

Moyer brings 34 years of experience directing dozens of planning projects in the Washington, D.C., metro region, as well as across the country and globe. Projects have included master planning, waterfront and watershed planning, transportation and transit planning, campus planning, and site-specific planning and design.

As principal of the Jacobs Advance Planning Group, Moyer maintains the long-term vision for projects while establishing the practical, near-term steps, decisions, and milestones necessary to create project momentum. He facilitates this by communicating a clear understanding of the planning process, allowing for appropriate stakeholder buy-in, and defining ways that the client and other relevant parties can contribute and ultimately take ownership of the project's successful implementation.

Moyer collaborates with clients and provides planning leadership to proactively solve complex problems, establish implementable plans, and facilitate processes to gain support for a wide range of projects. His expertise in helping clients of all scales to understand and address technical project issues from environmental, economic, transportation, to urban design, helps him drive projects toward the best solution for each project, client, and set of stakeholders.

His work spans private, local municipal, and federal clients and has been recognized both locally and nationally by the American Planning Association and American Society of Landscape Architecture. He has a degree in urban planning from the University of Cincinnati, is certified by the American Institute of Certified Planners, and is an Envision Sustainability Professional.

## Jamison “Jamie” Weinbaum

Washington, D.C.

Weinbaum is a seasoned real estate leader and senior executive with significant experience in multifamily and mixed-use development, including sourcing, acquisition, entitlement, and comprehensive oversight of design, construction, and lease-up through to stabilization. He values building teams of committed and accomplished professionals to ensure projects are successfully completed on time and on budget. Weinbaum has focused on leveraging his vast public- and private-sector background to build communities through thoughtful engagement and collaboration with diverse stakeholders.

He currently leads real estate development activities for MidCity, a Bethesda, Maryland-based company, with a focus on building out a 4 million-square-foot pipeline across numerous urban infill properties. Before joining MidCity, he served as chief operating officer of Ditto Residential, where he led all development and construction-related activities as well as long-term strategic growth initiatives. Before joining Ditto, Weinbaum managed large-scale, mixed-use residential and retail projects at JBG Smith. He also previously worked in the public sector as the former director of the DC Office of Zoning, and on behalf of the D.C. deputy mayor for planning and economic development.

Weinbaum holds a JD from the George Washington University School of Law and a BA from Wake Forest University.

## Audrey Wennink

Chicago, Illinois

Wennink directs MPC's transportation efforts and coordinates transportation initiatives with other facets of planning including affordable housing, land use, equity and the environment. She leads transportation research and advocacy efforts such as pursuing sustainable funding for transportation in Illinois, integration of performance-based planning methods into transportation practice, and developing efforts to boost transportation equity.

Under her leadership, MPC developed the *Toward Universal Mobility* report defining needed improvements to the region's transportation system to benefit people with disabilities and seniors. The *Where the Sidewalk Ends* report documents the state of municipal ADA transition planning in the Chicago Metropolitan Area. Her work on transportation equity includes contributing to research on understanding mobility barriers for marginalized communities, studying how equity is used as a project prioritization criterion by metropolitan planning organizations, and development of a toolkit for employers to support transportation needs of workers in disconnected communities. The *Transit Means Business* report she spearheaded highlights the need for transit investment to support jobs in the region. She also leads the MPC Transportation Advisory Committee composed of regional business and public policy leaders.

Before MPC, Wennink was a transportation planning and policy consultant for 12 years with national expertise in transit, traffic safety, freight, and performance-based planning. Prior to her planning career she served in various communications roles in Washington, D.C., and Chicago.

A Chicago resident for more than 20 years, Wennink is an advisory board member of the Greater Chicago chapter of WTS, a professional organization to advance women in the transportation industry. She also serves as a member of the national advisory board of Young Professionals in Transportation. In addition, she is a member of Lambda Alpha International, an honorary society focusing on land economics and planning issues. Wennink also serves on the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning's transportation committee. She holds a BA in English and Spanish from Colby College and a master's in urban planning and policy from the University of Illinois at Chicago. She is a fellow of the University of Chicago's Harris School's Civic Leadership Academy.



Urban Land Institute  
2001 L Street, NW  
Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20036-4948  
[uli.org](http://uli.org)