

ULI ADVISORY SERVICES PROGRAM

CELEBRATING THE SUCCESS OF ADVISORY SERVICES

Where We Have Been and Where We Are Headed



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 2020 alone, more than 2,600 events 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. Follow ULI on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram.

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 a five-day panel assignment is intensive. It includes an in-depth briefing day composed of a tour of the site and meetings with sponsor representatives, a day of hour-long interviews of typically 50 to 100 key community representatives, and two days 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 five-day panel assignments are able to make accurate assessments of a sponsor's issues and to 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.



1947–2019

 **72 years active**

 **750+ panels**

 **Panels convened in more than 22 countries around the world**

Since 2010

 **150+ panel engagements**

 **Top areas of focus**

- Economic development
- Downtowns
- Adaptive use/building reuse
- Housing
- Healthy neighborhoods and corridors
- Infrastructure

 **1,100+ ULI members and industry experts engaged**

A Letter from ULI's Global CEO

Of all the Urban Land Institute's many offerings, perhaps the one that best delivers an ideal combination of member value and mission advancement is the Advisory Services program.

With the goal of bringing the finest expertise in the real estate field to bear on land use planning and development projects, programs, and policies, ULI's Advisory Services program convenes multidisciplinary panels of member experts to provide unbiased, market-driven feedback on some of the most challenging problems facing communities.

Since 1947, ULI's Advisory Services program has assembled well over 700 global ULI-member teams to help sponsors find creative, practical solutions for issues such as downtown redevelopment, economic development, land management strategies, evaluation of development potential, growth management, community revitalization, provision of low-cost and affordable housing, asset management strategies, and more.

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This report, which profiles the impact of 10 Advisory Services panels that occurred between 2015 and 2019, demonstrates the breadth and depth of the program's work—including the communities ULI serves, the members ULI engages, and the value ULI delivers.

We at ULI believe that the Advisory Services program is our mission made real, and we are proud of the impact we have had—and will continue to have—by bringing the best of practice in the field of land use and real estate to communities across the world.



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Introduction

Of all the Urban Land Institute's many offerings, perhaps the one that best delivers an ideal combination of member value and mission advancement is the Advisory Services program.

For more than 70 years, this program has consistently delivered pragmatic, unbiased, and nonpartisan solutions to complex urban development problems faced by cities around the world.

Prospective sponsors, including local governments, private developers, community development corporations, and civic and philanthropic organizations, turn to ULI when they need help with land use issues.

What makes Advisory Services such an effective and trusted resource is the land use expertise and objectivity of the program participants—ULI members representing all aspects of industry disciplines.

Since the program was established, thousands of dedicated ULI members have served as panelists, developing solutions for more than 700 assignments spanning the full spectrum of real estate-related issues,

from reusing obsolete waterfront industrial properties to rebuilding downtowns ravaged by economic decline, natural disasters, or both.

Typically, service on an Advisory Services panel entails ULI members from outside the community volunteering to evaluate the assignment.

The process includes site tours and numerous interviews with a wide variety of stakeholders that inform the preparation of initial recommendations that are presented at the conclusion of the panel's visit. This is followed by a more detailed report of solutions provided to panel sponsors.

Advisory Services has a strong track record of producing tangible, lasting results by changing the way local stakeholders think about and approach land use planning, design, and development.

As the program has evolved, the scope of the Advisory Services program has expanded to include a particular emphasis on issues of universal importance, such

as increasing the stock of attainable housing, building resilience to mitigate climate change, and redeveloping cities to make them more inclusive and to reflect the growing diversity of older as well as younger generations. Through this approach, panel recommendations developed for one assignment can be more easily adapted for and applied to other communities, further extending ULI's time-honored tradition of sharing land use knowledge and expertise.

Although support from community sponsors continues to be a key funding source for Advisory Services, the program has attracted significant philanthropic support from the ULI Foundation, as well as the Kresge Foundation, Colorado Health Foundation, and The JPB Foundation, each of whom sponsored panels included in this report. This reflects a more proactive approach to community assistance that allows ULI to proactively identify panel assignments in addition to responding to requests from individual panel sponsors.



ULI

Panelists at a park in Detroit's Fitzgerald neighborhood.

This report contains 10 profiles of panels that took place between 2015 and 2019, covering topics ranging from improving urban resilience in Miami, to expanding park space in Detroit, to enhancing the economic competitiveness of Durban, South Africa. In several cases, implementation of at least some of the panel recommendations is underway, demonstrating the power of Advisory Services to make a difference locally and globally.

ULI is deeply grateful to the panel sponsors, partner organizations, and hundreds of community stakeholders whose ideas, concerns, and insights helped inform the challenges outlined in the panel

assignments. Special thanks are owed to the more than 150 panelists (identified in this report by the company titles/positions they held when the panels took place) who readily volunteered their time and expertise to deliver practical recommendations to ensure the best outcomes for communities.

With so many factors affecting how our cities grow— demographic and population shifts, new economic drivers, technology advancements, environmental concerns, and infrastructure needs, to name a few— the advice offered by the Advisory Services program has never been more necessary.

“The Advisory Services program is, in my opinion, the very best outreach program offered by ULI. It truly reflects our core mission of making the built environment better for all.”

—Jim DeFrancia
ULI Life Trustee and principal,
Lowe Enterprises

Promoting Equitable Growth and Inclusivity in North Charleston, South Carolina

Central to ULI's Advisory Services work is helping communities prosper and evolve in ways that are more equitable for all residents, particularly those for whom economic opportunities and enhanced livability have proved elusive even as the greater community thrives. The city of North Charleston, South Carolina, is one example of the ULI's work in this area.



PANEL HIGHLIGHTS

Where: North Charleston, South Carolina

What: Adaptive use and building reuse, economic development

When: March 31–April 5, 2019

Who: Andrew Irvine (panel chair), Catherine Buell, Veronica Davis, Aletha Dunston, Rosemarie Hepner, Thomas Jansen, Emil Malizia, Paul Peters, Lance Robbins, and Gayle Starr

Sponsors: North Charleston, Charleston County, and the Coastal Conservation League

[Knowledge Finder](#)

Following the 1996 closure of its largest employer, the Charleston Naval Base and Shipyard, the city rebounded quickly, rebuilding its economy on the strong industrial roots established by its military heritage. New industry and manufacturing have more than replaced the job loss caused by base closure, and the city is now the third largest in the state of South Carolina. However, not all North Charleston residents and neighborhoods have enjoyed this growth, as highlighted by the city's tallest building, the former Charleston Naval Hospital, which has remained shuttered since the base closure.

At 10 stories and about 400,000 square feet, the hospital, which sits on 22 acres, is a towering reminder of the community's loss. Unsuccessful attempts to redevelop the hospital have led to significant disinvestment in the surrounding neighborhoods, which are occupied largely by minority residents whose incomes and rates of employment are significantly lower than those of North Charleston in general. The decline of these neighborhoods, located in an area known as the "Neck," has made the hospital a

symbol of contentious disappointment in a community looking for continued prosperity. The neighborhoods near the hospital site lack access to high-quality open space, shops, grocery stores, and community centers, and they offer few options for walking or biking.

In April 2019, North Charleston, Charleston County, and the Coastal Conservation League asked a ULI Advisory Services panel to offer a fresh perspective on the hospital site's future—including the merits of demolishing the hospital—as well as to provide advice on catalyzing economic growth in the surrounding neighborhoods.

In its evaluation of options for the site, the panel considered the following factors:

- Land uses and improvements in the study area that would enhance and support (a) the city's bus rapid transit (BRT) plans, (b) Charleston County's effort to establish a community services hub, (c) the city of North Charleston's goal to eliminate the food desert in the area, and (d) the city's desire to preserve the unique identity and retain the affordability of the existing neighborhoods;

- Land uses and improvements in the study area that might prove detrimental to the surrounding neighborhoods and contribute to displacement of residents and businesses;
- Tools and strategies to encourage investment within the study area while minimizing or mitigating disruption to existing neighborhoods;
- The cost/benefit of adaptive use, compared with demolition and new construction, as modes of redevelopment for properties in the study area;
- The role of private/public partnerships in helping to ensure success of the redevelopment effort;
- The type of public investments needed in the area to make it more walkable and bikeable; and
- Ways to engage community residents in the study so they have a vested interest in the outcome.

Panelists noted that the loss of the major economic driver left the area underserved and lacking in public investment on both financial and policy levels. Before moving forward with any redevelopment, they urged the city to give equal attention to

enhancing the area and maintaining its affordability. The panel advised that the city strive to unite the neighborhoods surrounding the site through a shared vision and community identity. This would entail proactive measures by the local government and nongovernmental organizations to mitigate potentially negative effects of growth and ensure that issues pertaining to social equity, affordability, and inclusion were addressed.

“Our work centered around the need to restore a sense of place in an area that had been left behind in North Charleston’s economic recovery,” noted panel chair Andrew Irvine, senior principal at Stantec in Denver. “We saw in the hospital site a way for the community to create a destination that would bring much needed economic growth to underserved neighborhoods, benefiting existing residents and attracting new ones.”

Following tours of the site and surrounding neighborhoods, as well as extensive stakeholder interviews, the panel concluded that the hospital should be demolished to make way for a transformative revitalization. Based on that initial finding, panelists made detailed recommendations grouped into the following categories:

- **Neighborhood and quality of life:** Enhance links and activate open space to support healthy lifestyles and social interaction; create job-training opportunities; find ways to improve access to fresh food until the redevelopment attracts grocery stores; support the proposed BRT route to help relieve traffic jams and accidents; create bike lanes; and improve sidewalks.
- **Development and redevelopment:** Following the hospital demolition, prepare the site for equitable mixed-use development; create a refined land use and master plan for a retail depot and a neighborhood center that includes the planned transit center, structured parking, mixed-income housing, open space, and a temporary grocer; and focus on supporting historic and emerging commercial corridors to function as neighborhood-scale commercial centers.
- **Housing stabilization:** Support affordable housing development by modifying single-family zoning restrictions, implementing density bonuses, encouraging accessory dwelling units, and creating a housing trust fund; establish a city housing and community development department to administer housing programs; and reduce displacement of residents by educating

them about housing assistance resources and creating new programs targeted at minimizing displacement.

- **Planning and public process:** Make robust community engagement a top priority with a carefully executed strategy to help create an equitable outcome that addresses the needs of existing residents and has community buy-in; create a new zoning overlay that maximizes BRT benefits; seek public/private partnerships for redevelopment of the hospital site; and formalize the collaborative effort between North Charleston, Charleston County, and the Coastal Conservation League with regular meetings that help reinforce transparency and ensure better coordination, communication, and project management.





Calli Stegim/ULI

Irvine was joined on the panel by Catherine Buell, vice president, policy and programs, Greater Washington Partnership Washington, D.C.; Veronica O. Davis, cofounder, Nspiregreen LLC, Washington, D.C.; Aletha Dunston, executive director, Fort Harrison Reuse Authority, Indianapolis; Rosemarie Hepner, director, ULI Terwilliger Center for Housing, Washington, D.C.; Thomas Jansen, director, HR&A Advisors, Los Angeles; Emil Malizia, research professor, department of city and regional planning, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, North Carolina; Paul Peters, principal, Hood Design, Oakland, California; Lance Robins, chief executive officer, Urban Smart Growth, Los Angeles; and Gayle Starr, managing director, capital markets, Prologis, San Francisco.

In a detailed report explaining its recommendations, the panel commended the local leadership on its thorough planning process ahead of the redevelopment. “The panel sees the Naval Hospital site redevelopment as an exciting, unique, and rare opportunity to bring much-needed amenities to southern North Charleston, to stabilize the city’s affordable housing, to capitalize on the BRT, and to create a vibrant corridor for

current and future residents to enjoy,” the report states. “However, if this redevelopment and other projects are not handled in a balanced and purposeful manner, growth can result in displacement and disenfranchisement of the existing community. The city and county need to stand firm to preserve their vision and channel the growth into a force of equity and inclusion.”

“Our work centered around the need to restore a sense of place in an area that had been left behind in North Charleston’s economic recovery. We saw in the hospital site a way for the community to create a destination that would bring much-needed economic growth to underserved neighborhoods, benefiting existing residents and attracting new ones.”

—Andrew Irvine
North Charleston panel chair



Making Miami More Resilient to the Effects of Climate Change

With severe storms and other natural disasters increasing in intensity and frequency, the city of Miami is among a growing number of communities taking steps to become more resilient in terms of being able to prepare for, recover from, and adapt to weather events and other impacts related to climate change.



PANEL HIGHLIGHTS

Where: Miami, Florida

What: Urban water resilience

When: June 2–7, 2019

Who: Ladd Keith (panel chair), Michelle Beaman Chang, Jason Bonnet, Samia Byrd, John Macomber, Michael Rodriguez, Susannah Ross, Matthew Steenhoek, Byron Stigge, Jay Valgora, and Kevin Rogan

Sponsors: City of Miami, City of Miami, Office of Resilience and Sustainability, and Miami Downtown Development Authority

[Knowledge Finder](#)

In addition to stronger storms and a longer rainy season, the Miami region is expected to experience a two-foot increase (over the next two decades) in sea-level rise, vastly raising the associated flood risks such as king tides and tidal flooding, including more frequent sunny-day flooding. This, along with more extreme heat occurrences (Miami recorded 71 days with temperatures at or above 92° F in 2019) has elevated a sense of urgency among city officials to act quickly to improve Miami's overall resilience.

Against this backdrop, the city of Miami and the Miami Downtown Development Authority (Miami DDA) sought assistance from a ULI Advisory Services panel in June 2019 to help develop a road map for improving the resilience of the city's waterfronts along the Miami River and Biscayne Bay. The area evaluated by the panel has an estimated population of about 250,000 and is the city's primary employment hub; about 75 percent of Miami's jobs are located within a half mile of the water.

The panel—consisting of nationally renowned land use, urban planning, and resilience experts—was asked by the city and the Miami DDA to focus on the following:

- Concentrate on economic resilience, update waterfront design guidelines that incorporate the city's resilience goals, align with the city's form-based code, and bolster the Baywalk and the Riverwalk. These design alternatives should address the increasing flood risks to the physical and economic viability of the waterfront, including insurance rates, real estate investment, financing, and enhanced livability.
- Define public and private-sector roles and recommend financing strategies for green and gray infrastructure improvements along the waterfront (especially the Baywalk and the Riverwalk).
- Develop a policy direction that informs both private and public property modifications to enhance flooding and storm surge resiliency, with a specific focus on high rises and historic buildings that cannot be elevated and are not likely to be demolished.
- Identify steps that forward-thinking cities are taking to ensure protection of their waterfront assets (such as waterfront promenades) and apply these to Miami.

The panel was charged with forming an action plan with short- and long-term steps that could be integrated with and leverage other resilience planning work underway, such as Resilient Greater Miami and the Beaches Strategy; the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Back Bay study; and the Miami Baywalk and Riverwalk Design Guidelines, the city of Miami's Stormwater Master Plan, and its overall strategic plan.

As the panel developed its recommendations specific to the waterfronts, it applied a holistic definition of resilience, helping ensure that actions taken to mitigate the impacts of climate change also boost economic prosperity and quality of life for the metropolitan region. In addition, the panel wanted to focus on ensuring that solutions are not maladaptive—either unintentionally contributing more greenhouse gas emissions or inadvertently causing new problems—such as installing water pumps to keep downtown dry that might also increase pollution in the bay and harm the natural environment, inadvertently adding to the impact of storm surge.

Panelists also factored in the city's existing efforts at furthering resilience, including the following:

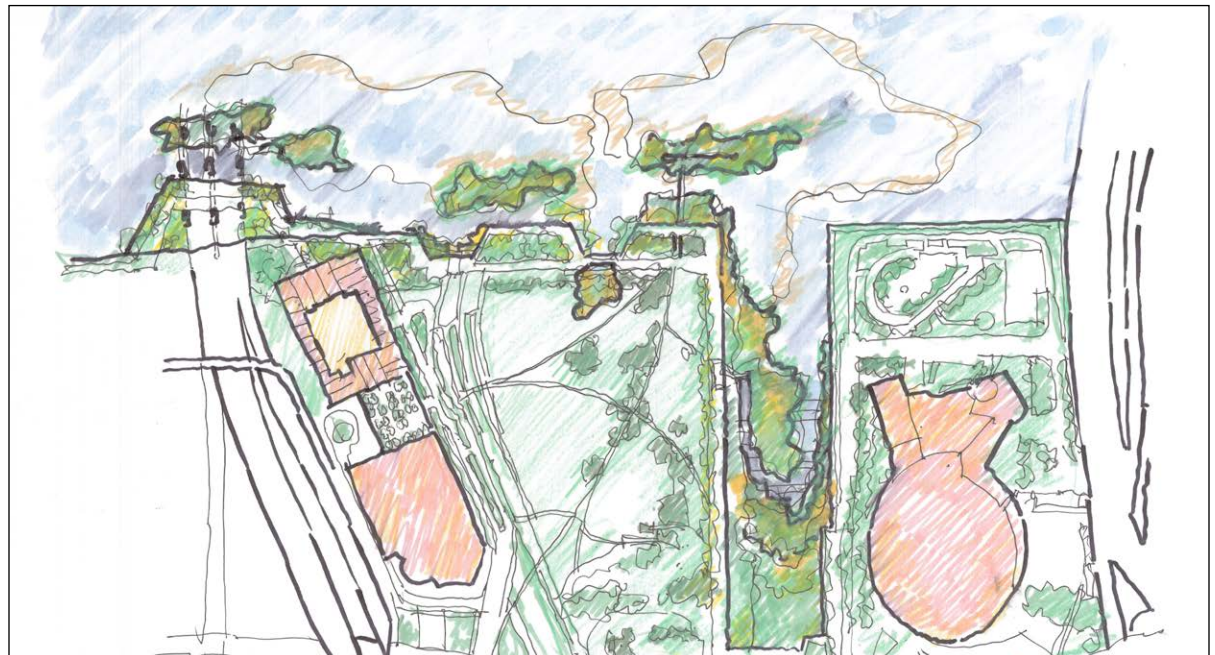
- Participating in the 100 Resilient Cities program and continuing to support the city’s chief resilience officer and the Office of Resilience and Sustainability;
- Creating and sustaining an active Sea Level Rise Committee within the city of Miami;
- Creating and distributing Resilient305, a strategy to address resilience challenges through collaboration within the community and across several city and county jurisdictions;
- Developing a city-specific Climate Ready strategy;
- Supporting the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact;
- Amending the zoning code to provide for elevation of new structures, and demonstrating leadership in wind and storm-related building codes; and
- Continuously updating the city’s Stormwater Master Plan.

The panel was chaired by leading ULI member Ladd Keith, chair of the Sustainable Built Environments Program and urban planning faculty for the University of Arizona’s College of Architecture, Planning and Landscape Architecture. “We were pleased to bring

the expertise of ULI members to Miami and engage in a robust dialogue to address the impacts of climate change and develop recommendations to protect the economic, natural and human resources in the urban waterfront area,” Keith said.

Following three days filled with briefings from the city and the Miami DDA, a tour of the urban bayfront and riverfront, and more than 80 interviews with a variety of stakeholders, panelists prepared a set of recommendations including the following:

- Embrace the legacy of the waterfront through design to protect from water, live with water, and create value from water.
- Adopt the draft Miami Baywalk and Riverwalk Design Guidelines with a few modifications.
- Design and implement a Living Shoreline Demonstration Project along the bayfront that helps build partnership across agencies and the community and allows exploration of long-term resilience strategies not currently in use both out into the bay and further inland.



The panel recommended that the city use a living shoreline demonstration project to build consensus, engage stakeholders and experts, and highlight opportunities.

- Extend and apply these guidelines to the Riverwalk, the Baywalk, and riverfront with some additional resilience-focused measures.
- Track and actively engage in the Back Bay Study by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and support the installation of an iconic tidal gate for the river.
- Embrace environmentally sensitive transit-oriented development on the ridge for future growth.
- Update the Downtown Miami Master Plan to bring existing plans and visions together. Act on these strategies and evaluate outcomes on a regular basis to account for progress made in resilience-related measures.
- Pursue a portfolio of financial strategies to become the world leader in resilient finance, investment, and construction.
- Use an expanded transfer of development density policy to encourage sensitive development in less flood-prone areas and provide capital for existing buildings to make investments in flood-proofing measures when elevating or demolishing a building is untenable.
- Reduce uncertainty for the community and private market through predictability, transparency, and accountability.

- Pursue proactive community engagement strategies and support networks to foster communication throughout the city.
- Use incremental actions to catalyze larger, transformational changes.

“Miami has the opportunity to lead the national conversation about building resilient communities. Proactive stakeholder engagement, transparency, and predictability of process are necessary in implementing the panel’s recommendations. Change may be incremental, but it has the potential to be lasting and transformational for Miamians.”

—Miami, Florida
Advisory Services panel report

“Our recommendations ultimately balanced the various aspects of resilience—economic and social, along with the corresponding environmental challenges and opportunities—giving the city a practical suite of actions they can take to advance the resilience of their urban waterfront,” Keith noted.

Keith was joined on the panel by panel vice chair Michelle Beaman Chang, founder and chief executive officer, Imby Community Inc., Washington, D.C.; Jason Bonnet, vice president of development, Brookfield Properties, San Francisco; Samia Byrd, deputy county manager, Arlington County Government, Arlington, Virginia; John Macomber, senior lecturer in the finance unit, Harvard Business School, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts; Michael Rodriguez, leader, market research and insights, mid-Atlantic region, CBRE Inc., Washington, D.C.; Susannah Ross, landscape architect, Boston; Matt Steenhoek, vice president of development, PN Hoffman, Washington, D.C.; Byron Stigge, founder, Level Infrastructure, New York City; and Jay Valgora, founder and principal, Studio V Architecture, New York City. Kevin Rogan, managing director, global real estate and hospitality practice at Marsh & McLennan in Miami served as the panel adviser.

The panel’s visit to Miami continued a series of urban resilience activities ULI has conducted in a number of communities across the nation, including Norfolk, Virginia; Seattle; Portland, Maine; Duluth, Minnesota; El Paso, Texas; Toa Baja, Puerto Rico; and Lafayette, Louisiana; as well as throughout the Miami region.

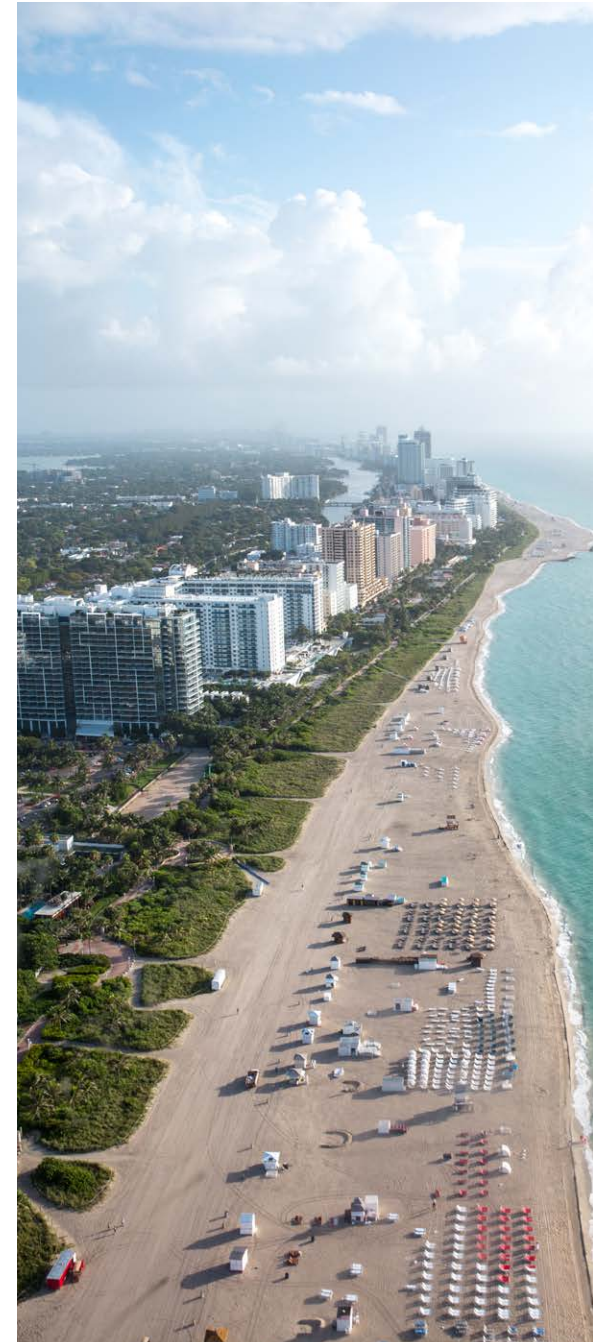
In 2018, through the Advisory Services program, ULI members assessed the multiyear stormwater management program implemented by the city of Miami Beach, and recommended improvements that included broadening the strategy. In 2016, an Advisory Services panel assisted Miami-Dade County in assessing climate vulnerabilities and social equity through an adaptation action area framework. This effort was followed by a workshop conducted by the local district council, ULI Southeast Florida/Caribbean, to explore the use of transfer of development rights as a climate adaptation strategy in South Florida.

In their report on the 2019 Miami panel visit, panelists noted that the city is poised to be a national leader on urban resilience. “With its current work and efforts and a great foundation of previous efforts, the city is well primed to take the final step of consolidating all efforts into a unified vision with goals, objectives and clear recommendations that provide sufficient detail to inform policy on waterfront resilience: one direction, one road map, one narrative, unified in one key document,” states the panel report. “This approach will provide predictability and can bring certainty to the residents, the business community, and others that the city has a direction and vision and understands what it needs and what it wants to be.”

Sponsor’s Prospective

“The 2019 ULI Advisory Services panel report on waterfront resilience for Miami has become the de facto research document and public involvement process for embracing our waterfront, learning to live with water, protecting our most valuable assets, and creating value. The Downtown Miami panel brought together the best and brightest of the responsible development community—planners, architects, engineers, economists, and financiers—and their extensive research and outreach provided the road map for community input, design-based solutions, and future coastal investments.”

—Neal Schafers
ASLA, senior manager, Planning,
Transportation + Resiliency, Miami
Downtown Development Authority



Improving Access to Parks and Open Space in Austin, St. Paul, Detroit, and San Antonio

The Urban Land Institute has long promoted parks and open space as a critical component of successful communities, serving both as a key amenity that enhances quality of life and as a catalyst for economic development and revitalization.



This emphasis on shared space as the connective tissue of thriving cities was elevated in 2017, when ULI joined 10 Minute Walk, a collaborative effort with the Trust for Public Land and the National Recreation and Park Association to increase access to urban parks in cities nationwide. The goal for the campaign, which is supported by The JPB Foundation, is for all people living in U.S. cities to live within a 10-minute walk (or half-mile) of a high-quality park by 2050. ULI's participation in the campaign is through its Building Healthy Places Initiative, created to highlight the link between human health and development.

As part of its involvement in the 10 Minute Walk campaign, ULI convened four Advisory Services panels in 2018 and 2019 to recommend strategies for improving access to parks and open space as well as the space itself in four cities: Austin, Texas; St. Paul, Minnesota; Detroit, Michigan; and San Antonio, Texas. Although each of the assignments was quite different in scope, one of the main takeaways from all of them is that prioritizing access to shared common space and maintaining high-quality space can instill community pride by helping “level the playing field” for residents of all incomes and demographic cohorts. Regardless of the community, park space that serves as the people's space is critical to creating places that ultimately become more equitable, inclusive, prosperous, and sustainable.

PANEL HIGHLIGHTS

Where: Austin, Texas

What: Recreation and entertainment, healthy neighborhoods and corridors

When: August 25–30, 2019

Who: Julie Underdahl (panel chair), Kimberly C. Driggins, Shane Farthing, Suzanna Fry Jones, Edward Henley III, Sandra Kulli, Amie MacPhee, Charlie McCabe, and Beth Silverman

Sponsor: The Trail Foundation, the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department

[Knowledge Finder](#)



Austin

In Austin, the Advisory Services panel was asked by the city's Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) and The Trail Foundation (TTF), a nonprofit organization, to develop a revised operations and maintenance strategy for the nearly 50-year-old Butler Trail, a 10-mile hiking and biking loop along Lady Bird Lake in the city's downtown. Maintained by the city since its creation, the trail—a cherished community asset—has become much more heavily used as Austin has grown, making even basic upkeep challenging if not difficult. The panel was asked for advice on transferring some of the operations and maintenance responsibility from PARD to TTF to help improve maintenance and the overall trail experience for Austin residents and visitors.

The panel responded with recommendations based on four guiding principles: trust, in terms of building trust between the PARD-TTF partnership and the greater community; equity, in terms of positioning the trail as a place for all; collaboration, in terms of increasing collaboration between groups with different interests but who share a devotion to the trail; and stewardship, in terms of cultivating more users to be trail stewards who regularly clean the pathways and inspire others to do so.



Based on these principles, the panel's recommendations included the following:

- Formalize the public/private partnership between TTF and the city of Austin, using the respective strengths of each organizational partner.
- Develop a strategic plan that includes a communications strategy.
- Launch initiatives to fully fund implementation of the strategic plan that connect to the vision.
- Build upon past successes and explore new, better ways to maintain and improve the trail.
- Involve, engage, and reach out to the community to build support and trust.
- Plan for future growth and expansion of trail improvements and connections.

Sponsor's Prospective

“Our experience with the ULI Advisory Services panel has helped shape the path forward for The Trail Foundation [TTF]. As TTF embarks on a new formalized relationship with the city of Austin Parks and Recreation Department, we have relied heavily on the recommendations made by our panelists. The strategies and priorities outlined in their final report have served as our ‘true north’ as we have navigated this new territory. TTF is grateful for the opportunity to work with ULI in this capacity and the wealth of knowledge we received as a result of our work together.”

— Heidi Anderson
CEO, The Trail Foundation

The panel, which visited Austin in August 2019, was chaired by Julie Underdhal, urban district management consultant in Denver. She was joined by Kimberly C. Driggins, director of strategic planning, City of Detroit Planning and Development Department, Michigan; Shane Farthing, director of economic and community development,

city of Martinsburg, West Virginia; Edward Henley III, principal and project executive, Pillars Development, Nashville; Suzanna Fry Jones, director of marketing and community outreach, High Line Canal Conservancy, Denver; Sandra Kulli, real estate consultant, Los Angeles; Amie MacPhee, founder, Cultivate, San Francisco; Charlie McCabe, parks consultant, Boston; and Beth Silverman, cofounder, Lotus Campaign, Washington, D.C.

A report from the panel explaining its recommendations pointed out that the city could apply learnings from the new trail maintenance arrangement to similar agreements for other Austin parks. It also noted that although adapting the trail to meet increased demand will not be quick or cheap, ample energy and enthusiasm exist from PARD and TTF to overcome the challenges. “TTF and PARD have impressive levels of accomplishment and have made clear to the panel that they are ready to step up their leadership and collaboration. The panel is excited to see the partnership between TTF and the city of Austin bloom and grow for many years to come,” the report states.

PANEL HIGHLIGHTS

Where: St. Paul, Minnesota

What: Architecture—landscape; healthy neighborhoods and corridors; open space and parks; urban and regional planning

When: March 18–23, 2018

Who: Lyneir Richardson (panel chair), Beth Callendar, Rodney Crim, Sarah Graham, Bert Gregory, Ilana Lipsett, and Ben Stone

Sponsors: ReConnect Rondo

[Knowledge Finder](#)



St. Paul

In St. Paul, the Advisory Services panel was asked to advise on creating park space over Interstate 94 to link neighborhoods in the Rondo community. Panelists visited the city in March 2018 to offer their expertise in land use and urban planning for a proposed land bridge, or “freeway lid,” to reconnect the community after decades of being divided by the interstate. The panel was sponsored by the Reconnect Rondo: More Than a Bridge organization and its partners, including the city of St. Paul, Minnesota Department of Transportation, Metropolitan Council, Minnesota Department of Health, and Ramsey County.

In evaluating the assignment, the panelists considered the types of land uses and development (such as retail, residential, and office space) that could be catalyzed by one or more land bridges and which would be most beneficial to adjacent neighborhoods and the greater Rondo community. This included factors such as the benefits and constraints of previous freeway lid concepts; the most effective way to incorporate a freeway lid into the surrounding community; strategies for revitalization that acknowledge the area’s history while promoting connectivity;

setting priorities for timing and phasing; lessons learned from other communities on funding and space management; and stakeholder actions to ensure inclusive, equitable development and to reduce displacement.

Panelists concurred that the land bridge would be a worthy investment, serving not only as a physical connection that would enhance neighborhood livability but also as an opportunity for long overdue social justice for the community. The panel’s recommendations included the following:

- A significant Rondo Community Land Bridge should move forward as an opportunity for healing, a celebration of history, and an opportunity to capture the benefits of economic development for the local community.
- The Minnesota Department of Transportation should construct and maintain the land bridge, working with partners to ensure long-term funding for operation and maintenance of the space.
- Stakeholders should plan to commit resources of at least \$6 million to advance the land bridge concept to the next phases of design and engineering and cost estimates.

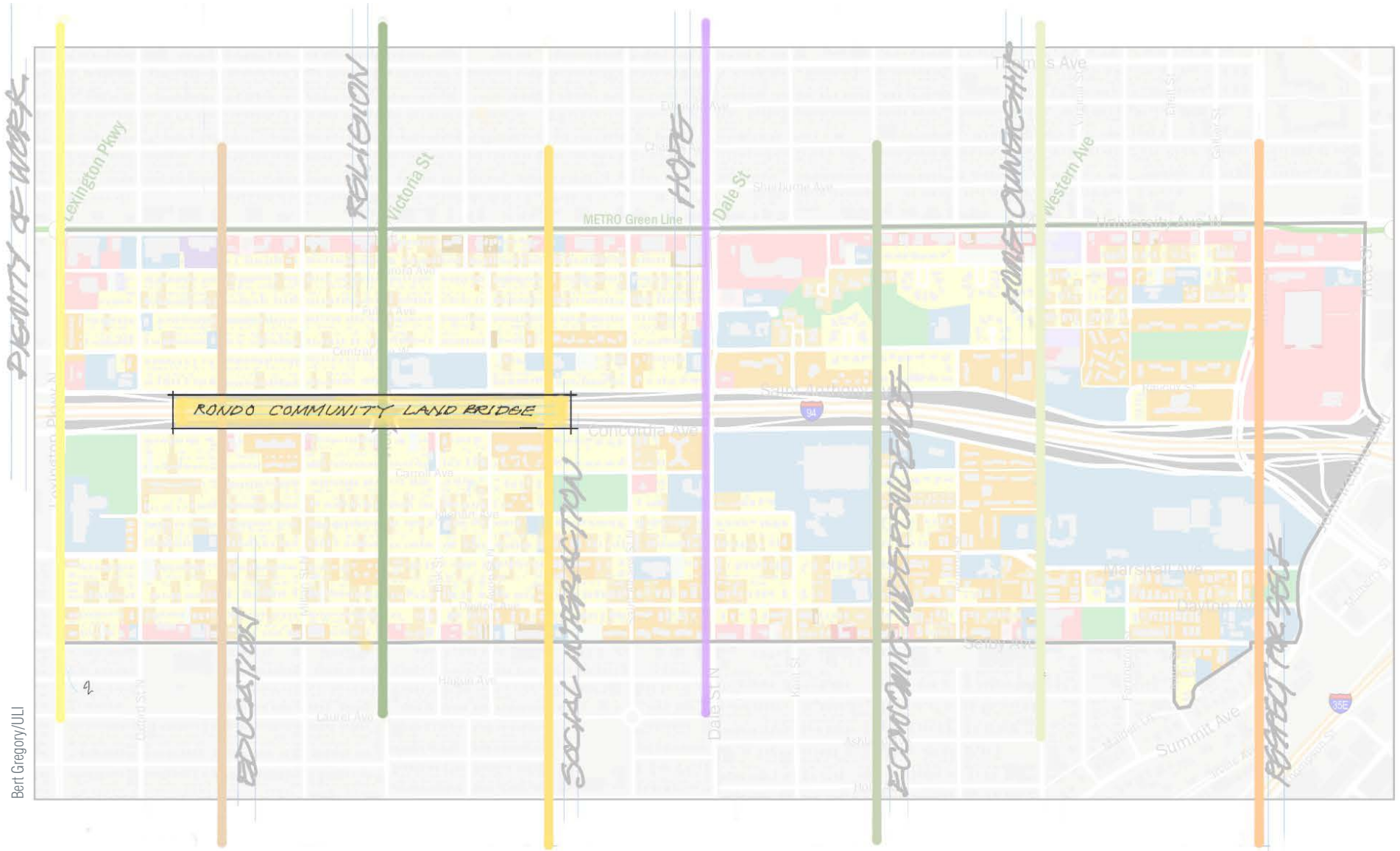


- The opportunities for African American leadership of the project should be embraced and encouraged, ensuring that this is an opportunity for inclusive economic development.

The panel's recommendations also included three land use options of varying density with housing, commercial and community space, and additional open space—each created with social equity, economic opportunities, and wealth creation for neighborhood residents as top priorities. The assignment built on previous advisory work regarding freeway lids conducted through ULI Minnesota, which serves ULI members in the Minneapolis–St. Paul area and throughout the state.

Lyneir Richardson, executive director for the Center for Urban Entrepreneurship and Economic Development at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey, served as the panel's chair. Other panelists were Beth Callender, principal, CallendarWorks, San Diego; Rodney Crim, president, St. Louis Economic Development Partnership, Missouri; Sarah Graham, principal, Strategic Economics, Berkeley, California; Bert Gregory, partner, Mithun, Seattle; Ilana Lipsett, cofounder, PublicDesign|PublicSpace, Oakland, California; and Ben Stone, director of arts and culture, Smart Growth America, Baltimore.

A report prepared by the panel following its visit commended Reconnect Rondo for effectively communicating its vision for the land bridge to gain key support for the effort. "Now is the time to take meaningful action to ensure the land bridge moves from a 'moonshot' concept to a point of inevitability," the report states. "Rondo will be an example of social injustice no more, but instead be an example of how to address I-94's legacy."



Bert Gregory/ULI

The panel's recommendation for the location of the Rondo Community Land Bridge superimposed on ReConnect Rondo's values.

PANEL HIGHLIGHTS

Where: Detroit, Michigan

What: Open space and parks, healthy neighborhoods and corridors, resilience, design and planning

When: March 31–April 5, 2019

Who: April Anderson (panel chair), Neelay Bhatt, Michael Brown, Alexander Feldman, Savlan Hauser, Stephany Lin, Ilana Lipsett, R. Steve Qualkinbush, and Donald Schrottenboer

Sponsor: Downtown Detroit Partnership

[Knowledge Finder](#)



Detroit

In Detroit, the city government sought assistance from an Advisory Services panel on creating sustainable financial models for Detroit's growing network of parks and public spaces and the connectors among them, including urban walking and biking trails. The park system has received considerable support from the public, private, and philanthropic sectors in an effort to position high-quality open space as a key contributor to the city's revitalization. By bringing in the panel, the city made a deliberate decision to identify and design a more equitable framework to ensure that increased investments in parks and open space encourage financial stability and enhance the city's rich history and cultural assets.

Panelists were asked to consider several issues, including options for generating revenue; how to increase earned income where it makes sense; coordination of private, philanthropic, and city government expenditures; how to capture a portion of the economic value from development catalyzed by the park space; an expansion of public and philanthropic funding sources; prioritization of investments; and how to achieve sustainability of the park system while preserving and increasing access for longtime residents of the city.

In developing their recommendations, panelists noted that Detroit's parks and open space are key assets that address a wide range of the city's needs by helping lift up underserved communities, improve urban resilience, improve the health of residents, and boost economic development. The recommendations included strategies for sustainable park funding that focus on building a culture of business planning, understanding the true costs of services, and securing dedicated, long-term funding sources. The recommendations also included the following specifics on organization and governance:

- Elevating the City Parks and Recreation Department to a cabinet level within the city government, so the department can more effectively coordinate with other departments;
- Forming a Detroit Parks Alliance, a nonprofit, public/private partnership to operate as a cross-sector governing body to champion the city's park system in a collaborative effort with the city;
- Pursuing resource-sharing opportunities as a top priority;



- Exploring the creation of a special assessment district to help insulate park system resources from market, economic, and political fluctuations;
- Pursuing community engagement strategies to garner public support and ensure residents needs and expectations for public space are being met; and
- Reinforcing the historical significance of the Detroit River as a gateway by pursuing a national monument designation from the National Park Service, opening up more federal funding opportunities for revitalization and maintenance of the riverfront park.

The panel, which visited Detroit in April 2019, was chaired by leading ULI member April Anderson Lamoureux, president of Anderson Strategic Consulting in Boston. Anderson was joined by Neelay Bhatt, principal, Pros Consulting Inc., Indianapolis; Michael Brown, planning supervisor, Montgomery County Planning Department, Silver Spring, Maryland; Savlan Hauser, executive director, Jack London Improvement District, Oakland, California; Ilana Lipsett, founder, Public Design/Public Space, Oakland, California; Steve Qualkinbush, partner, Q2 Real Estate, Northbrook, Illinois; Donald R. Schrottenboer, president and chief executive officer, Private Equity Group, Fort Myers,

Florida; and Alex Feldman, managing director, U3 Advisors, Philadelphia. ULI Michigan, which serves ULI members throughout the Detroit region and the state, was instrumental in bringing the panel to the city.

In a report detailing its recommendations, the panelists noted: “Investing in people—particularly longtime residents—should remain the main focus of park and open space investments, and through that lens the city of Detroit should adopt a goal of becoming a best-in-class public park system. This will lend to enhanced economic revitalization and Detroit serving as a global model for equitable development.”

PANEL HIGHLIGHTS

Where: San Antonio, Texas

What: Open space and parks, design and planning

When: April 28–May 23, 2019

Who: Alex Rose (panel chair), Marina Badoian-Kriticos, Daniel Conway, Richard Dishnica, Allen Folks, Joyce Lee, Riki Nishimura, Tyrone Rachal, and Janine Sisak

Sponsors: Hemisfair Park Area Redevelopment Corporation, 10 Minute Walk Campaign

[Knowledge Finder](#)



Hemisfair

The Boomerang climbing feature at Yanaguana Garden at Hemisfair in San Antonio.

San Antonio

In San Antonio, the city sought assistance from an Advisory Services panel on how to restore a vibrant urban environment on the eastern portion of the Hemisfair site—a once thriving downtown neighborhood that was uprooted to host the 1968 World’s Fair and Exposition, and which has been underused in the decades since. The panel was asked to provide guidance to the Hemisfair Park Area Redevelopment Corporation, a nonprofit established to assist with acquiring property, planning, developing, managing, and financing projects within the Hemisfair site and surrounding neighborhoods, which includes a convention center and several cultural institutions.

In developing its recommendations, the panel advised rethinking connections between separate sections of the site and creating a sense of continuity that emphasizes inclusivity and accessibility. Its suggested approach would promote connectivity to the surrounding neighborhoods through “complete streets” improvements, multiple on-site residential housing opportunities (including affordable and senior housing), a mix of retail and dining options, and both active and

passive open-space elements. Specific recommendations included the following:

- **Create a vision for the Eastern Zone:** Identify appropriate infrastructure and design interface between parks and development that incorporates future uses for the existing building inventory of historic and nonhistoric properties, including potential commercial uses and strategies to establish development requirements to develop the park and achieve sustainability and resiliency goals.
- **Cultivate a development strategy:** Find opportunities to strengthen the attractiveness of the park and identify opportunities to leverage private development that brings people and residents to the area, supporting surrounding economic impacts.
- **Strive toward long-term sustainability:** Incorporate best design and fiscal practices from similar park models across the country.
- **Use financing tools and methods to make goals attainable:** Incorporate best design and fiscal practices from creative models across the country.

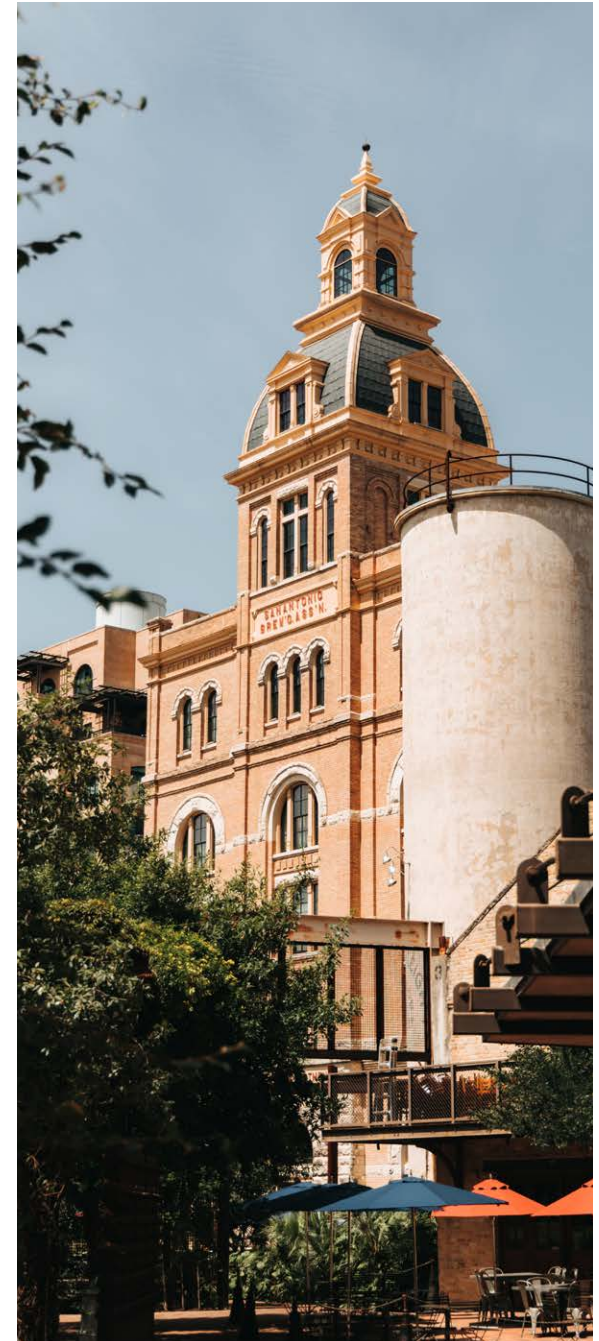
The panel, which visited San Antonio in late April and early May 2019, was chaired by ULI trustee Alex Rose, senior vice president of Continental Development Corporation in El Segundo, California. He noted that while the panel believed creating the vibrant open space sought by the sponsor was important, panelists determined that the inclusion of residential uses is what would ultimately make the public space financially viable, catalyze additional commercial and related development, and reknit adjacent portions of the community that were torn apart to create the World’s Fair site.

Rose was joined on the panel by Marina Badoian-Kriticos, research scientist, energy and natural resource policy, Houston Advanced Research Center, the Woodlands, Texas; Dan Conway, president and director of marketing and economics, THK Associates Inc., Aurora, Colorado; Rick Dishnica, president, the Dishnica Company LLC, Point Richmond, California; Allen Folks, director of design and planning, Ascent Environmental, Sacramento; Joyce Lee, president, IndigoJLD Philadelphia; Riki Nishimura, director of urban strategies, Gensler, San Francisco; Tyrone Rachal, president, Red Rock Global Capital Partners, Atlanta; and Janine Sisak, senior vice president and general counsel, DMA Companies, Austin, Texas.

In a report following the panel’s visit, panelists concluded that “the creation of one of the world’s great public places is within the city’s capability and grasp. This vision can be realized by a strategic development plan that balances open space, historic structures, and new high-quality and affordable developments.”

“Thoughtfully designed parks and open space make a positive difference in communities, in terms of improved livability, environmental quality, and economic outcomes. They serve as a respite, a source of civic pride, and a draw for investment activity. The work of Advisory Services panels to raise awareness of these key benefits of publicly shared space fits perfectly with ULI’s mission to create thriving, sustainable communities worldwide.”

—Alex Rose
San Antonio panel chair and ULI trustee



Improving Urban Connectivity in Durban, South Africa

For the past two decades, ULI's Advisory Services program has increasingly offered assistance to communities and cities worldwide, reflecting ULI's global growth in membership as well as its rising profile as a trusted global authority on responsible land use and creating vibrant communities.



PANEL HIGHLIGHTS

Where: Warwick Junction, Durban, South Africa

What: Connecting people, place, and purpose in the eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality

When: February 22–27, 2015

Who: William Kistler (panel chair), Michael Beyard, Peter Holland, Andrew Irvine, Liz Ogbu, and Rod Stainton

Sponsors: World Bank, National Treasury Cities' Support Programme (CSP)

[Knowledge Finder](#)

Already active in Asia and Europe, the program expanded to Africa with a panel visit in February 2015 to Durban, the largest port in Africa and one of the largest cities in South Africa. Durban is part of the eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality, a regional municipality formed in 2000 from seven formerly independent local councils and tribal land. Currently, the municipality's total population is nearly 3.5 million, while Durban's is just over 595,000.

South Africa's National Treasury, through an urban advisory service agreement with the World Bank, engaged ULI to provide the eThekweni municipality with strategic advice on improving the overall connectivity of Warwick Junction, a major transit hub in Durban that connects the commercial center of the city with the rest of the region and South Africa. According to the Warwick Junction Urban Renewal Project, 460,000 people pass through the junction every day.

In considering ways to improve and reinforce Warwick Junction as a key place for transit connections, the ULI panel recognized the junction's greater role as the area's focal point connecting Durban's peoples and cultures, its institutions and its services, and ultimately its past to its future. Strengthening those links, panelists

emphasized, would be fundamental to Durban's ability to compete as a global city and to achieve eThekweni's goal of Durban becoming "Africa's most caring and livable city" by 2030. The panel determined that although larger projects, initiatives, and investments are envisioned for Durban—from the new cruise terminal to hosting the Commonwealth Games—none would have more transformative potential than upgrading the Warwick precinct.

Leading ULI member William P. Kistler, chief executive at Urban Innovation Network in London, chaired the panel. "The great potential of this key area to lift up Durban was readily apparent," Kistler said. "We immediately recognized how enhancements to the quality, efficiency, and character of this critical gateway would have a catalytic effect, accelerating and leveraging other initiatives throughout the city. The end result would be greater economic development, a significant increase in tourism, and perhaps most important—the cultivation of a strong sense of community pride among residents that would help keep the momentum going."

The panel found Durban to be experiencing many of the same challenges as other cities, such as poverty, unemployment,

insufficient and inadequate housing, concerns about personal safety and security, and aging infrastructure. Traditionally, the Durban Central Business District (CBD), where Warwick Junction is located, had been the principal driver of economic activity and the home for most of Durban's major commercial, cultural, and civic facilities and entities. However, since the early 2000s, most of Durban's residential and commercial development, infrastructure investment, and employment opportunities moved away from the CBD to the suburbs, particularly in neighborhoods along the coast. Panelists noted the troubling implications for the CBD associated with this flight to the suburbs, including underused building stock, disinvestment in the CBD, a perception of the CBD as an unsafe place, and abandoned buildings and urban decay.

The panel acknowledged efforts by the government and the business community to reverse this trend of decline and revive the CBD, noting that ULI's advisory work was meant to supplement and enhance initiatives already underway. In addition, the panel pointed out that while meaningful results will likely take years to achieve, it is critical to stay committed to the revitalization. Its recommendations included the following:

- Establish a set of principles to help guide the city and the district’s stakeholders so that, going forward, every action contemplated can be measured and judged as it is conceived, planned, and implemented. The suggested principles include the following:
 - Engage all stakeholders throughout the process to build trust and gain support;
 - Elevate the importance of the diverse activities and historical significance of the junction;
 - Create a vibrant, appealing gathering place that improves the quality of life for workers and residents and attracts new businesses;
 - Upgrade and maintain transportation infrastructure, with a focus on creating a more pedestrian-friendly environment;
 - Restore the historical and cultural structures that provide a strong physical and cultural link to the past that resonates powerfully with the diverse populations in eThekweni; and
- Strive for a broader customer mix at the retail markets by offering more types of goods and services at different price points, and by providing more and different consumer experiences.
- Recognize and take advantage of the substantial daily influx of workers who pass through Warwick Junction by maximizing the market opportunities represented by the volume of workers in terms of buying power, social cohesion, and synergies.
- Improve various components of the public realm (such as sidewalks, crosswalks, directional signage, and landscaping), and improve safety and security.
- Undertake and stay committed to important catalytic projects, including social housing to provide more housing options for residents with moderate to lower incomes, student housing to accommodate more students at the Durban University of Technology, and public and park space to provide more opportunities for recreation and socializing.
- Understand and leverage the transportation improvements being implemented throughout the city, especially bus rapid transit, as a key way to improve mobility.
- Establish new approaches to managing Warwick Junction, including a new project management structure on the city side with the appointment of a new program executive, regular progress meetings, and short-term actions that will improve the cleanliness and safety of the area.

Kistler was joined on the panel by Michael Beyard, ULI senior resident fellow emeritus, Washington, D.C.; Peter Holland, director, International Property Economics Urbis, Melbourne, Australia; Andrew Irvine, principal, UDLA/RNL Design, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates; Liz Ogbu, principal, Studio O, Oakland, California; and Rod Stainton, Rokwil Pty Ltd., Kloof, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

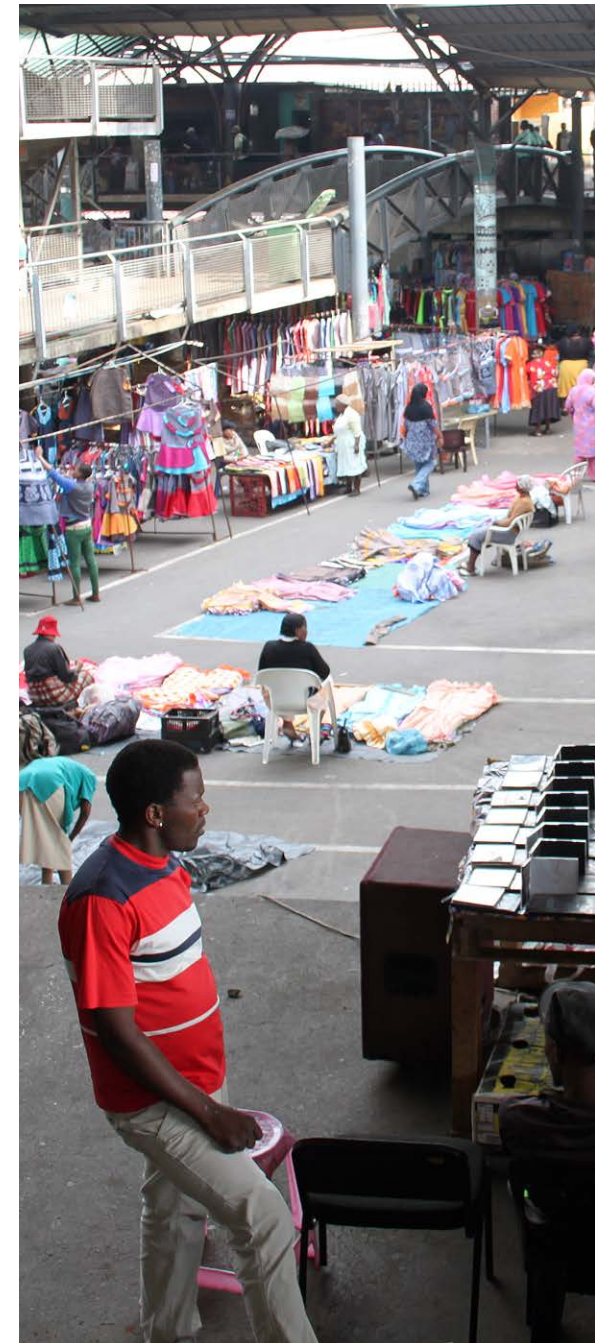
In a detailed report published after the visit, the panel stated: “Warwick is the gateway to the Durban CBD, and positive action in Warwick will inexorably affect the CBD. It is essential that all levels of government—

national, provincial, or municipal—believe in the ongoing importance of the Durban CBD. Hence, they must be prepared to address and prioritize the improvement of Warwick by taking the necessary action to restore the health of the CBD and to make it a vibrant, attractive, and safe place where the people of Durban will again be keen to live, work, and play.”

The panel also pointed to the correlation between the regeneration of Warwick Junction and continued growth throughout Durban. “In the panel’s opinion, the success of Warwick is directly linked to the success of downtown Durban; therefore, the implementation of the larger vision for Durban relies on success in Warwick,” says the report. “The panel believes that if the guiding principles for urban regeneration are adopted and used, the public realm improvements funded and built, the catalytic projects identified and constructed, and if the new management structure is implemented, then the objective of connecting people, place, and purpose can be achieved, and Warwick Junction and the city will improve significantly.”

“We immediately recognized how enhancements to the quality, efficiency, and character of this critical gateway would have a catalytic effect, accelerating and leveraging other initiatives throughout the city. The end result would be greater economic development, a significant increase in tourism, and perhaps most important, the cultivation of a strong sense of community pride among residents that would help keep the momentum going.”

—William P. Kistler
Durban panel chair



Warwick Junction market.

Attracting New Economic Drivers to Erie, Pennsylvania, through a Downtown Revival

The waning of U.S. manufacturing and industrial sectors has left many communities that were dependent on those industries—particularly communities in the Rust Belt—grappling with how to reinvent themselves to compete in the knowledge economy.



PANEL HIGHLIGHTS

Where: Erie, Pennsylvania

What: Downtown; public and private partnerships; economy; infrastructure—parking and parking facilities

When: July 29–August 3, 2018

Who: Richard Reynolds (panel chair), Daniel Anderton, Walter Bialas, Lucia E. Garsys, Stanley Lowe, Thomas Murphy, and Nan Rohrer

Sponsor: Erie Downtown Development Corporation

[Knowledge Finder](#)

The challenges associated with the transition are often reflected in the decline of downtown areas that have lost businesses and no longer serve as a focal point for the community. ULI's Advisory Services program often helps communities in these circumstances determine how to revive their economies and their downtowns. An advisory panel's recent visit to Erie, Pennsylvania, is one example of how the program can assist local stakeholders in building momentum for positive change.

Located between Cleveland, Buffalo, and Pittsburgh and along major Great Lakes waterways, Erie served as a hub for heavy industry and steel-related shipping during much of the 20th century. But as the industrial sector declined, the city lost jobs and population. This took a toll on Erie's downtown, which dwindled to a modest amount of office space, some retail scattered throughout the area, and a limited number of mostly moderate- to lower-income apartments.

Although manufacturing currently accounts for just 15 percent of Erie's jobs, the city has remained heavily reliant on manufacturing as its main economic driver. It tried over the past decade to diversify its economy

but experienced only limited success, resulting in poor job growth and steady out-migration, which severely hampered new residential and commercial development.

Now, however, Erie's fortune appears to be changing, with significant investments being made by key anchor educational institutions and major companies, and the emergence of new businesses including cybersecurity, medical services, and medical research. A group of local corporate and civic leaders formed the Erie Downtown Development Corporation (EDDC), capitalizing it with investment funds for property acquisition and redevelopment in a portion of the downtown core. The EDDC, together with the local government and other prominent stakeholders, sought assistance from an Advisory Services panel for help with the initiative.

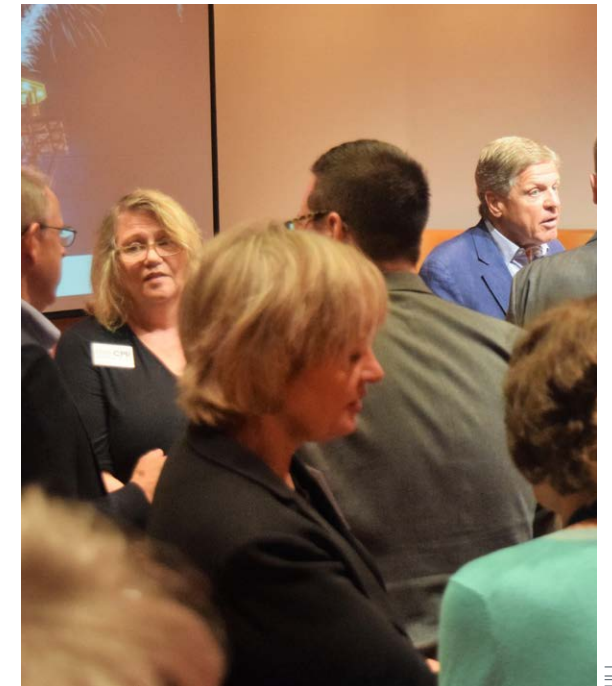
The panel, which visited Erie in August 2018, was asked to consider several factors, including the following:

- Erie's competitive advantage for attracting, growing, and retaining housing and businesses in the city as well as EDDC's target area;
- How to harness resources for downtown business initiatives, growth, and retention;
- Steps Erie must take to locate and obtain funding from the state and federal governments to facilitate economic development in the downtown;
- How Erie should rethink uses for valued space within the EDDC's footprint; and how to maintain the downtown's historic integrity as the city rebuilds and modernizes for future growth;
- How to plan responsibly for transportation;
- Assets and attributes that could be catalysts in the early stages of Erie's growth agenda, and assets that could be catalysts in later phases of revitalization;
- How to capitalize on the unique talents and skills that neighborhood groups bring to the city;
- How to avoid displacement of residents as a result of revitalization; and
- Best practices for communicating early wins (based on examples from other cities) to garner residents' support at the initiative progresses.

In evaluating the assignment area and the city in general, the panel pointed to several strengths that could work in Erie's favor, such as its waterfront and natural assets (which the panel felt should be better connected to downtown), its appeal as a relocation site for new immigrants, the low cost of living and conducting business, an expansive stock of architecturally interesting buildings, and the strong financial commitment and participation by public, private, and nonprofit groups in Erie's civic organizations. Most important, noted the panel, is the pervasive sense of optimism that the community is on the cusp of change. The panel's recommendations included the following:

- Understand and embrace the land economics and technological changes that are currently driving the economy in Erie and in every other Rust Belt city in the country. Capitalize on the competitive advantages that are the new face of downtown Erie.
- Create an inventory of land assets, including blighted, vacant, and delinquent properties. Streamline the process to convert these properties into productive uses.
- Cultivate a culture of inclusion, communication, and accountability for the public, private, and nonprofit sectors as EDDC and the city lead the effort to reimagine Erie.
- Adopt guiding principles for the redevelopment of downtown, including the following:
 - Increase residential units downtown;
 - Provide ground-floor commercial development on commercial corridors;
 - Right-size the amount of parking downtown;
 - Increase priority of complete streets and other critical streetscape improvements; and
 - Create a cohesive "one street" for State Street, a main thoroughfare.
- Redevelop the EDDC footprint with a variety of mixed-use projects. Provide the capital to fund catalytic components of these projects.
- Create a mayor's task force to reimagine Erie.

- Create a new organizational structure in the city and strengthen the planning department to become the keeper of the future.
- Enhance the financial capacity to establish public/private partnerships, and identify internal and external funding sources.
- Identify and engage the civic and private institutions to help make reimagining Erie a reality.



Following the public presentation, the panelists answer questions from the audience.

The panel was chaired by Richard W. Reynolds, president of the Needham, Massachusetts–based Reynolds Group. “The panel was impressed that the private and public leaders of Erie recognize the reality and seriousness of the issues facing the city given the structural changes in the regional and national economy,” Reynolds said. “Whether the city can adapt for success in the future lies in its ability and commitment to put in place the changes needed. We hope ULI’s recommendations will be helpful in getting that process underway.”

Reynolds was joined on the panel by Daniel Anderton, senior associate, community design and planning, Dewberry, Rockville, Maryland; Walter S. Bialas, vice president, real estate market research, Jones Lang LaSalle, Dallas; Lucia Garsys, chief administrator for development and infrastructure, Hillsborough County, Tampa, Florida; Stanley Lowe, president and chief executive officer, Pittsburgh Neighborhood Preservation Services, Pennsylvania; Tom Murphy, senior resident fellow/Klingbeil Family Chair for Urban Development, Urban Land Institute, Washington, D.C.; Nan Rohrer, independent consultant, Rohrer Advisors, Baltimore; and Stephen Leeper, president and chief executive officer, Cincinnati Center City Development Corporation, Ohio.

In a report published subsequent to the panel’s visit, panelists emphasized the need to use early successes to build and maintain community support to see the initiative through. “Although the panel believes that key elements are in place to begin revitalization—optimism, money, and municipal support—any tipping point is a time risk,” the report states. “Building support for change is difficult even in the best of times. Garnering support, keeping support, and expanding support on a focused set of strategies is even harder. The success of EDDC will manifest itself when its work in the early phases of revitalization enables and enhances continuation of the long-term broader acceleration of economic growth for the community.”



Sponsor’s Prospective

“When you’re working on transformational projects, why go it alone in a vacuum when you can learn from and work with transformational experts with decades of proven results? The ULI Advisory Services panel features the best of the best when it comes to coaching development, no matter the scale, with a diverse array of planners and real estate experts bringing an unparalleled depth of knowledge and global experience. Thanks to the ULI Advisory Services panel’s time spent in Erie and insightful report capturing its findings and framing its recommendations, the path to progress is better informed and guided through decision-making processes rather than gut decisions.”

—Ben Speggen
Vice President,
The Jefferson Educational Society of Erie

Identifying New Economic Drivers for Morgan City and Berwick, Louisiana

Helping communities identify a new economic driver to boost employment opportunities is often part of the guidance provided by ULI's Advisory Services program. In September 2018, a group of community leaders in the neighboring cities of Morgan City and Berwick, Louisiana, requested assistance from Advisory Services on reviving the area in the wake of the oil industry's decline.



PANEL HIGHLIGHTS

Where: Morgan City and Berwick, Louisiana

What: Industry sectors; design and planning; public sector; finance and investment

When: September 16–21, 2018

Who: Alrich Lynch (panel chair), Garrett Avery, John Goss, Clifford Graves, David Greensfelder, Brad Power, and Nitasha Rajora

Sponsor: Community Foundation of Acadiana

[Knowledge Finder](#)

The group, named St. Mary Excel in recognition of the communities' location in St. Mary Parish, was convinced that area residents should be more strategic in defining their communities through a diversified economy.

St. Mary Excel—in close cooperation with mayors and city council members, parish representatives, school board members, directors of the chambers of commerce and the Cajun Coast Visitors and Convention Bureau, the parish economic development director, South Louisiana Community College—Young Memorial Campus, Port of Morgan City officials, South Central Planning District members, St. Mary Parish Community Foundation members, and local volunteers—defined the purpose of the panel assignment as increasing the Morgan City and Berwick population through job creation in diversified businesses.

Situated across from each other on the banks of the Atchafalaya River, Morgan City and Berwick serve as the gateway to the 800,000-acre Atchafalaya Basin, the largest overflow swamp in the United States. The Morgan City–Berwick area's main economic engines had long been propelled by commercial fishing (mostly shrimping) and later by the oil industry. However, over the past several years, as the oil industry suffered from oil price declines, Morgan

City and Berwick experienced a significant drop in population (a historic school closed because of low enrollment), major job losses (the area's unemployment rate is well above that for the state and the United States), business closures, and aesthetic decline.

To help the communities reverse this trend, the panel focused on the communities' shared waterway resources as the centerpiece of a strategy to revive existing businesses, diversify the area's economy with supplemental businesses, and improve the quality of life for area residents.

In evaluating the area's potential, the panel considered the following:

- Actions that could be taken along the Morgan City and Berwick waterfront areas to help maximize the return on additional investments;
- Profitable industries and businesses, including those in emerging technology and renewable energy fields, such as wind turbines, solar panels, and hydroelectric power, that could be feasibly located in the area, and steps that should be taken to attract those industries;
- The expansion of existing area businesses and industries;

- The optimal use for property development along Lake Palourde, another water resource in the area; and
- Steps to attract investors in properties slated for development in Morgan City and Berwick.

In developing its recommendations, the panel emphasized the need for the two communities to cooperate with each other rather than compete against each other, and to work together with the surrounding communities for a successful economic rebound. Panelists pointed to many positive aspects of the communities that they can build upon, including the fact that together, they already have a solid foundation for growth based on (a) the existence of culture and heritage-related events that can be expanded to boost tourism in the area; (b) the potential of the industrial sector to become a cargo hub for the region; and (c) the fact the region is working cooperatively to build resilience-related community assets to prepare for the future effects of climate change.

Panel chair Alrich Lynch, partner and senior managing director at LDG Consulting in Atlanta, noted that the assignment required an approach that reflected breadth as well as depth. "Our recommendations needed

to be broad enough to address the various issues that have and are continuing to contribute to some of the most recent declines in population, employment, economic development, resilience, and other factors. At the same time, we needed to go deep enough in the various areas to provide a useful roadmap for the future,” Lynch said. “We believe we were able to frame the issues appropriately and set the stage for quality discussions that will lead to sustainable changes in approaches by civic, community, business and philanthropic groups.”

The panel developed the following key recommendations that relate specifically to the immediate study area of Morgan City and Berwick as well as the nearby city of Patterson and St. Mary Parish:

- **Learn from the past:** The past is history. Any cyclical economy will have booms and busts. The study area has felt the curves acutely because of its strong tie to the oil industry. The time has come to learn from the past and support substantive diversification of the local economy. This step will require appointing newer, younger, and more diverse voices on committees who will participate in the decision-making process.

- **Build on the existing tourism base:** The study area is lively. The existing calendar of events evidences the area’s base to use and grow to become a greater visitor attraction. It has potential to support a tourism industry to share the regional culture, assortment of historic homes, existing industry, and assets like the Atchafalaya River and swamps. But a Tri-City brand needs to be created to position Morgan City–Berwick–Patterson as a unique destination distinguished from the rest of St. Mary Parish and the Gulf Coast.
- **Differentiate downtown Morgan City and Berwick through specialization:** Both communities’ downtown cores should be specialized to complement each other rather than compete. Morgan City should specialize in retail and commercial uses, and Berwick should specialize in recreational uses and in growing its shrimping businesses.
- **Position the area as a maritime support hub:** The study area is uniquely situated to ship and receive cargo throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean. Once a strategy is in place to maintain sufficient river depth, opportunities exist to better support existing businesses and position the area as an innovative maritime support hub situated in a safe harbor.

- **Understand the social, economic, and environmental vulnerabilities:** Improving resilience to social, economic, and environmental changes should be a priority for Morgan City and Berwick. Although some stressors, such as the changing oil industry, are out of the communities’ control, the area has a prime opportunity to mitigate the negative impacts of these changes by establishing a new, diverse economy built around innovation and technology.
- **Focus on the benefits of collaboration and consolidation:** Although the study area once supported an expansive base of schools and industries, local governments and citizens should start strategizing on how to prioritize efficiencies in marketing, purchasing, business retention, and other services. The consolidation of taxing entities whenever and wherever possible would help greatly to support a concerted effort at economic growth.



Panelists and community stakeholders talk at the Monday night public reception.

Calli Stegny/ULI

- **Expand the range of housing options:** The state of housing throughout the area needs greater attention. Expanding the range of housing options would support a greater variety of economic sectors and help revitalize underused properties. Enforcement of code violations would help greatly to reinstate neighborhood pride and improve the housing stock through infill development, including some multifamily development in both communities.

Panelists also explored resilience measures needed to ensure that Morgan City and Berwick mitigate the vulnerabilities from sea-level change and river flooding. The recommendations include possible scenarios for 10, 20, and 30 years into the future, with an emphasis on the need to commit to long-term planning and adaptation strategies. Recommended strategies include achieving and maintaining Federal Emergency Management Agency levee certification, preserving existing natural areas as a buffer against wave energy or dampening wind effects, and restoring the ecosystem to create a consistent and reliable case for the beneficial reuse of dredged material, rather than the current preference for in-water disposal.

Panel chair Lynch was joined by Garrett Avery, senior designer, AECOM, New York City; John Goss, Asian Carp project staff, Indiana Wildlife Federation, Indianapolis; Clifford Graves, planning and partnerships consultant, city of Carson, Culver City, California; David Greensfelder, managing principal, Greensfelder Commercial Real Estate LLC, Albany, California; Brad Power, director, community development department, city of Englewood, Colorado; and Nitasha Rajora, general manager, developments and investments, Atelier Capital Partners Inc., Vancouver, British Columbia.

In a detailed report following the panel's visit, panelists noted that they were encouraged by the willingness of residents, including young people, to participate in the panel process, and by their shared desire to reinvent the area's future. "Achieving the vision laid out by the community to return to a thriving, unique, and prosperous region will require time, dedication, and hard work," the report states. "It will not be easy. It will not be quick. But ultimately, the people who live and work in Morgan City and Berwick are the greatest assets of the community. It is worth the struggle ahead."

Sponsor's Prospective

"Without the services of ULI, we would be 'first-timers' in economic development. Our grit and commitment would be misdirected without the ULI pathway to community revitalization. As many of the folks who hosted a panel report told us, 'the work begins once the panel leaves.' You must get an organizational plan ready as you invite the ULI panel to tackle the questions you pose. With our community, time was of the essence as oil prices declined and historic river flooding took place. ULI panel recommendations provided a foundation upon which we could exhibit our community readiness for state and federal dollars to relieve our community stresses."

—Monica Mancuso
St. Mary Excel

Building for Health and Wellness in Four Colorado Communities

For decades, ULI has been at the forefront of efforts to increase the connectivity and improve the sustainability of communities through development that is pedestrian-friendly and reduces automobile dependency.





This emphasis on the economic, social, and environmental benefits of walkable places was elevated and expanded significantly in 2013, with the launch of ULI's Building Healthy Places Initiative, created specifically to highlight the link between human health and development. The multifaceted program, which includes Advisory Services panels, aims to leverage the power of ULI's global networks to shape projects and places in ways that improve the health of people and communities.

In 2018, ULI convened four Advisory Service panels to recommend strategies for creating healthy living environments within four communities in Colorado—the southeast portion of Colorado Springs, the southern section of Commerce City, the East Memorial neighborhood in Greeley, and the Montbello neighborhood in Denver.

The panels were sponsored by the Colorado Health Foundation (CHF) as part of the foundation's Healthy Places initiative, which supports the development of healthy and equitable communities in Colorado. The panels' work was a continuation of earlier advisory work in Colorado conducted in conjunction with CHF to incorporate physical activity and other health-related aspects into design and development.

One of the main takeaways from the four panel assignments is that prioritizing health and wellness as a designated outcome of community building can result in the creation of places that ultimately become more equitable, inclusive, prosperous, and sustainable. Although the neighborhoods evaluated by these panels were in different locations, they shared several challenges

related to healthy living environments, such as streetscapes not being conducive to physical activity; unsafe, unattractive walking routes; and limited access to healthy food options.

In each case, the panels found that the neighborhoods have distinct characteristics that could be leveraged to position the areas as attractive places for physical and social interaction that offer options for better mobility and healthier food choices. Panelists noted that the reinvention of these neighborhoods as health oriented could serve as a catalyst for economic growth, attracting residents who prefer active lifestyles as well as businesses seeking to locate in areas with a growing pool of skilled workers.

PANEL HIGHLIGHTS

Where: Southeast Colorado Springs, Colorado

What: Placemaking and placekeeping; economic development; projects—small-scale; healthy neighborhood and corridors

When: January 7–12, 2018

Who: Andrew Irvine (panel chair), Jose Bodipo-Memba, Brett Boncore, Collene Carey, Alysia Osborne, Jae Shin, and Tamara Zahn

Sponsor: Southeast Colorado Springs

[Knowledge Finder](#)



Colorado Springs

In Colorado Springs, the Advisory Services panel was asked by El Paso County Public Health to develop a strategy that would support public and private investments in the Southeast community to improve physical and social connectivity in the neighborhood and that would be market sensitive and align with the city's overall strategic direction.

In evaluating the assignment, the panel considered several factors, including making the case for public and private investments in projects that strengthen community connections and are also market sensitive, applying the principles of building healthy places to identify and prioritize projects that are both responsive to community needs and in alignment with the strategic direction of the city and region; recommending realistic and resident-driven strategies to activate vacant spaces (buildings, parking lots, land) and underused public places; and identifying opportunities to implement elements of existing plans that have the potential to benefit both human and economic health in the area.

The panel responded with a range of health-oriented recommendations, including the following:

- Improve sidewalks and other pedestrian walkways.
- Improve access to other areas of Colorado Springs, including its vast natural resources.
- Create a community gathering place.
- Activate vacant spaces with temporary uses such as “pop-up” parks.
- Improve community-wide communication.
- Use creative branding to help dispel negative perceptions by those outside the community.
- Identify health care needs and provide a mobile health care clinic.
- Create a community garden to encourage healthy eating and socializing.
- Improve transit services.
- Maintain affordable housing.
- Establish a community development corporation to support all the elements and make sure they are working together to improve the community's health and wellness.

The panel, which visited Southeast Colorado Springs in January 2018, was chaired by Andrew Irvine, senior principal at Stantec in Denver. Irvine was joined by Jose Bodipo-Memba, manager of Environmental Services, Sacramento Municipal Utility District, California; Brett Boncore, transportation engineer/planner, Kittelson and Associates Inc., Orlando, Florida; Colleen Carey, president and founder, the Cornerstone Group, Minneapolis; Alysia Osborne, director of Historic West End, Charlotte Center City Partners, North Carolina; Jae Shin, partner, Hector Urban Design, Planning & Civic Arts, Newark, New Jersey; and Tamara Zahn, president, Zahn Associates, Indianapolis.

The panel's report outlining its recommendations pointed out that turning around Southeast Colorado Springs is vital to the continued progress of the entire city. "This is not just about Southeast; it is about the whole city. Colorado Springs will not be successful unless it invests in all its neighborhoods, including the Southeast community," the report states. "This investment is not about 'cleaning up' or 'beautifying,' but about infusing investment into the areas the city has been ignoring for years. As the new Colorado Springs comprehensive plan sets out priorities for the next 20 years, all of its set goals should have actions that work in Southeast."



PANEL HIGHLIGHTS

Where: Commerce City, Colorado

What: Open space and parks, transit-oriented development, healthy neighborhoods and corridors, urban and regional planning

When: February 11–16, 2018

Who: Sarah Sieloff (panel chair), Aletha Dunston, Tom Fairchild, Luis Gonzalez, Savlan Hauser, Joyce Lee, Michael Rodriguez, and John Watt

Sponsor: Commerce City, P.U.M.A, and Cultivando

[Knowledge Finder](#)



Commerce City

In Commerce City, the city asked the Advisory Services panel for assistance on enhancing the livability of its southern section with a strategy to promote health and wellness, improve walkability, and provide greater social equity. The population of the study area, located in the city's historic section, is nearly 70 percent Latino, with a very high concentration of low-income, mixed-documentation-status families with limited English proficiency. The need for access to healthy eating and active living opportunities in this part of the city is pronounced, as residents tend to have above-average rates of obesity and accompanying health problems.

The ULI panel, which visited the city in February 2018, analyzed access to healthy food choices and active transportation options (such as biking and walking trails), as well as the availability of safe, attractive places for physical activity. In evaluating its assignment, the panel considered a variety of health-related issues, including public and private investments in projects that enhance walkability and improve connections between neighborhoods; improving access to healthy food choices for residents in the study area; practical, resident-driven strategies to activate vacant spaces (buildings, parking lots, land) and

underused public places that catalyze community development; and applying the most promising ideas from existing plans to improve the health of residents and boost the area's economy.

The panel's recommendations included the following:

- Use economic development as an anti-displacement strategy by better matching the local population to locally available jobs. Collaborate with local employers and funders to create training programs for residents.
- Implement "tactical urbanism" to address physical, social, environmental, cultural, institutional, and other barriers. Tactical urbanism is an inexpensive way to make strategic interventions to test ideas that will make safer and more engaging spaces. Examples include farmers markets, pop-up plazas, festivals, and better street design.
- Normalize active transportation by making walking safer and more comfortable. This can be accomplished by better timing and automating crossing signals, improving crosswalk design, and using art to enhance feelings of pedestrian/cyclist safety and place.



- Strengthen Historic Commerce City's brand and sense of community with signage and other features that help foster an environment of belonging and instill community pride.
- Evaluate all development decisions, infrastructure improvements, and program investments—large or small—in terms of how they support or detract from creating a healthy, connected community.

The panel was chaired by Sarah Sieloff, executive director, Center for Creative Land Recycling, Oakland, California. Joining Sieloff were Aletha Dunston, executive

director, Fort Harrison Reuse Authority, Lawrence, Indiana; Tom Fairchild, principal, City Version 3, Arlington, Virginia; Luis González, senior planner/landscape architect, Rodgers Consulting, Largo, Maryland; Savlan Hauser, executive director, Jack London Improvement District, Oakland, California; Joyce Lee, president, IndigoJLD Green, Philadelphia; Michael Rodriguez, director of research, Smart Growth America, Washington, D.C.; and John Watt, analyst, Valbridge Property Advisors, Pittsburgh.

In a report detailing the recommendations following the visit, panelists noted that despite the prevalence of concerns in the study area related to health, displacement, deportation, and distrust of local officials, there is a palpable desire by the community as a whole to build a better future for all residents. "People want to live and be in the community," the report states. "This success should be celebrated to further build support for government action as well as increase the pride and feeling of ownership of Commerce City."

PANEL HIGHLIGHTS

Where: Greeley, Colorado

What: Rural; architecture—design; infrastructure—transportation and transit; healthy neighborhoods and corridors

When: February 25–March 2, 2018

Who: Kamuron Gurol (panel chair), Nat Bottigheimer, Angelo Carusi, Sarah Hazel, Bettina Menhert, Riki Nishimura, Peter Quintanilla, Beth Silverman, and Kenneth Stapleton

Sponsor: City of Greeley; City of Greeley Department of Culture, Parks, and Recreation

[Knowledge Finder](#)

Greeley

In Greeley, an Advisory Services panel was convened to advise the city on how to bolster residents' quality of life and promote health and wellness in the East Memorial neighborhood, which had for years been isolated from the rest of the community by physical, socioeconomic, cultural, and environmental barriers. Similar to the panel in Commerce City, the panel focused on access to healthy food choices, driving alternatives such as biking and walking, and increased availability of appealing places for physical activity.

The panel considered several factors, such as community engagement; legacy building; neighborhood connectivity, including safe routes to schools and other facilities; infrastructure, including solutions for improving substandard public utilities and basic public services; ways to activate places; and ways to measure success. In developing its recommendations, the panel focused on social equity, in terms of providing a healthier living environment in which East Memorial residents have the same opportunities as other residents for access to healthy food, employment, and public services.

The recommendations include the following:

- **Enhance healthy parks and encourage healthy food:** Increase the use of current parks with low-cost measures, including creating visually inviting park entrances, lining sports fields to accommodate simultaneous use, and incorporating healthy snacks at concession stands.
- **Foster community engagement and empowerment:** The city should work directly with East Memorial residents on defining a vision of what is possible for the community.
- **Build a vision for urban design:** The panel suggested a design vision for East Memorial that strengthens the community by providing a design framework that reinforces healthy and active living, proposes an economic catalyst, develops a regional and local identity for the community, and provides destinations for the community to gather and places where the community can feel pride and ownership.



Angelo Carusi/ULI

The panel's design for a Greeley park.



- **Make better connections:** Use biking, walking, and transit connections to create opportunities to improve access, connectivity, mobility, and overall neighborhood health. Such opportunities include improving intersections along major thoroughfares to slow vehicle speeds and make pedestrian crossings safer, adding well-defined bike lanes, adding bike and pedestrian wayfinding signs, and enhancing lighting to improve visibility for pedestrians and cyclists.

The panel, which visited the city in late February and early March 2018, was chaired by Kamuron Gurol, North Corridor development director of Sound Transit in Seattle. Gurol was joined by Nat Bottigheimer, D.C. Region market lead, Fehr & Peers Washington, D.C.; Angelo Carusi, principal, Cooper Carry Inc., Atlanta; Sarah Hazel, assistant to the city manager, Special Projects, City of Charlotte, North Carolina; Bettina Mehnert, president and chief executive officer, AHL, Honolulu; Riki Nishimura, director of urban strategies, Gensler, San Francisco; Peter Quintanilla, urban design studio lead, Michael Baker International, Moon Township,

Pennsylvania; and Ken Stapleton, president, Ken Stapleton & Associates, Miami.

In a follow-up report explaining the recommendations, panelists commended East Memorial residents and other community stakeholders for their willingness to share ideas, hopes, and expectations, noting, “They are poised to be effective champions of change in East Greeley. The panel is confident Greeley can overcome its barriers to create a community where all residents are valued and feel valued, where public and private investments are prioritized equitably, and where commitments are kept.”

PANEL HIGHLIGHTS

Where: Montbello, Denver, Colorado

What: Mixed use and multiuse, nonprofit developers, urban and regional planning, arts and culture

When: March 11–16, 2018

Who: Michael Banner (panel chair), Tatiana Bendeck, Michael Brown, Juanita Hardy, Jeremy Hudson, Geoff Koski, Klaus Philipsen, and Zane Segal

Sponsor: Montbello Organizing Committee

[Knowledge Finder](#)



Montbello

In Montbello, one of Denver’s most ethnically and racially diverse neighborhoods, the Advisory Services panel was asked by the Montbello Organizing Committee (MOC) to advise on how best to create a community hub on an existing Regional Transportation District site that would serve as a gathering place offering a fresh-food market and space to celebrate cultural heritage and neighborhood unity. The request stemmed from the MOC’s receiving a grant from the Kresge Foundation’s FreshLo Initiative to support a space that would bring together the entire Montbello community and provide access to healthy food. The panel’s assistance was sought within the context of concerns about changing demographics in Montbello, as well as a desire to attract new investment in the community.

The panel was asked to consider several factors, including the feasibility of implementing the FreshLo plan; the availability of public and private financing for implementation; the most effective structural mechanisms for realizing the FreshLo plan; steps residents can take to ensure that the community-driven initiative takes precedence over the priorities of outside developers and investors; how to

position the initiative to leverage further economic development; and how to work effectively with other community partners to accomplish the FreshLo goals and the emerging goals for the Montbello community.

In developing its recommendations, the panel determined that the site could accommodate the hub and provide residents much-needed access to healthy food choices, provided that internal and external connectivity throughout the neighborhood is improved, including access to the RTD rail system. Panelists proposed three scenarios based on different levels of planning and time commitment, each of which incorporated an affirmation of the importance of food and art in placemaking, acknowledgment of the need for a fresh-food market in Montbello, confirmation that the hub fits on the RTD site, and recognition of the need for a robust governance structure for implementation of the FreshLo program.

In addition, the panel recommended the following:

- The immediate creation of an art program to help brand the community and reinforce a sense of place;

- Building a walkable loop throughout the neighborhood to connect different community assets, and activating the loop through signage indicating exercise stop points; and
- Frequent, clear communications from the MOC to all subsections of the community to gain consensus for and increase residents' engagement in the effort.

The panel, which visited Montbello in March 2018, was chaired by ULI trustee Michael Banner, president and chief executive officer, Los Angeles LDC Inc. in California. Banner was joined by Tatiana S. Bendeck, project manager, Beyer Blinder Belle, Washington, D.C.; Michael Brown, planning supervisor, Montgomery County Planning Department, Silver Spring, Maryland; Geoff Koski, president, Bleakly Advisory Group, Atlanta; Juanita Hardy, ULI senior visiting fellow, Washington, D.C.; Jeremy Hudson, partner and chief executive officer, Specialized Real Estate Group, Fayetteville, Arkansas; Klaus Philipsen, ArchPlan Inc., Philipsen Architects, Baltimore; and Zane Segal, Zane Segal Projects, Houston.

In its report explaining the recommendations for the cultural hub, the panel noted the importance of leveraging change—including opportunities presented by new residents and businesses—for

the community's benefit. "The cultural hub has the opportunity to bring much needed and much-anticipated resources to help the Montbello community grow and strengthen. Change is not inherently bad, and accepting new players is instrumental to being prepared to have change work for Montbello's benefit," the report states.



"People want to live in the best environment possible—physical, social, and economic—and health is a major part of this. Health and wellness have a significant impact on a number of determinants, including wealth creation. You cannot have wealth creation in an unhealthy community. A lot of the factors that make a healthy community can get unplugged, leaving all kinds of 'deserts' such as food deserts and capital deserts. Part of the work of Advisory Services is helping communities understand what they need to bring back, rebuild, and renew to create a healthier and more sustainable environment."

—Michael Banner
Montbello panel chair and ULI trustee

Creating a More Resilient Growth Strategy for Lafayette, Louisiana

ULI's Advisory Services program has an extensive track record of advising communities—both large and small—on how to effectively rebuild following natural disasters, providing urban resilience strategies that incorporate economic opportunity and livability as well as environmental sustainability.



PANEL HIGHLIGHTS

Where: Downtown Lafayette, Louisiana

What: Downtown; housing—multifamily; resilience

When: June 25–30, 2017

Who: Thomas Murphy (panel chair), Denise Bell, Aletha Dunston, Sukirti Ghosh, Alexander Kelso, Betty Massey, Nan Rohrer, Julie Underdahl, and Nancy Whitworth

Sponsor: Lafayette Consolidated

[Knowledge Finder](#)

Following a devastating flood in 2016, Lafayette, Louisiana, was left with severely damaged suburban areas and faced many follow-up challenges with flooding and stormwater management. Seeking a plan for recovery and future growth, the city of Lafayette sought assistance from a ULI advisory panel on how to bring more infill development and redevelopment to its downtown, which had experienced economic decline but is less flood-prone, as it is on a higher elevation than the suburbs.

Taking place in June 2017, the Lafayette panel was one of a series of ULI panels funded by the Kresge Foundation to assess how cities can better prepare for the effects of climate change, such as severe flooding, wildfires, drought, extreme heat, and rising sea levels. The objective of these panels is to offer guidance to communities that will inform the formulation of plans and policies to make communities more resilient and create stronger responses to and recoveries from such events.

The Lafayette Consolidated Government (LCG) asked the panel to examine opportunities for catalytic mixed-use and residential development in the city's urban core, with a specific focus on financial tools and policies to implement more resilient land use and water management strategies. With a population of 127,000, Lafayette is

the fourth-largest city in Louisiana and the seat of Lafayette parish.

Like other Gulf Coast industrial cities, Lafayette experienced both rapid growth and decline during the oil boom of the 1980s. The decline left the city and parish seeking ways to reenergize its work opportunities and diversify its economy. At the time of the panel, the city had experienced steady growth and relatively low unemployment, attracting new employers, particularly those in the technology sector. However, much of the area's residential growth tended to be in outer areas rather than the downtown core; in parts of the parish, much rural and agricultural land has been developed into low-density residential.

As part of its assessment on reviving the downtown, the panel considered the following:

- Public-sector actions such as investments; infill incentives; and design, finance, procurement, and parking strategies that would support mixed-use and residential development and encourage private-sector investments to revive the downtown;
- The impact to the city and parish tax base of downtown redevelopment and revitalization efforts;

- How to improve access to the downtown to make it a more appealing destination for residents in outlying areas;
- How to ensure that the downtown revitalization plan would fit into a broader resilient land use strategy that factors in environmental, community, and economic components;
- How to provide sufficient infrastructure to support additional residents downtown; and
- Policies to ensure better preparedness for future storm events and concentrate development in less vulnerable areas.

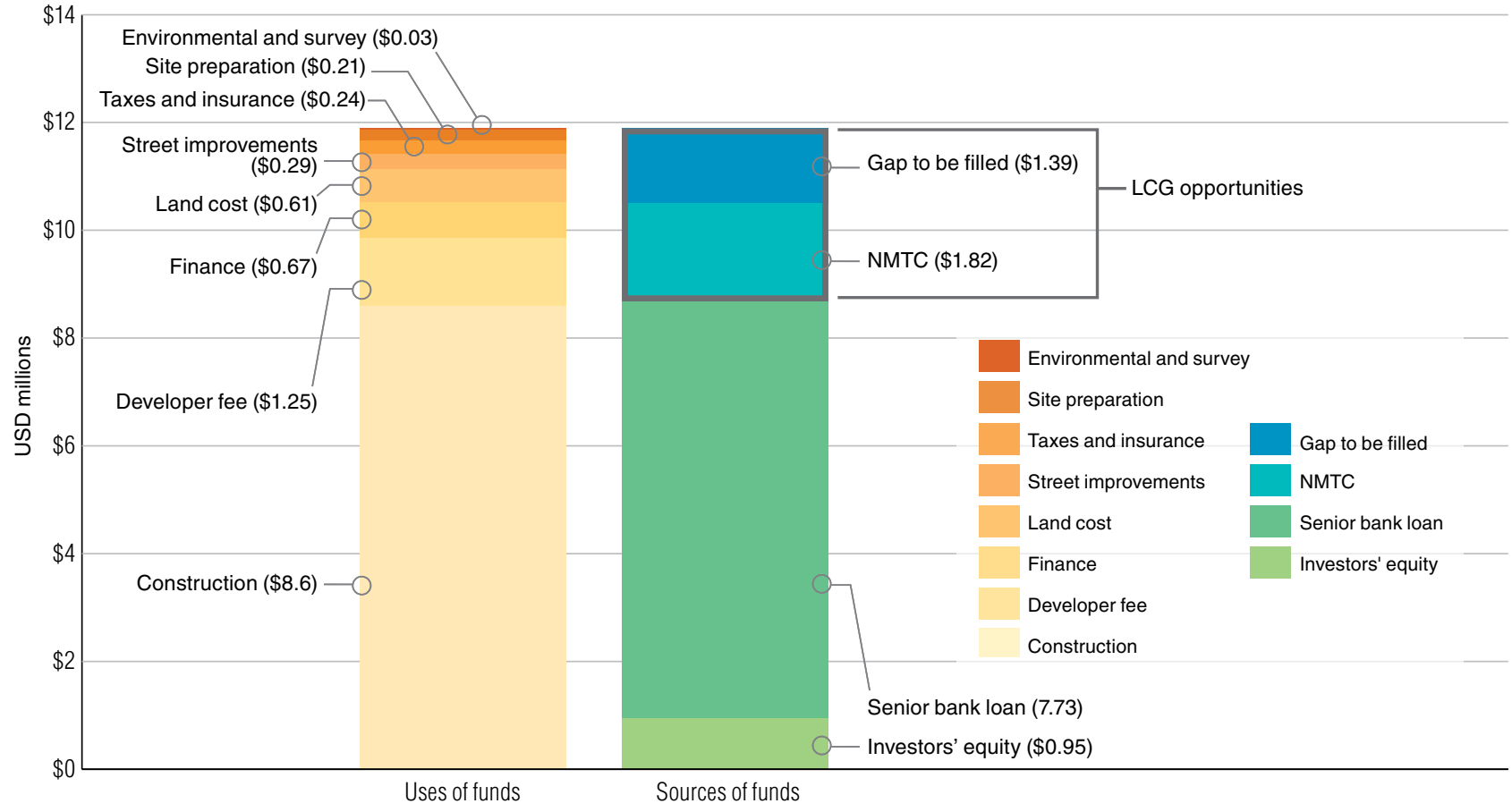
The panel was chaired by Tom Murphy, a ULI senior resident fellow based in Washington, D.C. "There was a great desire on the city's part to make Lafayette's downtown more vibrant and resilient, but help was needed to figure out how to turn the vision into reality," Murphy said. "Our ideas focused on what would be doable in the short and long terms not only to protect the city from extreme weather, but to help transform the downtown into a place to work and live as well as visit, not just work and leave."

The panel's recommendations included the following:

- Implement organizational changes that ensure neighborhood leaders have a seat at the table. A strategy for downtown needs to include and engage its surrounding neighborhoods. These neighborhood residents are both invested in the area and are most likely to become future customers, business owners, or employees in downtown businesses. A staffed Community Development Corporation focused on downtown-adjacent neighborhoods, the addition of a neighborhood services director, and community engagement strategies such as a community summit are a few strategies that would help Lafayette build neighborhood potential and harness synergies for downtown revitalization.
- Embrace catalytic projects and seek opportunities to engage in public/private partnerships. Downtown Lafayette has several high-profile sites that could catalyze development, such as the IberiaBank and Old Federal Courthouse sites. To engage the private sector and build partnerships, LCG should look into options such as tax incentives and other strategies to kick-start private development on these sites that could lead to citywide benefits such as an expanded tax base, more economic development opportunities and jobs, and enhanced tourism.
- Focus on fundamentals to attract investment. At its core, Lafayette's downtown must be clean, safe, and accessible to support the goal of becoming a mixed-use hub of Lafayette. Accordingly, while strategizing about catalytic investments, LCG should also consider fundamentals, such as code enforcement, safety, lighting, and wayfinding.
- Promote Lafayette's unique character through marketing and public programming that will differentiate the downtown and foster vibrancy. Highly successful festivals and a celebrated food culture currently draw locals and visitors to downtown Lafayette. Future development should build from this success, also finding opportunities for public art, additional programming, and communicating these opportunities and successes through marketing.
- Build resilience into everyday development practices and make investments to better manage water in both adverse and routine events. Stormwater management continues to be a problem for Lafayette during both major storms and routine rain events. This is a shared problem, which requires a shared solution, such as a dedicated fee to finance stormwater management best practices, green infrastructure, and low-impact development techniques. Engagement with homeowners, including those on repetitive-loss properties, and targeted investment in parks and open spaces are also important components of addressing the parish's vulnerability to flooding.
- Put plans into action by aligning responsibility with authority, and set realistic expectations. LCG has already completed excellent planning that outlines goals related to downtown development. Advancing this vision for a vibrant and resilient downtown Lafayette will require public/private partnerships, strong leadership to evaluate difficult decisions, and a strategy to ensure services related to downtown are not duplicated. LCG has the commitment and an engaged resident and business community; now is the time to build momentum.

Murphy was joined on the panel by Denise P. Bell, floodplain manager, city of Birmingham, Alabama; Aletha Dunston, Community Development Block Grant program manager, Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs, Indianapolis; Sukirti Ghosh, senior associate/urban designer, Rhodeside & Harwell, Alexandria, Virginia; Alexander S. Kelso Jr., principal, Green Coast Enterprises LLC, New Orleans; Betty Massey, executive director, Mary

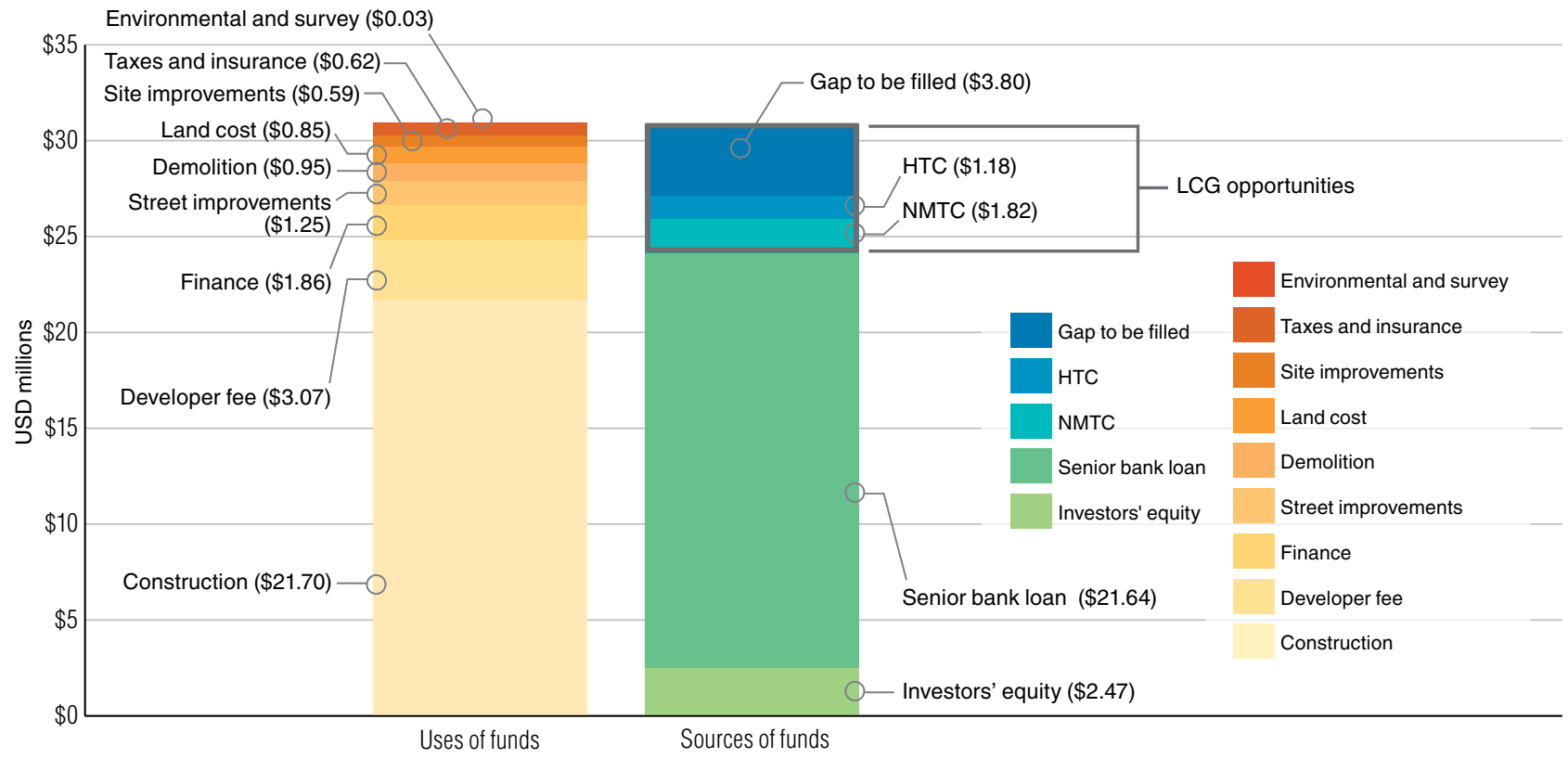
IberiaBank Site Redevelopment



Source: Iberia Development Study, "Block A", 2014.

The panel identified a \$1.39 million financing gap for the IberiaBank site redevelopment and a \$3.8 million financing gap for the Old Federal Courthouse redevelopment site. The panel recommended that the Lafayette Consolidated Government could fill the gap via tax credits and other programs.

Old Federal Courthouse Redevelopment



Source: Centre-ville Site Development Study, 2014.

The panel identified a \$1.39 million financing gap for the IberiaBank site redevelopment and a \$3.8 million financing gap for the Old Federal Courthouse redevelopment site. The panel recommended that the Lafayette Consolidated Government could fill the gap via tax credits and other programs.



Moody Northern Endowment, Galveston, Texas; Tyrone Rachal, principal, Red Rock Global, Atlanta; Nan Rohrer, independent consultant, Rohrer Consulting, Baltimore; Julie Underdahl, president and chief executive officer, Cherry Creek North, Denver; and Nancy P. Whitworth, deputy city manager/director of economic development, city of Greenville, South Carolina.

Subsequent to the panel's visit, panelists prepared a detailed report explaining the recommendations for reviving the downtown with a strategy that would ultimately make the entire city more resilient. "A vibrant downtown is important to the whole parish's economic health. The workforce of today and the future demands a quality of life that provides choices, including the choice to live in a walkable

environment, without reliance on a car to reach places of work and play," the report states.

"Although Lafayette certainly has highly desirable residential areas, a vibrant downtown would provide the parish with a hub that will ensure Lafayette remains competitive for investment. It would also contribute to fostering a more resilient and sustainable approach to land use in Lafayette by concentrating development in an area well served by infrastructure. Alongside large-scale catalytic projects, the Lafayette Consolidated Government and downtown advocates can make substantial progress through small-scale management and placemaking interventions. These will ultimately lead to a more inviting downtown and support the vision for the long term."

"A vibrant downtown would provide the parish with a hub that will ensure Lafayette remains competitive for investment. It would also contribute to fostering a more resilient and sustainable approach to land use in Lafayette by concentrating development in an area well served by infrastructure. A vibrant downtown is important to the whole parish's economic health."

—Advisory Services panel report
Lafayette, Louisiana

Transforming an Iconic Fairground into an Economic Driver and Community Amenity for Pomona, California

The work of ULI's Advisory Services program often entails helping communities determine how to maximize the potential of older, often historic existing assets to further increase the benefits they provide as economic drivers and popular amenities, and to avoid obsolescence.



PANEL HIGHLIGHTS

Where: Fairplex, Pomona, California

What: Recreation and entertainment, economic development

When: July 7–12, 2019

Who: Glenda Hood (panel chair), Nat Bottigheimer, Ari Erlichman, Jonathan Gelber, Patricia Kirk, Michael Maurer, and Stephanie Pankiewicz

Sponsor: Fairplex

[Knowledge Finder](#)

The assistance provided by an Advisory Services panel regarding the Fairplex in Pomona, California, is an example of the program's expertise in this area.

Under new management, the nearly 100-year-old Fairplex, a 487-acre site that hosts the Los Angeles County Fair, is poised for a transformation to meet changing demographics and future market challenges. The site, which is mostly owned by Los Angeles County and includes a portion of the city of La Verne as well as Pomona, hosts about 1.2 million fairgoers and provides a variety of other events that bring more than 3 million visitors to Fairplex annually.

One of the largest fairgrounds in the United States, the expansive complex has considerable assets, including 325,000 square feet of historical, Quonset hut-style buildings constructed during the 1930s as a Works Progress Administration project, museums, a hotel and conference center, an on-site farm that serves the hotel's farm-to-table restaurants, a forested parcel, a grandstand, a drag strip, a child development center, occupational training facilities for high school students, sports fields, and a variety of exhibition buildings and animal barns that could be repurposed for other uses. However, the site is challenged by a visually uninteresting

design, poor connectivity with surrounding neighborhoods (it is bounded with chain-link fencing and surrounded on all four sides by surface streets), and underused land, buildings, infrastructure, and resources.

The Advisory Services panel, which visited Fairplex and the surrounding area in July 2019, was asked by Fairplex's staff and board as well as public officials from Pomona and La Verne to reimagine the site's potential as an economic engine and year-round destination. Specifically, the panel was requested to identify opportunities for improving land use, sustainability, and utilization of existing assets; creating economic impact; improving the flow of visitors from future mass transit resources and within the Fairplex complex; enhancing programming and visitor experience with new landscaping and experiential opportunities; generating additional revenue; creating mutually beneficial partnerships with community businesses and organizations; and connecting with and engaging the local community.

The panel's work was based on a strategic plan for Fairplex prepared by its board in 2018 to update, revise, and refresh its vision and goals, including making Fairplex a model community partner,

economic engine, and presenter of unique experiences. In developing its recommendations, the panel emphasized the need to expand the appeal of Fairplex with more year-round programming that reaches beyond its agricultural roots to other topical interests that resonate with new area residents and younger generations of visitors. Panelists noted that Fairplex was founded not only to host the Los Angeles County Fair but also to provide holistic support for the local community financially, through commerce as well as agriculture; socially, as a convener and community gathering place; and artistically, by offering members of the community a space to share their creations and passions.

Stakeholders interviewed by panelists expressed a desire for change that includes the creation of a live/work/play environment with greenways and open space, technology upgrades, an expansion of farm and job-training programs, an expansion of the child development center, development of attainable and multigenerational housing, and reorientation of the site to improve access to a light-rail line that is scheduled for completion in 2025.



Stephanie Pankiewicz/ULI

The panel's vision for the Los Angeles County Fairplex.

Key recommendations from the panel were as follows:

- **Solidify identity:** Fairplex's identity and core businesses need clearer articulation; those businesses need further evaluation to identify opportunities for generating the best returns for Fairplex and its investment partners.
- **Consider a rebranding initiative:** Involve all community stakeholders and update the organization's image to reflect future land use changes.
- **Embrace a paradigm shift:** Position Fairplex as a year-round destination that also operates the Los Angeles County Fair. Fairplex can become more responsive to the shifting retail economy and community needs by remaining open for continuous use. This will create a sense of place that deepens its community connections and expands possibilities for revenue generation.
- **Pursue an imaginative and sustainable framework plan:** In becoming a year-round destination, Fairplex should be more accessible to the community. A gateway should be created to connect Fairplex to La Verne's proposed light-rail station, and it should connect to a pedestrian-oriented promenade that would serve as Fairplex's "main street" and traverse the entire site.
- **Incorporate the history of the fair experience into all aspects of design, use, and programming:** Fairplex should incorporate its story into future projects, including signage that educates visitors about Fairplex's history, with illustrative artwork that showcases Fairplex's role in the community.
- **Emphasize the role of the community:** Engaging the community must be part of any and all rebranding and planning processes to garner support for future projects.
- **Become a model of environmental sustainability:** Create on-site renewable energy production and storage facilities; form mutually beneficial partnerships with local energy companies and clean-tech businesses; and implement best practices for water conservation.

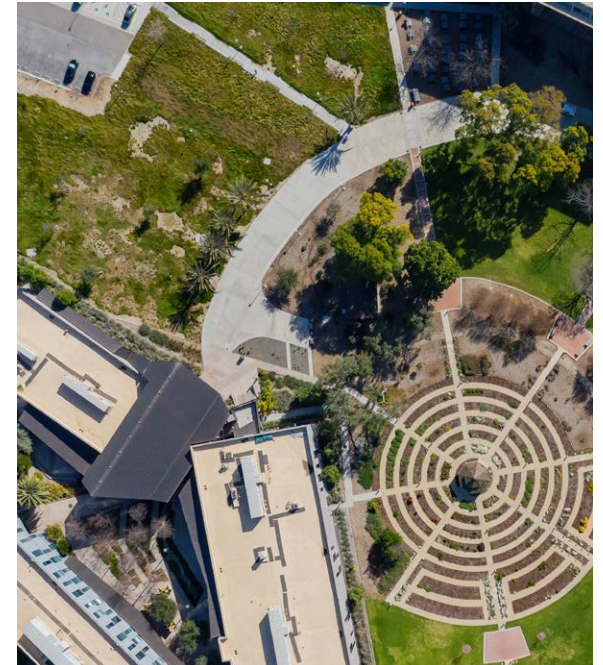
- **Create functional, flexible phasing:** Identify short-, medium-, and longer-term priorities and opportunities. Start the transformation process with highly visible, impactful, and well-publicized projects that require minimal funding and can be completed within one to two years. All initiatives going forward should focus on building visibility and broad user appeal to create support for subsequent phases and initiatives.
- **Create an imaginative and sustainable framework plan that includes a new campus gateway from the proposed Gold Line, a grid of complete streets, a wayfinding system, and a green artery that connects Fairplex neighborhoods and anchors of activity, which include both existing uses and the opportunity to develop and curate future uses.**
- **Support implementation concepts that promote model partnerships and financial sustainability:** Fairplex’s management should seek opportunities to form mutually beneficial partnerships with businesses, local government agencies, educational and health care institutions, and nonprofits that enhance Fairplex’s visibility and support in the community.

- **Evaluate internal and external governance:** To respond to current and future community needs, consider reorganizing governance to align with the goals and objectives in the Fairplex strategic plan; the reorganization should include experts capable of guiding redevelopment efforts.

Glenda Hood, president of Hood Partners LLC in Orlando, Florida, chaired the panel. “We approached the assignment with the goal of positioning Fairplex as the soul of the community. What we discovered is a promising opportunity for Fairplex to be renewed in a way that respects its rich history while making it relevant and interesting to current and future generations of visitors,” Hood said. “Clearly, the time is now for Fairplex to evolve into a year-round, sought-after destination that serves as a focal point for the region.”

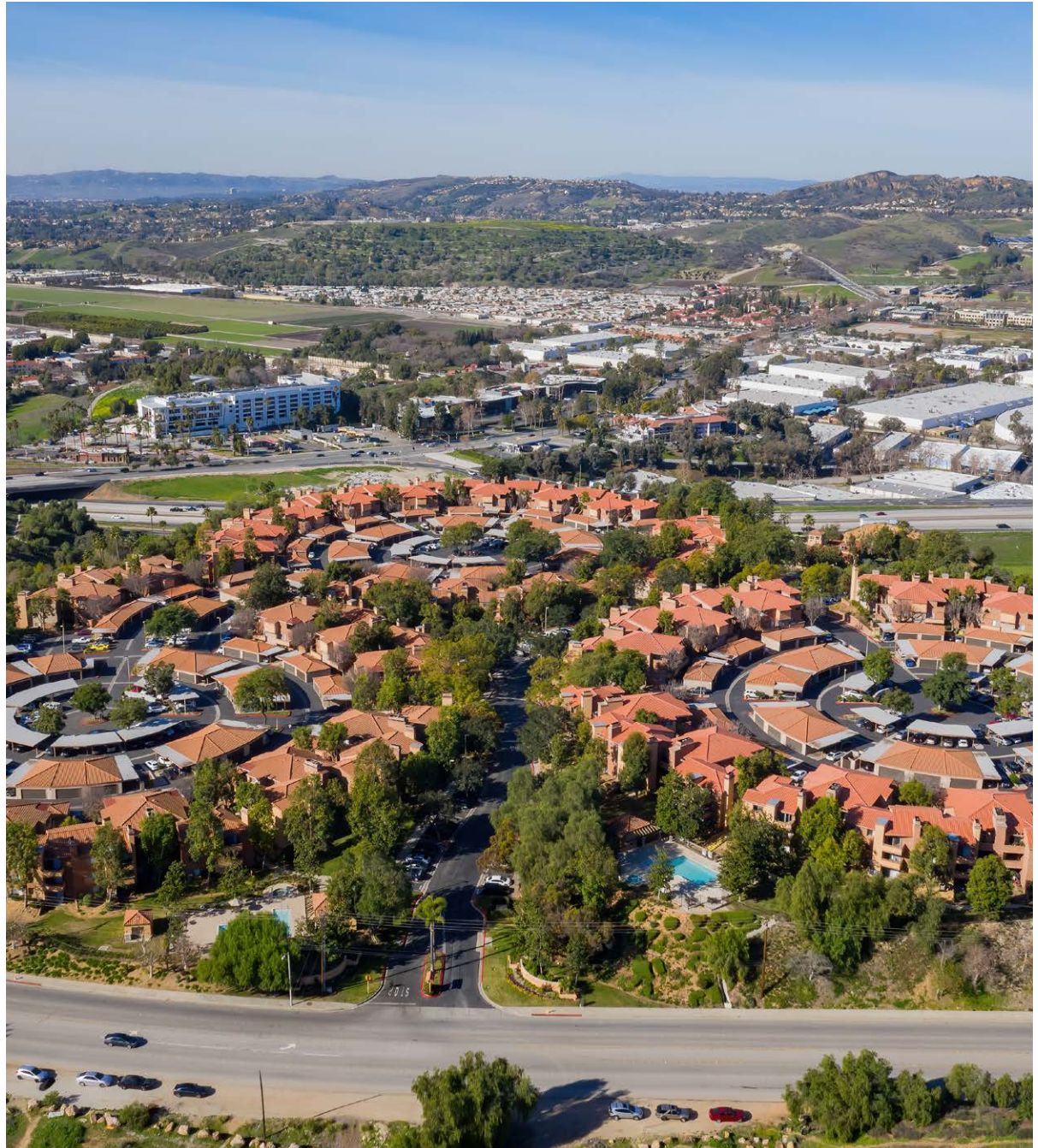
Hood was joined on the panel by Parag Agrawal, community development director, city of Milton, Georgia; Nat Bottigheimer, director, state programs, New Jersey Regional Plan Association, Princeton, New Jersey; Ari Erlichman, chief development officer, Le Grand Réservoir, Paris, France; Jonathan Gelber, vice president, Bleakly Advisory Group, Atlanta; Michael Maurer, principal, Perkins Eastman, Chicago; and Stephanie Pankiewicz, partner, LandDesign, Alexandria, Virginia.

In a follow-up report explaining the recommendations, panelists commended Fairplex’s initiative thus far and expressed optimism for the growth potential of the site and the impact it will have on the surrounding community. The recommendations, panelists noted, “can help Fairplex meet the dynamic challenges of today and tomorrow, while contributing to the social and economic vitality of the county and the region, meeting local community needs, and convening entertainment opportunities that create memories, enjoyment, and community engagement year-round.”



“As we prepared to implement a newly developed five-year strategic plan for our 487-acre Fairplex campus leading up to our centennial, our goal was to also look toward the future to see what we could be in the next 100 years. The Urban Land Institute took our strategic plan and vision document and used them as a foundation to create a blueprint for a ‘place’ where the community can live, learn, work, and play. Perhaps the strongest component of ULI’s plan was seeking out the community’s input. As a community-benefit organization and physically being located in a residential neighborhood, our neighbors and community partners are an extension of our team. ULI sought suggestions, concerns, and big ideas from the community, making them feel like a part of the process. That was priceless.”

—Miguel A. Santana
President and CEO, Fairplex



Rebuilding St. Thomas to Be More Resilient, Prosperous, and Livable

Over the past decade, as hurricanes and other types of severe weather have occurred with increasing frequency and intensity around the world, a growing number of communities affected by natural disasters have sought assistance from ULI's Advisory Services program on rebuilding to become more resilient to future events.



PANEL HIGHLIGHTS

Where: St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands

What: Placemaking and placekeeping; infrastructure—transportation and transit; resilience; economic development

When: August 25–30, 2019

Who: Adam Weers (panel chairs), Neil Albert, Daniel Anderton, Allison Anolik, Catherine Buell, R. David Gibbs, and Tyrone Rachal

Sponsors: Virgin Islands Housing Authority, ULI Foundation

[Knowledge Finder](#)

In August 2019, ULI convened an Advisory Services panel to help the city of St. Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) develop a plan to rebound following two devastating hurricanes—Maria and Irma—both of which struck the Caribbean in September 2017.

The Eastern Caribbean location of the Virgin Islands makes the area vulnerable to short- and long-term physical and economic damage from storms, including a hurricane season that lasts from June through the end of November. Hurricane Irma passed directly over St. Thomas as a category 5 hurricane in early September 2017, and St. Croix took a direct hit from Maria, also a category 5 hurricane, just two weeks later. Puerto Rico was also severely damaged by Maria. The total damage to the region from the storms was estimated by the federal government to be \$11.25 billion.

The St. Thomas panel was the third in a series of panels deployed to the Caribbean to advise on recovery and rebuilding—the first in St. Croix in June 2018, the second in Puerto Rico in December 2018. While each panel was specific to the needs of the assignment area, the panels were united by connective themes of resilience that allowed a shared vision to emerge, with the first two informing the work in St. Thomas.

Sponsored by the Virgin Islands Housing Authority (VIHA), the panel was asked to include in its urban resilience strategy a focus on improving economic vitality, expanding affordable housing availability, and enhancing overall livability as key factors in reducing vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, such as extreme weather and sea-level rise. Ironically, during the panel’s visit, St. Thomas was hit by Hurricane Dorian, a much weaker, but still disruptive category 1 storm whose sudden appearance underscored the unpredictability that island residents must endure during hurricane season. That firsthand experience further informed the panel’s work.

The housing authority asked the panel to focus on an area that includes downtown Charlotte Amalie, which is St. Thomas’s central business and shopping district; Havensight, a major cruise ship port; and several housing community sites owned and managed by the VIHA. Specifically, the panel’s charge included providing strategic recommendations on the following:

- Integrating the existing affordable housing stock, given the context of the surrounding neighborhood;

- Creating an equitable economic development vision projecting toward the next five, 10, and 15 years;
- Helping new communities become more resilient and reduce consumption of natural resources; and
- Creating a cultural theme and design principles to tie the area together and brand it as a unique location.

In developing its recommendations, the panel supplemented its already extensive stakeholder interview process with additional outreach to gain further input from island residents. This contact yielded keen insights reflecting an overwhelming desire for small and local business ownership opportunities, an expanded tourist industry, downtown revitalization, better walkability, more partnership opportunities, and government reform and restructuring. As one resident said, “My aspiration for St. Thomas and my community is . . . for everyone to have a place in the progress and development of downtown’s upgrade.”

The panel grouped its recommendations into five categories: recovery and resilience; economic development; public and affordable housing; built environment, placemaking, and mobility; and governance:



Laura Magruder/ULI

Panelists listen to St. Thomas residents.

- **Recovery and resilience:** Rebuilding efforts should be targeted to higher standards and not just re-creating the previous framework for resources that proved insufficient when stressed by extreme weather events.
 - Harness Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Disaster Recovery funding to jump-start community resilience and invest in energy alternatives.
 - Strengthen commitments to USVI's enactment of the Climate Change Adaptation Policy, which addresses multiple sectors, including energy, agriculture, health, and critical infrastructure.

- Recognize resilience as a key economic infrastructure. In addition to strengthening commitments to energy alternatives, support resiliency in new developments, particularly resilient initiatives backed with publicly supported partnerships.
- Explore the decoupling and privatization of portions of the utility to a company with the means to transform the territory's electrical system; and establish a public utility commission to regulate utilities.

- **Economic development:** Focus on economic development investments at all scales to achieve greater economic diversification.
 - Create a business improvement district to support and bolster the downtown's business community.
 - Foster pathways to small business entrepreneurship.
 - Enhance tourism with extended-stay experiences that benefit the local economy.
 - Explore market-rate housing development.
 - Tailor workforce training to meet the territory's skill set needs.

- Create job opportunities for low-income residents.
- Use creative partnerships to support a more equitable approach to economic development.
- **Public housing and affordable housing:** Use CDBG Disaster Recovery funding as a catalyst for the revitalization of public housing and the creation of greater cohesion with the surrounding community.
 - Revitalize public housing through the development of mixed-income, mixed-use projects.
 - Address blighted properties with rehab grants and code enforcement.
 - Focus on revitalization that limits displacement and creates multipurpose indoor and outdoor gathering spaces for the community.
 - Ensure that revitalized areas include play spaces for children.
 - Enhance service, civic, and social networks to build trust and foster community engagement.
 - Recognize the connection between health and housing; take action to address the health and housing needs for the most vulnerable residents.



- **Built environment, placemaking, and mobility:** Improve the overall quality of life through reunifying and connecting surrounding communities by placing residential at the core of the vision.
 - Recognize and celebrate St. Thomas’s unique culture by tying themes into placemaking. Leverage key opportunities to acknowledge the inherent value of the existing community and tie in cultural themes and design principles throughout the areas of downtown Charlotte Amalie, Havensight, and the VIHA properties to brand them as unique locations.
- Improve health and quality of life through mobility enhancements. Encourage a culture less reliant on use of personal vehicles by encouraging alternative transportation modes between neighborhoods, enabling the USVI to be eligible for federal transportation funds to improve the bike and pedestrian experiences.
- Reinforce the vitality of the overall community by enhancing existing strengths within its districts. Use placemaking and mobility improvements to achieve greater connectivity and walkability within the districts and as well as along a major corridor that connects residential and commercial uses.
- **Governance:** Evaluate structural and governance barriers, implementing reform and ensuring a high level of delivery and implementation in the context of the disaster recovery funding and new administration.
 - Improve coordination among agencies.
 - Reinforce comprehensive planning functions within the territory.
 - Focus on attracting skilled talent.
 - Increase participation of residents in planning process through an office devoted to community engagement.

- Bolster confidence in leadership by ensuring that appropriately skilled individuals are well suited for their positions through a new civil service classification for management workers.

Leading ULI member Adam Weers, principal, Trammell Crow Company, Washington, D.C., chaired the panel. “The Advisory Services panelists team were honored to assist the government of the Virgin Islands in planning for the revitalization as part of the ongoing recovery efforts throughout USVI,” said Weers. “We hope the panel’s work provided useful and actionable recommendations, and we hope to find ways for ULI to continue to support the USVI leadership as it moves toward implementation.”

Weers was joined on the panel by Neil Albert, president and executive director, DowntownDC BID, Washington, D.C.; Dan Anderton, senior planner/landscape architect, Dewberry, Germantown, Maryland; Allison Anolik, senior transportation planner, AECOM, Raleigh, North Carolina; R. David Gibbs, renewable energy consultant, Brooklyn, New York; Marion Mollegen

McFaden, senior vice president, public policy, and senior adviser, resilience, Enterprise Community Partners Inc., Washington, D.C.; and Tyrone Rachal, president, Red Rock Global Capital Partners, Atlanta.

In a detailed report published after the panel’s visit, panelists acknowledged the challenges faced by the territory in obtaining sufficient recovery funds from the federal government. Still, the panel urged local officials to immediately use the funds received so far to jump-start the rebuilding effort with the expectation that additional federal funding—some of which is already approved for the purpose—will arrive to further support the process. “If the [USVI] government partners with the community to make meaningful shifts in its economic, resilience, and housing policies, then St. Thomas and the USVI as a whole will be better positioned to strengthen and withstand challenges to their community,” the report concludes.

Sponsor’s Prospective

“The framework for a ULI Advisory Services panel maximizes the collaboration and enhancement of broad stakeholder vision coupled with diverse global expertise in real estate development that yields valuable recommendations for the study area. The Virgin Islands Housing Authority implemented all relevant ULI recommendations, which infused global best practices into our \$1 billion redevelopment plan for 3,000 units of affordable housing.”

—Robert Graham
CPM, executive director, Virgin Islands Housing Authority



“For more than 75 years, the Advisory Services program has been providing strategic advice to a wide variety of communities on urban development. As the real estate and land use industry has changed, so has the program. While we continue to advise on core issues such as downtown revitalization, economic development, housing, urban design, and infrastructure, we have pivoted our focus to include critical issues such as building resilience, creating healthy places, encouraging effective community engagement, and increasing social equity. The program will continue to evolve, and we expect to reach new communities and countries around the world that can benefit from ULI’s expertise.”

—Thomas Eitler, senior vice president, ULI Advisory Services



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