ULI Washington

GREAT SENECA CORRIDOR

Montgomery County, MD

Technical Assistance Panel Report | September 20-21, 2022

ON THE COVER: Mallory Square, off Key W Ave, is a model mixed-use development in Great Seneca.

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 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 the Asia Pacific regions, with members in 80 countries.

More information is available at **uli.org**.

About ULI Washington

ULI Washington is one of ULI's largest District Councils worldwide, with 2,300 members. We welcome membership and participation from individuals who share our commitment to responsible land use to sustain the growth and prosperity of the National Capital region. The opportunity to influence local land use policy remains the focus and achievement of ULI Washington.

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ULI Advisory Services: National and Global Programs

Since 1947, the ULI Advisory Services program has assembled well over 700 ULI-member teams to help sponsors find creative, practical solutions for complex land use challenges. A wide variety of public, private, and nonprofit organizations have contracted for ULI's advisory services. National and international Panelists are specifically recruited to form a Panel of independent and objective volunteer ULI member experts with the skills needed to address the identified land use challenge. The program is designed to help break through obstacles, jump-start conversations, and solve tough challenges that need an outside, independent perspective. Three- and five-day engagements are offered to ensure thorough consideration of relevant topics.

An additional national offering is the project analysis session (PAS) offered at ULI's Fall and Spring Meetings, through which specific land use challenges are evaluated by a Panel of volunteer experts selected from ULI's membership. This is a conversational format that lends itself to an open exchange of ideas among diverse industry practitioners with distinct points of view. From the streamlined two-hour session to the "deeper dive" eight-hour session, this conversational format encourages creative thinking and problem solving.

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ULI Advisory Services: District Council Programs

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. On the local level, ULI Washington has completed over 40 technical assistance panels (TAP) offering objective and expert advice to local decision-makers on a wide variety of land use and real estate issues ranging from site-specific projects to public policy. Drawing from its local membership base, ULI Washington assembles panels for two day in-person TAPs. In response to the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, ULI Washington adapted the TAP program to include virtual meetings in order to continue providing strategic advice to communities while ensuring social distancing and safety of all participants.

Learn more at **washington.uli.org**.

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Acknowledgments

The Urban Land Institute – Washington, D.C., Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) members and project staff would like to thank the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) for inviting ULI Washington.

The Panel would also like to thank the many stakeholders and organizations who participated in the process, providing valuable input that shaped this report.

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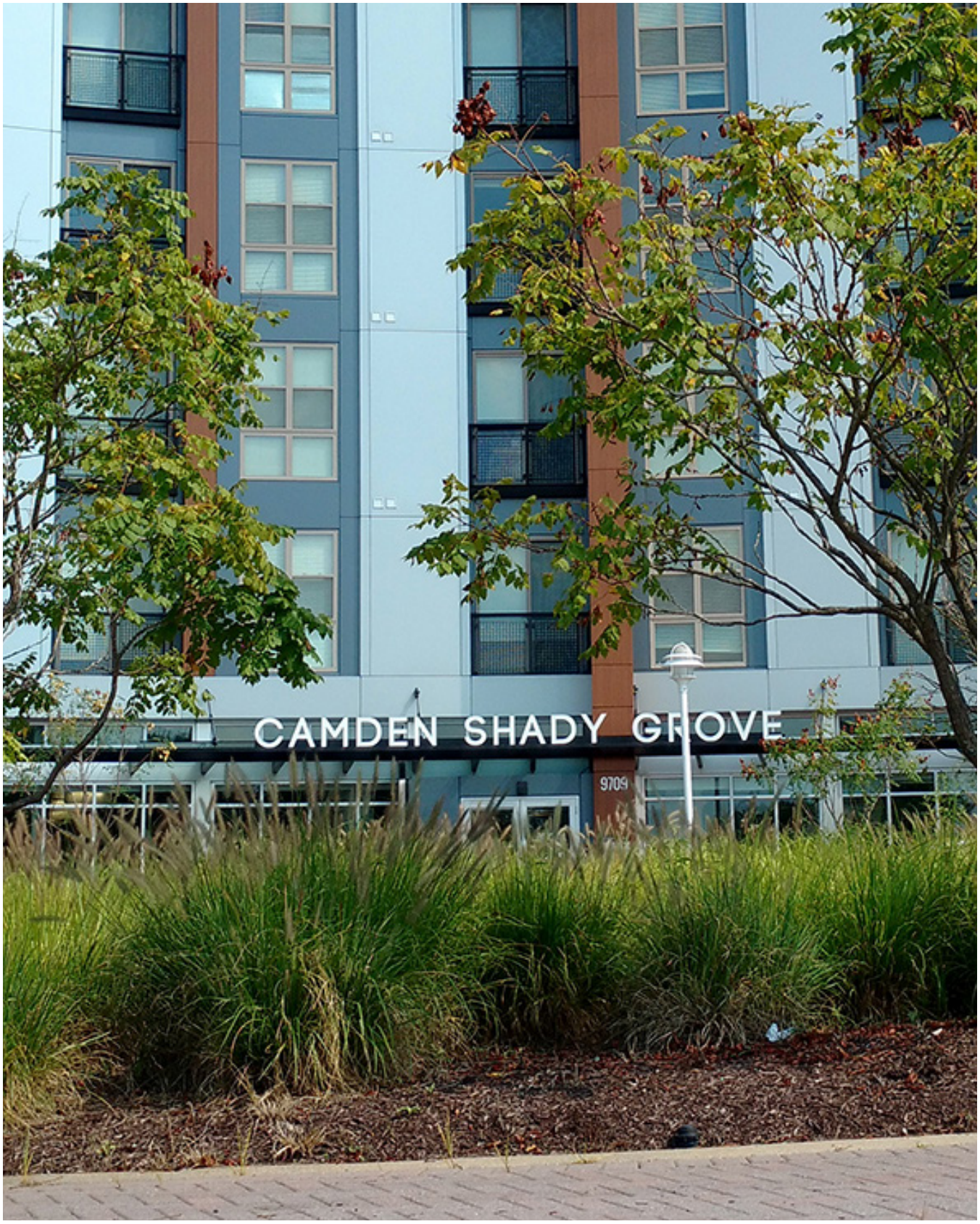

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Camden Shady Grove Apartments, located on Key W Ave, offers life sciences employees housing walking distance from Adventist Healthcare and other employers.

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Great Seneca Corridor is the epicenter of national public health research and serves as a hub for life sciences and education institutions. While this area has grown in recent years, more can be done to promote connectivity and community engagement in the space. Montgomery Planning, part of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), has geographic authority in Montgomery County, and approached ULI to convene a Technical Assistance Panel to address this issue. Over two days, panelists toured the area, met with stakeholders and produced recommendations to improve health, wellness and public spaces, improve connectivity and transportation, and better facilitate development and land use.

The recommendations are divided into four sections:

- Creating a network of hubs to promote walkability and community;
- Incentivizing the creation of affordable and workforce housing to shorten commutes and attract more talent to the region;
- Prioritizing improvements to the existing transportation infrastructure, including more pedestrian-friendly roadways and circulator bus routes;
- And finally, utilizing branding techniques to create a stronger identity within the space and using a consistent name.

Each recommendation is accompanied by action items and a timeline in which to implement them, taking into consideration the ease and feasibility of each one.

The panel believes the Life Sciences Center in the Great Seneca Science Corridor Plan area is a tremendous economic asset and research center, both for the region and the entire country. Montgomery County is prescient to focus on ways to make this area more connected and accessible so that the region, its workforce, surrounding population and industry continue to thrive.

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Stakeholders interviews helped inform the TAP process.

BACKGROUND

Montgomery County, Maryland is the epicenter of national public health research, hosting the headquarters of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), US Pharmacopeia, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). CBRE recently ranked the DC region as number two in the nation for the strength of our life sciences research talent. It also is connected to universities with strong life sciences programs, including Johns Hopkins University and the University of Maryland system (Universities at Shady Grove).

More than 20,000 people commute daily to the Life Sciences Center. According to the Metropolitan Washington Council of Government's regional travel model, the largest proportion of morning commutes into the Life Sciences Center and its adjacent areas come from within these same areas. Access to the area remains easier and more widespread by car, but approximately 16 percent of workers commute by transit to the area. While more than 2.7 million people can access the Life Sciences Center in a 45-minute drive, only about 150,000 people can access the Life Sciences Center in a 45-minute transit trip.

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The TAP study area covers over 940 acres in the heart of the 1-270 corridor.

How We Got Here

The original 2010 Great Seneca Science Corridor Master Plan was adopted over a decade ago. Since that time, some but not all of the expected life sciences development has not occurred. An influx of federal funds to Montgomery County during the 2020 pandemic has allowed this area to see a new surge of development. Our panel's recommendations will provide a helpful blueprint on what the future development priorities should be.

Demographics

The Gaithersburg area has a population of 76,676, which is approximately 10 percent of the county's population (1,040,133) using 2018 data. (The plan area is about half the population of Gaithersburg) Comparatively, the various education levels of the population track closely to the larger county-wide data, with 27.7 percent having a college education and 31.8 percent having a graduate degree (county-wide, 27.1 percent have college education and 31.9 have a graduate degree).

Description of the Study Area

The ULI TAP Study Area covers over 940 acres in the heart of the I-270 Corridor. The study area includes the Adventist Healthcare Shady Grove Medical Center, the Universities at Shady Grove, the former Public Safety Training Academy and the Belward Farm site. These areas are surrounded by the City of Gaithersburg, the City of Rockville and the Town of Washington Grove.

Previous plans and studies on the Great Seneca Corridor

There have been a number of plans and studies that looked at ways of revitalizing the corridor.

GOOGLE EARTH

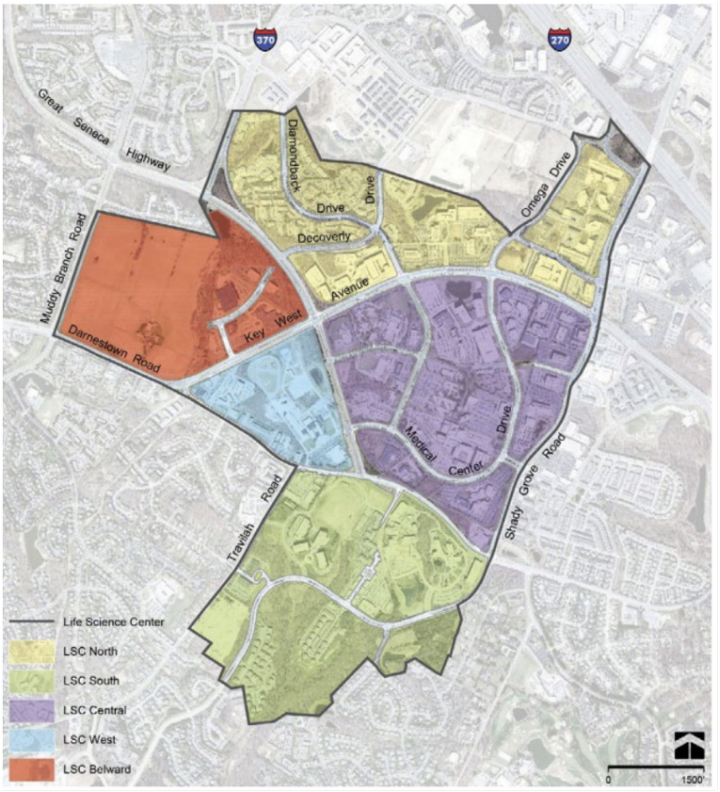
Google image of the Great Seneca Science Corridor.

These include:

- 2011 Technical Assistance Panel Report, Public Safety Training Academy/Shady Grove Life Sciences Center
- 2021 Great Seneca Science Corridor Minor Master Plan Amendment
- Great Seneca Science Corridor Master Plan (2010)

Planning initiatives are also informed by policies including Vision Zero and the Racial Equity and Social Justice Act.

- The Vision Zero resolution commits to eliminating traffic fatalities and severe injuries. Currently underway is the ten-year action plan to eliminate traffic fatalities and severe injuries by 2030.
- The Racial Equity and Social Justice Act requires that the Planning Board consider racial equity and social justice when preparing Master Plans.



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

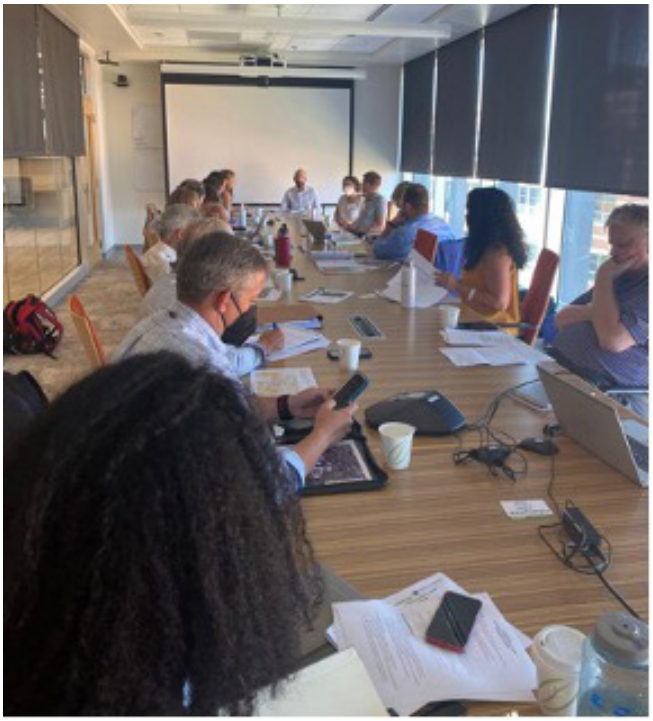
The Life Sciences Center, a portion of the Great Seneca Corridor study area.

THE PROCESS

Montgomery Planning engaged ULI Washington to convene a Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) with the overall goal of creating a vibrant community and pursuing opportunities to retain, attract, and grow the industry within the Life Sciences Center (LSC). This comes at the heels of the 2021 Great Seneca Science Corridor Minor Master Plan Amendment, which documented that the transformation to a live/work community with services and amenities from the 2010 plan had not been realized.

Currently, the area remains largely suburban with high-speed arterials cutting through the LSC and separating primarily single-use projects. New projects have been built with suburban forms and lower densities than anticipated in the 2010 Plan and several large, approved projects remain unbuilt.

The two-day TAP convened on Tuesday, September 20, 2022 at the Universities of Shady Grove in Rockville. On the first day, the Panel spent an hour touring the study area; the rest of the afternoon was devoted to interviewing a dozen stakeholders from the life sciences, education, health care communities, local developers, and government officials. On the second day, the Panel reconvened to share what they had learned and formulate their recommendations. At the end of the second day, the sponsor and stakeholders were invited to hear the Panel's presentation of its findings and recommendations.



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The TAP Panel discusses the project's scope with Montgomery County Planning Department staff.

What did we learn from our meetings with stakeholders?

Several themes came up in the stakeholder interviews that the panelists took into account when forming their recommendations. These include:

- The Life Sciences Center in the Great Seneca Science Corridor Plan area needs a name and sense of place, yet there was no consensus on what to call it.
- The stakeholders did not have a convening body and there was no ability or incentive to meet on a regular basis or form a coalition.
- Connectivity and transportation came up, with myriad concerns surrounding the issue, particularly the internal streets. There have been years of failed transportation plans, including the regional Corridor Cities Transitway, but there was a need for something concrete that would improve transportation and facilitate better connectivity, including improved access to public transportation. Some stakeholders expressed their satisfaction with the status quo - they drive to work, park their car, pack their lunch. The panel observed firsthand and heard in conversations about the ample space and

lanes on the roads - the possibility exists for a road diet within the internal streets and the introduction of multimodal facilities (bike lanes, bus lanes, pedestrian connections) given that the roads are currently underutilized. Improved pedestrian access at the crossing at Darnestown Road is also an opportunity for enhanced connectivity.

- Affordable/workforce housing was a concern, particularly from the university and hospital representatives who have many employees at lower wages who may face a long commute without nearby affordable housing options. There was also concern of a scientific drain - if the area is not considered attractive enough to scientists to work and live, they might be inclined to go elsewhere.
- Several stakeholders mentioned the need for a large community gathering spot, whether a park, amphitheater, or arena - a place large enough to hold graduations or celebrations. Multiple stakeholders mentioned the need for restaurants to walk to, preferably with shaded sidewalks with ways to safely and easily cross major intersections. Without that option, stakeholders felt the area will continue to remain "car-focused" and "auto-dominated." There was also a need to support people at various life stages, and come up with different but complementary uses to enhance the environment.
- The panel also heard and saw in a firsthand tour the success of the area - with life sciences and biotech companies and premier educational institutions thriving in the area. The success of this area has elevated the entire D.C. region and the panelists were struck by the amount of new construction and plans to bring more people, educational institutions, and businesses to the area.

Questions Posed by Sponsors

Prior to the TAP, the sponsor provided ULI with a list of issues they would like to see addressed. These included:

Visionary Growth

1. How can the Life Sciences Center evolve from individual campuses to a thoughtful collection of buildings, streetscapes and open spaces which establish a cohesive whole and create a sense of place, as well as an identity for this area of extreme value to Montgomery County, the State of Maryland, and the metropolitan region?

2. How can this center evolve to not only retain and grow the industry, but also to retain and attract residents and employees?

3. How can this critical employment center evolve to further the county's goals for compact development, characterized by a mixture of uses and forms that support active lifestyles and social interaction?

Planning Opportunities

4. What uses, services and amenities are needed to transition this area from the auto-dominated center to a vibrant, diverse, and innovative complete community?

5. How can the life sciences uses, traditionally occupied in low-scale buildings, be positioned to contribute to the public realm and further community coherence?

6. What kind of streetscape, open space or placemaking strategies can be used to connect disparate uses and properties and create a unique sense of place?

RECOMMENDATIONS

The TAP panelists listened to all the stakeholder concerns and spent time discussing some of the best ways forward, taking into account the surrounding community and businesses, and the panelists' own professional expertise.

The following key principles and objectives were taken into consideration when formulating the recommendations:

- Celebrate the successes to date for the Life Sciences Center - which has gained national recognition for its prominence.
- Do no harm. The panelists felt strongly that all recommendations adhere to the "do no harm" policy and not come with undue burdens to the stakeholders and community.
- Plan intentionally for the next 20 years.
- Recognize the unique character of the place - the Life Sciences Center has much to offer, and the panel wanted to retain much of its original character.
- Move away from describing the future of the LSC in ways that are not actionable, nor supported by stakeholders, including terms such as "compact development," "urban," and "dense."
- Balance differing priorities and stakeholder (e.g. life sciences, developers, property owners, end users) interest when formulating recommendations.
- Emphasize coalition-building among academic, commercial and residential, including Rockville, Gaithersburg and Montgomery County government officials. This does not need to be a formal BID, but a group of stakeholders with a designated champion.
- Never lose sight of the economic development drivers and implications.
- Prioritize low-hanging fruit to achieve tangible results quickly.

In addition, the panel also recommends removing the staging requirement, as outlined in the 2010 Great Seneca Corridor Master Plan. If the cap cannot be removed, or it is not politically feasible, then it should be revised so that it contributes toward one of the other goals outlined in this report, such as affordable housing.

The recommendations are organized into the following cohesive sections:

1. Hub Creation
2. Affordable/Workforce Housing
3. Transportation
4. Branding

Each recommendation is accompanied by a list of action items, with a timeline for implementation.

Recommendation #1: Creating Walkable "Hubs"

The panel recommends focusing on the Life Sciences Center as a sum of parts by identifying multiple "hubs" that are internally cohesive, walkable and complete, while being externally connected to each other. This constellation of hubs will be part of the larger community, with a branding concept that ties them together. One example of such an existing hub is the retail center at Darnestown Road/ Travilah Road.

Each "hub" should:

- Be pedestrian-friendly/walkable

- Contain public and green spaces that support wellness and active lifestyles
- Have a unique identity or theme embraced by the constituents of that specific "hub"
- Include programming and activations that facilitate social interaction

The panel envisions five nodes: LSC North, LSC South, LSC Central, LSC West, LSC Belward. (Although there may be potential existing hub activities, the hub locations and functions are yet to be studied and identified.) The "hubs" could be connected to one another with some or all of:

- Circulator/Transportation service
- Bike/scooter share
- LSC loop (shared use path)
- Greenway

Within each hub there would be places and opportunities to support active lifestyles and social interaction, such as community events, a summer concert series, or food truck Fridays. As part of another panel recommendation on branding for the area, the individual branding of the hubs should work to form a larger overall identity.

Action Items:

- Incorporate "Hubs" concept into Great Seneca Plan
- Establish implementation guidelines for the "hubs" without dictating their location. Each redevelopment project should create or enhance a "hub" in its own unique way.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of the 2015 LSC Loop design and other mobility improvements, and their coherence with likely "hub" locations

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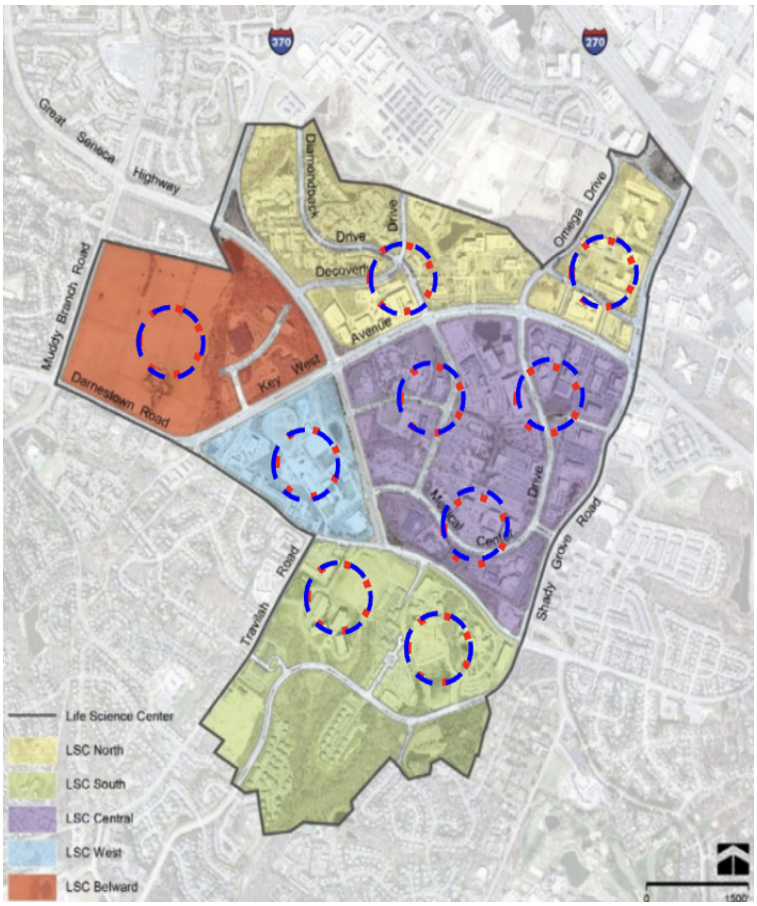
An existing hub at the intersection of Darnestown Rd and Travilah Rd features a pergola, seating, and landscaping.



TAP PANEL

Aerial map of recommended hubs in the Life Sciences Center, as identified and mapped by the TAP Panel.

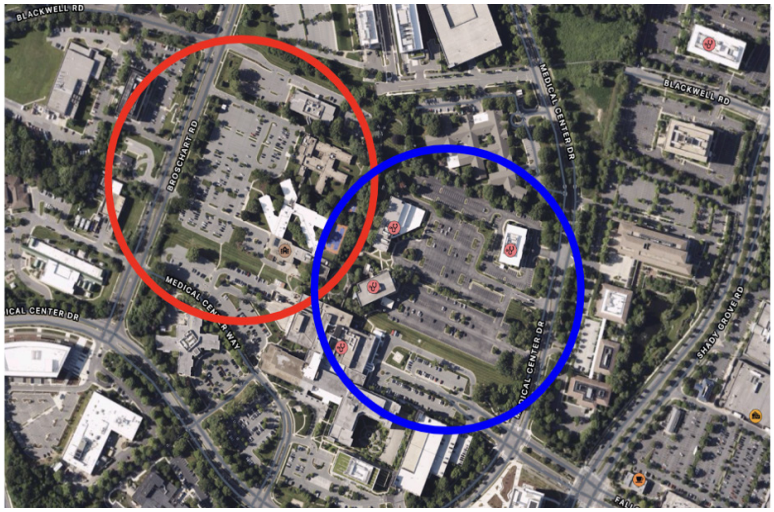
Recommendation #2: Affordable/Workforce Housing

The panel recommends more attention and priority be given to affordable and workforce housing to attract and retain employees in the region.

The panel recommends creating more opportunities and incentives to provide on-site and nearby affordable housing. This can be done by incentivizing Adventist Health Care (AHC) to provide affordable housing on existing surface parking lots, and incentivizing Universities at Shady Grove (USG) to create affordable housing - graduate and postdoc housing - on the 11 acre parcel south of Shady Grove Road, as well as consider alternative transportation options to support residents to minimize car-dependence. The county can also incentivize mixed-use development on privately owned parcels through density bonuses or other benefits/incentives, and tie commercial density bonuses to affordable and workforce housing production.

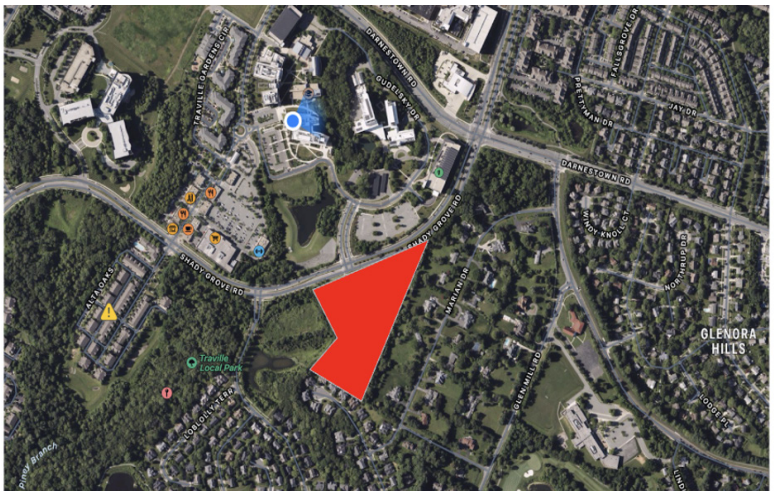
The panel recommends facilitating the conversion of obsolete office building sites into residential, particularly along Research Boulevard within the City of Rockville. In addition, the county can seek additional opportunities for application of the commercial-residential (CR) zone allowing the flexibility to develop commercial, residential, or a combination.

The panel also recommends exploring the demand for an extended stay hotel within the study area.



GOOGLE EARTH; TAP PANEL

Aerial shot of the surface parking lots that can be incentivized for AHC to provide affordable/workforce housing. Red circle is owned by Adventist, the blue circle is owned by the neighboring medical office center.



GOOGLE EARTH; TAP PANEL

Aerial shot of the 11-acre parcel south of Shady Grove Road for possible affordable graduate and postdoc housing.

GOOGLE EARTH; TAP PANEL

Aerial shot of obsolete office building sites along Research Blvd to facilitate into residential.

Action Items:

- Convene meeting with AHC and USG real estate personnel to brainstorm addition of housing on-site/ on adjacent parcels and investigate available financial resources.
- Engage Cities of Rockville and Gaithersburg to prioritize conversion of obsolete general office to residential.
- Convene meeting of large landowners to assess receptivity to a density bonus and other benefits/ incentives in exchange for moderately priced dwelling unit (MPDU) production.

Recommendation #3: Transportation

The panel believes that the Great Seneca area is likely to remain automobile dominated for the foreseeable future, but has come up with recommendations to reduce auto use within the area by utilizing and enhancing existing infrastructure.

The panel recommends reducing auto use within the area through:

- Micro-mobility, including identifying funding sources for the micro-mobility infrastructure.

TAP PANEL

Aerial view of transportation map of the study area - primary (red) and secondary (yellow) roads already in place.

- Creating an area-wide bus circulator, which connects to the major transit hubs including the Metro. The exact route and schedule would be determined by a BID, and underscores the need for a transportation champion for the area for this to come to fruition.
- Implementing and activating the LSC multi-modal trail loop and Complete Streets.
- Use and reprogram existing Right-of-Way by using ample roadway capacity and implementing road diets to improve connectivity for all modes of transportation.
- Revisit and enhance the desired Master Planned network and identify opportunities for connectivity.

The panel also came up with recommendations to improve pedestrian safety, and pedestrian comfort (including landscaping, furniture, shade from tree canopies and paving alternatives). Modest pedestrian improvements have a significant safety impact, including the following:

- Include pedestrian, bike, and transit infrastructure in the design and implementation of the GSSCTI (Greater Seneca Science Corridor Transit Improvements).
- Identify desired design cross sections for each roadway. There are roads and sidewalks in the region, but when a pedestrian approaches an intersection there is not always a way to safely cross.
- Review signal timings across the area prioritizing pedestrians. The panel cited the specific example of the Great Seneca Highway and Darnestown Road, in which a pedestrian has a short time to cross a busy intersection without a median.

In addition, as mentioned above, **the panel also recommends removing the staging requirements**, as outlined in the 2010 Great Seneca Corridor Master Plan. If the cap cannot be removed, or it is not politically feasible, then it should be revised so that it contributes toward one of the other goals outlined in this report, such as affordable housing.

Action Items:

Short term (1-2 years):

- Identify Complete Streets cross sections for area roadways.
- Review Master Planned network.
- Include micro mobility infrastructure in the design of the GSSCTI (Greater Seneca Science Corridor Transit Improvements).
- Identify funding sources for the micro-mobility infrastructure.
- Review signal timings across the area prioritizing pedestrians - specific example of Seneca and Darnestown.

Mid-term (5-10 years):

- Implement the GSSCTI.
- Implement and activate the multi-modal LSC Loop.

Recommendation #4: Branding

Short term recommendations:

Form a community group and select a name.

The panel recommends the formation of a group - either a leadership group, community alliance or steering committee - to develop a brand for the study area that is responsive to multiple audiences (e.g. local residents, property owners, universities, national life sciences companies). As emphasized in this report, this coalition does not need to be a formal BID, but it should comprise a variety of stakeholders committed to the future of the region and a champion should be selected to keep the momentum going forward. It is important to balance the need for concrete leadership with the ability to bring in wide-ranging members of the community. This group would be the one to drive branding efforts and come up with a cohesive name for the area.

The panel also recommends moving away from the ideas surrounding high density and compact development.

Instead, the panel recommends focusing on connectivity and technology. As reiterated in the recommendations on the hub formation, these hubs should have specific identities that speak to the overall larger identity, which will be developed in correspondence with the individual hub identities.

Medium term recommendation:

Space enhancements.

The panel recommends enhanced wayfinding, natural preservation and educational opportunities, public art and indoor-outdoor spaces to make the existing public realm and low-scale architecture more accessible. Consider designating certain areas for recreation and/or entertainment venues with programming to reinforce retail options and destination location visits (e.g., craft brewery and live music venue). These recreation areas may be tied to a regional or national system such as bike and hiking trails, this will tie into the long-range items as well.

Long Term:

Cultivate environmental consciousness

As we look toward the future of the space, the panel recommends cultivating environmental consciousness of the area, which goes hand-in-hand with the health focus of the area's industry. The large lot sizes and existing open space may provide opportunities for renewable energy (e.g., distributed solar) and connecting greenspace and habitat corridors that may not be feasible for traditional urban infill development. Many of the life science centers are big buildings, with big roofs that are ripe for opportunity. Another recommendation is to explore cultivating plants that attract butterflies, as part of the monarch migration. Given the climate of the region, this can help improve the environmental stewardship of the area while providing a tangible benefit for its employees and residents.

Action items

Short term

- Replace the "Great Seneca Corridor" and "Shady Grove Life Sciences Center" with a trademark that speaks more directly to the unique opportunities available within and in close proximity to the study area. The panel recommends that the name chosen be one that plays well within the DMV and globally.

Medium Term

- Identify locations for signage and public art installations and source local artists

- Source potential vendors and operators for entertainment venues and modify related zoning for potential sites, if applicable.

Long term

- Commission environmental and feasibility studies

Summary of Action Items - TIMELINE

The panel recommends the following implementation schedule:

Short term (0-12 months)

- Identify and incorporate "Hubs" concept into Great Seneca Plan
- Establish implementation guidelines for the "hubs" without dictating their location. Each redevelopment project should create or enhance a "hub" in its own unique way.
- Convene meeting with AHC and USG real estate personnel to brainstorm addition of housing on-site/ on adjacent parcels and investigate available financial resources.
- Identify Complete Streets cross sections for area roadways.
- Review Master Planned network.
- Include micro mobility infrastructure in the design of the GSSCTI.
- Identify funding sources for the micro-mobility infrastructure.
- Review signal timings across the area prioritizing pedestrians - specific example of Seneca and Darnestown.
- Replace the "Great Seneca Corridor" and "Shady Grove Life Sciences Center" with a trademark that speaks more directly to the unique opportunities available within and in close proximity to the study area.
- Identify locations for signage and public art installations and source local artists

Medium term (2-5 years)

- Implement the GSSCTI.
- Implement and activate the multi-modal LSC Loop.
- Source potential vendors and operators for entertainment venues and modify related zoning for potential sites, if applicable.
- Engage Cities of Rockville and Gaithersburg to prioritize conversion of obsolete general office to residential.
- Convene meeting of large landowners to assess receptivity to a density bonus in exchange for MPDU production.

Long term (5-10 years)

- Commission environmental and feasibility studies
- Evaluate the appropriateness of the 2015 LSC Loop design and other mobility improvements, and their coherence with likely "hub" locations

CONCLUSION

In looking to the future of the Great Seneca Corridor, it is essential that the plan revision does not repeat the mistakes of the past. The panel's recommendations cannot be achieved without removing the staging requirements from the 2010 plan, and if they cannot be removed, the requirements should be substantially revised to allow for a smoother development process.

In addition to the hub model outlined in this report, there should be incentives for housing development at a range of income levels to support the various populations that comprise this area. Transportation policies should be amended and re-examined to reduce automobile dependency while increasing connectivity, and ways to do this include multi-modal transportation, area-wide circulator, LSC Trail Loop, and Complete Streets.

But very little of this will get done without the convening of a stakeholder group. Bringing together multiple stakeholders can be complicated in any situation, but the future of the Life Sciences Center in the Great Seneca Science Corridor Plan area will be dependent on the convening of such a group, with a dedicated champion (from public or private sector leadership) to take on the action items, including branding efforts, affordable and workplace housing development, and longer term projects, such as environmental stewardship. More incentives and bonuses can be put into place to encourage such projects, including density bonuses, expedited permitting, tax breaks, or reduced stormwater fees. The panel recommends that the regional jurisdictions can take a look at some of the existing incentive structures in the DMV region and see what could work best.

The ULI Washington TAP Panel thoroughly enjoyed its work on the Great Seneca Science Corridor and hope that it is helpful for the region moving forward. ULI Washington remains committed to help and provide information at any time in the future. Please contact ULI Washington or Emily McKnight for any additional follow-up.

ABOUT THE PANEL

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Principal & Founder
Brick and Story

LaToya Thomas is the Principal & Founder of Brick & Story and has nearly 15 years of experience working in the built environment. Trained in urban and regional planning, Ms. Thomas has worked in various capacities in the field of real estate, including overseeing business development and marketing efforts for architects domestic and international, as well as managing development projects and leading community engagement efforts for mission-driven real estate developers. Ms. Thomas has a unique focus in the areas of affordable housing, urban revitalization, and community development. She has a strong commitment to creating opportunities for marginalized populations, - particularly those in urban areas. Her career has merged her knowledge of urban planning and policy with her talents as a strategic business developer, marketer, facilitator, and consensus-builder. Ms. Thomas obtained both a Master of Regional Planning and a Bachelor of Science in Urban and Regional Studies with a Concentration in Architecture from Cornell University in Ithaca, NY. She is active in the affordable housing and community development spaces through her involvement with The Aspen Institute's Weave: The Social Fabric Project and the Housing Association of Nonprofit Developers, where she serves as a member of both the Program Committee and Braintrust. She has also previously served as a Campaign Coordinator for the Coalition for Nonprofit Housing & Economic Development and lent her policy expertise as a contributor to the report entitled "Bridges to Opportunity - A New Housing Strategy for D.C." that was produced by the Mayoral Affordable Housing Task Force in 2012. Ms. Thomas is a member of the 2012 Vanguard Class of Next American City.

Andy Brown

Chairman
Stanford Properties LLC

Mr. Brown directs all activities of Stanford Properties, LC, a real estate investment and development firm based in Bethesda, Maryland. Mr. Brown has acquired and developed over thirty residential and commercial projects with an aggregate value in excess of $300 million since the company's founding in 1992. His recent projects include conversion of an underperforming retail big-box center into a high density residential condominium project; development of a 50 acre mixed-use residential and retail town center; and redevelopment of a church and independent school into an urban townhome community. In 2013, Mr. Brown led the successful rezoning of the 1.8 million sq. ft. Tysons West mixed-use project at the new Spring Hill Metro station. Mr. Brown directs site selection, acquisition, governmental entitlements, financing, construction, leasing, and ongoing asset management of completed projects. Prior to founding Stanford Properties, Mr. Brown was the Director of Retail Development for Baier Properties, Inc. where he oversaw development of numerous retail and residential land development projects, and prior to that held positions in acquisition and project management with two Washington based real estate firms. He started his career as an Acquisition and Portfolio Manager for the Woodmont Companies in Belmont, California, where he supervised the acquisition and management of a $100 million portfolio of apartment, office, industrial, and retail properties. Mr. Brown received his B.A. in Economics from Stanford University in 1983. He is an active member of the Urban Land Institute where he is an Officer of the Washington District Council's Executive Committee and was previously Co-Chair of the TAP Committee. He is also a guest lecturer at the Schools of Architecture and Engineering at the University of Maryland and the Washington College of Law at American University. He has served on the boards of several local educational and philanthropic organizations, including Greater D.C. Cares, Inc., which Mr. Brown helped found in 1989 to promote volunteerism throughout the Washington area and the New Community Foundation which Mr. Brown founded in 2000 to provide scholarships to low income students of the Shaw neighborhood of Washington to attend college and independent schools.

Bob Harris

Attorney, Lerch Early and Brewer

Bob Harris is a land use and real estate attorney who helps landowners strategically improve the use and value of their real estate. He represents commercial, residential, and institutional landowners before planning commissions, courts, government agencies, and elected officials to obtain development approvals and protect land use rights in Montgomery County, Maryland and surrounding jurisdictions. Bob advises and represents clients in land development and real estate, including master planning, zoning, subdivision, site plans, and special exceptions. This includes advocating in legislative matters at both local and state levels, and participating in court proceedings. He is experienced in issues like smart growth, traffic management, adequate public facilities controls, public infrastructure, mixed-use planned development, environmental issues, urban design, affordable housing, real estate taxation, and historic preservation.

Chia Chang

Vice President, Director of Planning and Urban Design; Leo A. Daly

Mr. Chang is an industry leader in the management and design of complex, high-profile assignments that require big-picture, resource-driven solutions that move beyond ideas into built environments. With more than 25 years of planning, design and management experience, he has the strong ability to successfully combine vision with technical requirements. Mr. Chang's planning portfolio encompasses work across the United States and around the globe, focusing on vibrant mixed-use communities and dynamic placemaking. His key projects include high profile mixed-use communities in the US, a new model of a resource-efficient desert city in Saudi Arabia, a financial district in Malaysia that balances high-density urban environment with natural open space, and a self-sufficient community in Nigeria that blends local traditions with 21st century innovation.

C.J. Overly

Senior Project Manager Development, Boston Properties

C.J. Overly is a Senior Project Manager of Development with Boston Properties in the Washington, D.C. region, where he is responsible for the execution of new office and life science developments. He is the regional liaison for BXP Life Sciences, the company's national life sciences real estate business, and supports related acquisitions, leasing, marketing, and operations. He is currently spearheading the strategic positioning, master planning, entitlements, and project deliveries at the Shady Grove Innovation District, a new life science hub with 1.5M SF of future lab development in Rockville, MD. Mr. Overly previously completed the Leidos Global Headquarters, a 17-story Class-A office building in Reston, Virginia, as well as repositioning and interiors work at 901 New York Ave NW (DC); 1330 Connecticut Ave NW (DC); and, Two Freedom Square (VA), among others. Prior to Boston Properties, Mr. Overly served in a variety of roles with Trammell Crow Residential, Montgomery County Public Schools (MD), and JPMorgan Chase. While with MCPS, he served as a trustee on the Montgomery County Consolidated Retiree Health Benefits Trust, approving investments for a $456M portfolio on behalf of current and future beneficiaries. Mr. Overly is a board member of the Maryland Tech Council; a member of the Urban Land Institute and NAIOP. He received an AA in Business from Montgomery College; a BSBA in Finance from Georgetown University; and an MBA in Real Estate and Corporate Finance from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Irena Savakova

Vice President Global Design Director Leo A. Daly

Ms. Savakova is a Vice President and the first woman to serve as Director of Design for the award-winning international architecture and engineering design firm Leo A Daly in its Washington DC office. As one of two Global Design Principals for Leo A Daly she oversees a wide range of placemaking efforts and is responsible for creating signature design expressions and comprehensive solutions for clients in multiple market sectors. Ms. Savakova is regarded by her peers as a leader in the design profession, and her work has been recognized with numerous design awards. Throughout her career, spanning three decades, she has

led complex design efforts and delivered integrated, sustainable, wellness; promoting, secure and inspiring works of architecture, covering a broad range of market sectors, such as Placemaking, Corporate Commercial, Federal, Educational, Municipal, and Institutional, both locally and internationally. Her multidisciplinary approach leverages in-depth knowledge of mixed-use development, and excels at creating intricately interconnected indoor-outdoor environments. Her numerous projects, representing this unique design approach, can be experienced throughout the greater Washington DC Metropolitan area, across the nation, as well as overseas (Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Qatar, KSA, China, Hong Kong, Serbia, Bulgaria). Her passion for interdisciplinary collaboration has led Ms. Savakova to contribute to the designs of many signature buildings for agencies such as the Social Security Administration, the National Guard Bureau, the Air National Guard, the Naval Facilities Engineering Command, NASA, the US Department of State and most recently leading the design teams for the new University of Maryland's School of Public Policy, which opened doors in August this year at the College Park Campus, the mixed-use development at 20 Massachusetts Avenue near Union Station and a new signature commercial tower in Hong Kong.

Katie Wagner

Senior Associate
Gorove Slade

Katie Wagner is a Senior Associate at Gorove Slade. She is a registered Professional Engineer in DC, Maryland, Virginia, and Oregon and a certified Professional Traffic Operations Engineer. Katie oversees a variety of transportation planning and engineering projects across Washington, DC and extending into Montgomery County and Prince George's County, Maryland. With 13 years of experience, Katie provides a wide array of transportation planning and engineering services including traffic impact studies, traffic simulation, site access and circulation planning, roadway signing and striping plans, traffic signal design, parking demand studies, field data collection and analysis and Transportation Demand Management (TDM) planning and analysis. Her projects span educational institutions, mixed-use developments, commercial and retail developments, office developments, and government facilities. Katie takes great interest in the multimodal elements of urban projects that require brainstorming creative solutions to benefit all modes of transportation. Katie is an active member in NAIOP MD|DC and is a member of the Leadership Committee and was a recent graduate of the ULI Washington Leadership Institute. Katie received her degree in Civil Engineering from Gonzaga University and was on the Varsity Rowing team in college. She is originally from Beaverton, Oregon and moved to the DC area in 2015. She lives in Bethesda, Maryland with her husband and rescue hound, Maya. Katie loves being active and you can find her most mornings running with friends training for her next marathon. Other hobbies include biking, swimming, yoga, cooking, traveling, and taking Maya on adventures!

Kyle DeThomas

Attorney
Ballard Spahr LLC

Kyle's practice focuses primarily on development and disposition of mixed-use, multifamily, and condominium properties in DC, Maryland and Virginia. He specializes in helping buyers and sellers navigate DC's Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA) and Maryland's right of first refusal (ROFR) laws and is also well-versed in real estate finance, land use and zoning, commercial leasing, title and survey matters. His firm roles at Ballard Spahr include being the Co-Chair of the Diverse Lawyers Group and the Firm Lead for Project Destined. Kyle is also an active member of ULI Washington: Pathways to Inclusion (2020 Cohort), 2022 Future Forum Working Group, 2022 Full Member Engagement Committee, UrbanPlan, NEXT. Prior to practicing, Kyle served as a Captain in the U.S. Air Force and civil engineer on deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan and was chief of development and planning for $1 Billion in real estate assets and infrastructure, including housing for all Department of Defense personnel stationed in Okinawa, Japan. During law school, as a clerk for the Building and License Enforcement Division, he drafted complaints, court orders and coordinated efforts among landlords, community and civic organizations, and City agencies to reclaim and revitalize Chicago neighborhoods most affected by the subprime mortgage crisis.

Rick Reinhard

Principal
Niagara Consulting Group

Rick Reinhard is principal of Niagara Consulting Group and counselor to The Lakelands Institute, advising faith-based organizations and communities how to better employ the nation's hundreds of thousands of underutilized houses of worship to build better communities. For most of the past six years, he has led United Methodist organizations, as Chief Administrative Officer of the church's global social-justice agency on Capitol Hill and Executive Director of a not-for-profit agency based in New Jersey. For 30 years, Rick led business improvement districts and other economic- and community-development organizations throughout North America and the United Kingdom, including in Richmond, Buffalo, Atlanta, Washington DC, and Northern Ireland. Rick served as chief of staff to the Mayor of Buffalo. As consultant to the Mayor, he created the Buffalo-Niagara Medical Campus, leading to more than $750 million in public and private funding on a 120-acre inner-city campus. As adjunct faculty member, Rick taught urban planning and public policy at six major research universities and co-founded the Urban Design Project at the University at Buffalo. He earned a Bachelor's Degree in Biology from the College of William and Mary and a Master's Degree in Business and Public Management from Rice University. He served as a mid-career Loeb Fellow in Advanced Environmental Studies at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design.

Robert Meeks

Senior Vice President
Segall Group/Peerless Properties

Prior to joining Segall Group, Rob Meeks was the Regional Managing Director for the Sterling Organization, a private equity company based in Florida. He oversaw the leasing and asset management of Sterling's properties in the Mid-Atlantic Region, over 2.2 million square feet. Mr. Meeks also assisted the acquisitions team in sourcing off-market investments and analyzing acquisition opportunities. He successfully repositioned many assets generating excellent returns. Mr. Meeks has almost 30 years of experience in leasing, acquisitions, and development. Prior to joining Sterling, he was a Senior Managing Director at Newmark Knight Frank where he managed a team of brokers, represented landlords and tenants, and was active in acquisitions. Mr. Meeks represented national retailers such as District Taco, Dollar Tree, Tile Shop as well as landlords including Miller and Smith and Rose Investment Trust. Mr. Meeks previously was a Principal at Next Realty where he focused on tenant and landlord representation and development. He holds a B.A. from the University of Colorado and an M.A. from George Mason University. He is a veteran of the U.S. Army.

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