

A Technical Assistance Panel Report

Revitalizing the Richmond Highway Corridor to
Attract Office Development

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Fairfax County, Virginia

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ULI Washington is a district council of ULI—the Urban Land Institute, a nonprofit research and education organization supported by its members. Founded in 1936, the Institute now has more than 26,000 members worldwide representing the entire spectrum of land use and real estate development disciplines, working in private enterprise and public service.

As the preeminent, multidisciplinary real estate forum, ULI facilitates the open exchange of ideas, information, and experience among local, national, and international industry leaders and policy makers dedicated to creating better places.

The mission of the Urban Land Institute is to provide responsible leadership in the use of land to enhance the total environment. Members say that ULI is a trusted idea place where leaders come to grow professionally and personally through sharing, mentoring, and problem solving. ULI members proudly commit to the best in land use policy and practice.

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The objective of ULI Washington’s TAP program is to provide expert, multidisciplinary advice on land use and real estate issues facing public agencies and nonprofit organizations in the Washington metropolitan area. Drawing from its extensive membership base, ULI Washington conducts one and one-half day panels offering objective and responsible advice to local decision makers on a wide variety of land use and real estate issues ranging from site-specific projects to public policy questions. The TAP program is intentionally flexible to provide a customized approach to specific land use and real estate issues.

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ULI Washington hopes that the comments and recommendations provided in this report make a valuable contribution to the revitalization of the Richmond Highway Corridor. We encourage Fairfax County to inform us of new developments associated with this project and allow us to participate in future panels should the need arise.

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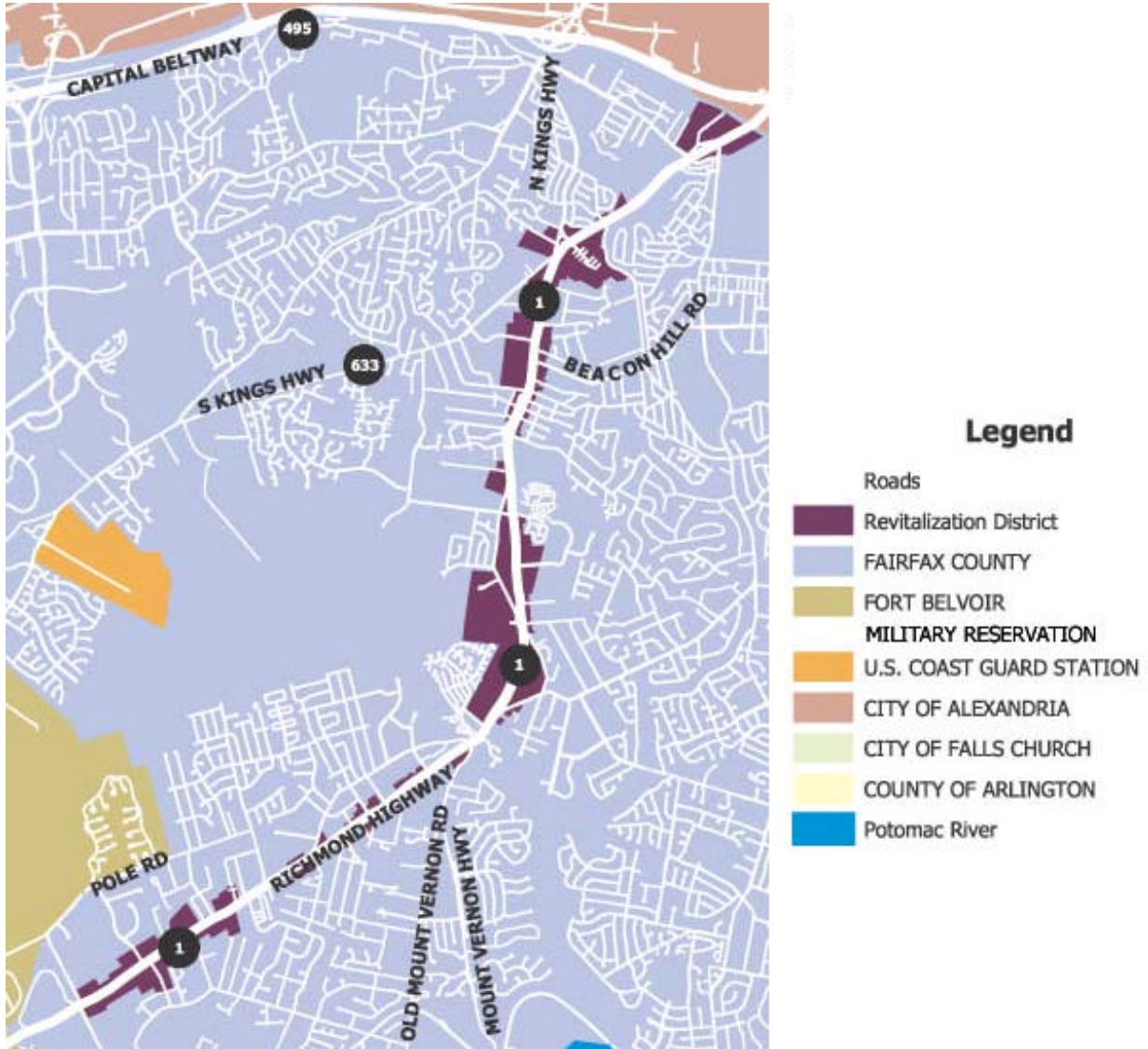
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The Richmond Highway Corridor



Foreword: Overview and Panel Assignment

The Richmond Highway Corridor, also known as Historic Route One, is located within the southeast quadrant of Fairfax County. One of the county's main business corridors, Richmond Highway consists primarily of longstanding commercial uses and is home to more than 650 business establishments and more than 20 community and neighborhood shopping centers. Recent redevelopment along the corridor, however, has been increasingly residential in nature, which has encouraged owners of larger community shopping centers to undertake major renovations.

Fairfax County encourages revitalization along Richmond Highway, and the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance identifies the Richmond Highway Corridor as one of seven specific commercial revitalization districts (CRDs) within the county. The Richmond Highway CRD extends approximately 7.5 miles, from Interstate 495 (I-495)/Interstate 95 (I-95)—also known as the Capital Beltway—south to the northern boundary of the U.S. Army Fort Belvoir Military Post (Fort Belvoir).

Fort Belvoir covers more than 8,000 acres and has more than 23,000 employees. The number of employees is likely to double over the next six years as a result of the May 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission announcements, which recommended relocating 21,000 U.S. Department of Defense employees to Fort Belvoir and/or the U.S. Army's Engineering Proving Grounds nearby. This transfer of employees likely will be followed by an influx of defense contractors, creating a new stream of demand for office development in the vicinity of the military post.

Issues

While substantial investment has been made in residential development and increased retail activity along the Richmond Highway Corridor, there has been very little office development. Office tenants currently located on Richmond Highway consist mainly of smaller employers, and there is a lack of Class A office space. Fairfax County would like to determine whether the corridor has the potential to be developed—particularly because of the recent BRAC announcements—as a commercial office market that will further economic growth and provide higher-paying jobs.

The Assignment

Seeking an outside perspective on how to continue the revitalization of the Richmond Highway Corridor, possibly by attracting more office development, the Fairfax County Department of Housing and Community Development, with input from the Fairfax County Department of Planning and Zoning, invited ULI Washington to convene a Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) on October 5–6, 2005. The 11-member panel spent an intensive one and one-half days touring the corridor; participating in a briefing led by Rick Neels, president of the Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation; obtaining valuable information from local stakeholders and representatives of both state and local agencies during roundtable discussions; and spending a

full day behind closed doors, deliberating on the issues presented and formulating its recommendations.

In the context of the challenges outlined above, the Fairfax County Department of Housing and Community Development asked the panel to respond to the following questions:

- What is limiting the current demand for commercial office development along the corridor? What strategies can overcome these obstacles?
- To what extent do the recent BRAC recommendations alter the demand for commercial space?
- To what extent does the completion of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge, the Springfield Interchange (“Mixing Bowl”) improvements, and the National Harbor development affect the demand for commercial space along the corridor?
- Given current and expected market demand along the corridor, would office development be more attractive as part of a mixed-use development? If so, how should the county plan for and accommodate this mixed-used development along the corridor?
- What impact will new Department of Defense security regulations have on development along the corridor? How can the county respond to this change?
- What incentives could the county provide to make the Richmond Highway Corridor competitive with other office markets?
- Outside of financial incentives, what else should the county focus on to improve the long-term economic viability of the corridor and to alleviate the negative impacts associated with the corridor’s current jobs/housing imbalance?
- Given current and expected demand for commercial office space, where within the corridor should the county focus its efforts to attract new office space? What opportunities and constraints are associated with potential locations along the corridor?
- How should the county plan for future commercial office development so as to minimize any adverse impact that this development activity may have on surrounding stable residential neighborhoods?
- How can the county use existing and future transit opportunities to attract commercial office development to the corridor?

After finalizing its recommendations, the panel presented its findings to the staff and guests of the Fairfax County Department of Housing and Community Development.

Introduction and Summary of Recommendations

Fairfax County has one of the most dynamic and successful business communities in the United States. With more than 1 million residents and 600,000 jobs, Fairfax County provides its residents and businesses with an exceptional place in which to both live and work. While the business community is thriving in Tysons Corner and Reston, however, few large employers have chosen to make the Richmond Highway Corridor their home. The panel quickly learned that this is a key concern of the area's residents, public leaders, and county staff.

Little new office development has taken place along the corridor, which currently features a vacancy rate of 13.6 percent and rents less than \$28 per square foot. Yet, as a result of the region's growth and Richmond Highway's close proximity to Washington, D.C., residential development has skyrocketed along the corridor, escalating land values and making it even more difficult for office developers to compete for potential sites.

Tasked with determining how to encourage office development along the corridor, the panel reviewed briefing materials, toured the highway, and met with area stakeholders. The panel concluded that in order to attract office development to the area, residents, political leaders, and county staff should embrace and direct residential development growth along the corridor to encourage complementary office and retail development.



Residential development has been a catalyst for redevelopment along the Corridor

The Richmond Highway Corridor has experienced little reinvestment until the past few years. Residential development has become the dominant market force in the corridor's real estate market. This residential development is the catalyst that is attracting retail renewal to the corridor. Together, residential and retail development can be harnessed to attract office development as well.

While the Department of Defense's BRAC activities certainly will boost the number of jobs on and around Fort Belvoir, the panel is dubious about any related increase in office demand on the Richmond Highway Corridor. Although the panel expects that the corridor will experience additional pressure for housing, retail, and professional office buildings, several factors discourage BRAC-related office development along the corridor. These factors include security regulations, which could affect a significant number of defense contractors, making it difficult to accommodate their building requirements on the corridor's narrow parcels. The panel foresees those jobs locating primarily south of Fort Belvoir, on Fairfax County Parkway and along the I-95 corridor. Additionally, while there is still uncertainty regarding where much of the BRAC-related activity will occur, demand to be accommodated on the Engineering Proving Grounds may result in little impact on the Richmond Highway Corridor.

The panel found that although the corridor has the ability to attract high-rise and professional office development, it will be able to do so only if Fairfax County can transform the corridor's image. The county can do this through good urban design, including the use of placemaking principles in mixed-use urban villages. Fairfax County already has the tools in place to facilitate this transformation. The comprehensive plan for Richmond Highway provides an excellent foundation for the panel's recommendations on how to reinvent the corridor by creating places where people can live, work, shop, and play in mixed-use environments.



Panel members met with area stakeholders to discuss Corridor issues.

The panel recommends using the elements of the comprehensive plan to focus redevelopment opportunities in three of the five designated community business centers (CBCs) on Richmond Highway, making each one a distinct place. The panel believes that it will be possible, within three to five years, to begin developing high-rise Class A office space at the northern gateway to the corridor in a mixed-use environment, increasing the comprehensive plan's intensity of uses to allow for a floor/area ratio (FAR) of up to 3.0.

Beginning in one of the central corridor's CBCs—in which a future transit stop already is planned—the panel recommends including professional office space in a mixed-use urban village. The panel then recommends identifying a location in the southern end of the study area where BRAC-related office development and cultural uses can be accommodated in a mixed-use environment. Focusing office and retail development within these limited areas will enable the developments to serve as activity nodes that will have the potential to act as catalysts for future office development.

To ensure that redevelopment is being fostered to coincide with the vision for a renewed Richmond Highway Corridor, the county needs to take bold action to make the corridor's redevelopment a priority. The county must actively involve its staff in the redevelopment process, increase allowable densities to overcome market forces, redirect relevant programs to the corridor, and ensure that additional funding is reaching Richmond Highway.

Market Potential

The panel was charged with evaluating the market potential for the Richmond Highway Corridor’s office market and then determining how to effectively position the corridor in order to attract the maximum number of employers. The panel could not isolate office development from other types of development, however, noting that the potential for office development is directly linked to the corridor’s residential and retail development. Single-family homes, townhouses, and condominium developments are springing up along Richmond Highway, and while the panel understands the concerns of area residents, political leaders, and county staff about the imbalance of residential and office development, it is important to realize that the corridor will not attract new employers without a critical mass of residential and retail development.

The expensive townhouse projects along the corridor have attracted the attention of companies such as Federal Realty Investment Trust, which is making significant connectivity improvements and facade renovations at Mount Vernon Plaza and the South Valley Shopping Center in Hybla Valley. Beacon Mall is another example of a retail complex that is reinventing itself for the new residents along Richmond Highway. What must be understood is that the combination of new residential development and better restaurant and retail options will, in turn, attract office development. Employers want to locate their offices in areas with amenities and, particularly, with mixed-use developments—places where their employees can go to lunch, shop, and recreate. Office developers understand this and will wait until those amenities are in place before they choose to invest in the corridor. Furthermore, at the present time, market rents in the corridor cannot justify the cost of land and structured parking for office development, unless it is internally subsidized by other components of a mixed-use development.



Currently, residential developers can pay 3 to 4 times more for land on the Highway than office developers.

Residential Market

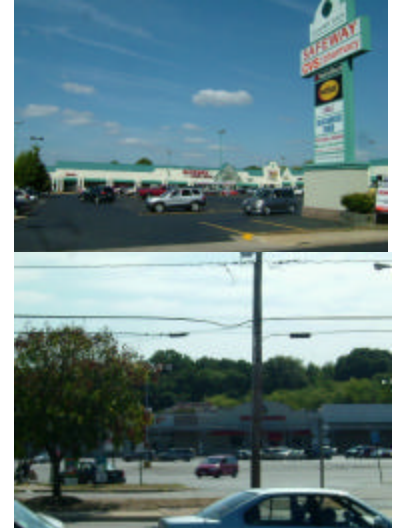
The housing market along Richmond Highway is quite strong, commanding very high prices (up to \$800,000 for a single-family home) and maturing to offer a wider range of housing options. The panel believes that the demand for housing will continue to remain strong along the corridor and that, as the Department of Defense begins to implement recent BRAC recommendations for Fort Belvoir, housing demand will increase even further.

Another driver of the residential market is the residential developer’s competitive advantage over office developers for land. Because housing prices along the corridor are high and office rents are low, residential developers are able to pay as much as three to four times more for land than office developers.

Knowing that the demand for market-rate housing will be satisfied, panel members focused their concern on the shrinking supply of affordable housing along the corridor. As residents of garden apartment complexes and trailer parks are displaced to make way for future development, they will be unable to afford new housing along the corridor.

Retail Market

Over the last few years, demand for retail space and shopping centers with a unique and upscale tenant mix along Richmond Highway has increased, driven primarily by the strong housing market. This demand has resulted in an improved tenant mix and new supermarkets, other stores, and restaurants, as well as facade improvements. Because of the area's rising median income and the demand from residents for improved retail, the panel believes that the market has matured to a point where the introduction of a mixed-use urban village product is appropriate. The urban village concept, which will be described in greater detail in the Planning and Design section, would improve the tenant mix, attract additional restaurants and specialty stores, and command higher rents.



Established shopping centers have received facade improvements, while newer upscale retail is coming to the Corridor.

Office Market

The panel spent the majority of its time understanding the current constraints to office development along Richmond Highway, as well as exploring potential future office tenants and areas of opportunity.

Current Constraints. It is clear to the panel that the main constraint to office development along Richmond Highway is the fact that too many more-desirable locations for office development exist elsewhere in the county and in nearby Alexandria to make the corridor competitive. The Richmond Highway Corridor is hurt by accessibility challenges, including its lack of identity as an office location; the lack of a strong east/west road network; its small, narrow parcels, which will only become narrower once the highway is expanded; limited development density potential, including minimal FAR, height restrictions, and substantial setbacks; the corridor's image problem; and high land values driven by strong housing demand. The cost of purchasing land and developing office space with structured parking far exceeds achievable rents.

Understanding the current constraints and taking into consideration current and future regional office demand, the panel explored whether these limitations could be overcome to attract commercial office development to the corridor. What the panel found was that the answer depends upon the type of office development. In the panel's opinion, there are three potential submarkets for office development in the corridor:

- Professional office development—including medical, financial, and legal offices—for area residents;
- High-rise office development for larger tenants; and
- BRAC-related office development for federal contractors.

Professional Office Development. Demand for professional office development will be driven by the strong housing market and complementary retail sites that create a sense of place. The panel believes that the corridor will support up to 25,000 square feet of professional office development per year in a mix of condominium and rental products. To reach this level of demand, the panel believes that this office space will have to be developed within mixed-use projects.

High-Rise Office Development. While Class A and B office tenants currently exhibit no strong demand for space in the area, the panel believes that the northern gateway of Richmond Highway will be a natural extension of both Carlyle and Eisenhower Valley, and that within three to five years this area will be able to support the development of high-rise office space. Upon the completion of the first building in five to seven years, the panel believes that the gateway will be able to support 150,000 to 200,000 square feet of office space every two to three years.



Panel members participated in a bus tour of Richmond Highway.

Circulation improvements resulting from the completion of the Mixing Bowl improvements and the Wilson Bridge will benefit this area. Although new developments such as National Harbor in Prince George's County, Maryland, might attract similar tenants, the panel believes that because the northern gateway is adjacent to an established concentration of office space and is within close proximity to the Huntington Avenue Metro station, it will have the competitive advantage.

BRAC-Related Office Development. Recent BRAC recommendations likely will result in the transfer of nearly 20,000 Department of Defense employees to Fort Belvoir over the next six years. The panel understands, however, that all of these employees will be located on Fort Belvoir. While federal contractors may be expected to move their offices to be near their client, the panel believes that it is too early to speculate as to how many contractors will relocate. Estimates range from a high of 20,000 to a negligible number. Presuming, however, that federal contractors *do* move, and that new office space may be needed outside of any accommodations that may be available on the Engineering Proving Grounds, the panel focused on where those contractors may go.

The panel notes that while federal contractors will have individual requirements, many prefer to locate in single-tenant buildings, in close proximity to one another, and in offices that provide security measures, including restricted entrances, setbacks, fences, and detached garages. To accommodate these needs, office developments require parcel sizes of at least 50 acres and significant setbacks. Federal contractors also look for convenient, affordable space. Given current market conditions favoring residential development, narrow parcel sizes, limited density potential, and the existing ownership structure of the parcels along Richmond Highway, the panel does not foresee a large amount of BRAC-related office development occurring along the corridor.

While BRAC-related development may not be focused along Richmond Highway *north* of Fort Belvoir, Fairfax County should be able to capture a majority of the related office need. The panel found that the 7.5-mile stretch of Richmond Highway *south* of Fort Belvoir provides an ideal

opportunity for office development. Other areas such as Springfield, Kingstowne, Fairfax County Parkway, and the I-95 corridor also are attractive for office development. These areas offer lower land prices (and thus lower rents), larger parcels, new product available for lease, and good access to I-95, the predominant highway on which employees will travel to and from work.

It is the panel's understanding that most BRAC-related office development will occur on the military base or related property. Little secondary contracting activity is projected to take place off the base. The panel therefore does not project that, at this time, BRAC will act as a catalyst to spur significant office development throughout the Richmond Highway Corridor.

Revitalization Strategies

In order to maximize the amount of office development along the Richmond Highway Corridor and to create catalysts for future development, the panel recommends that Fairfax County focus on what is already there. By adding residential development to the corridor; raising the quality of retail; upzoning key areas; changing the perception of the corridor through good development, planning, and design; and capitalizing on a newly created critical mass, the county can create an environment to which office development will come.

Priority Areas

The panel recommends that the county focus its energy in three specific areas: the northern gateway, targeted central corridor locations, and the southern portion of the highway.

The Northern Gateway. The panel recommends that the county take advantage of the fact that this is the only area along the corridor that can support Class A and B office development and that offers developers the potential to assemble a minimum of 15 acres to create a high-rise, mixed-use community. The panel recommends that this be the only area along the corridor in which high floor/area ratios (FARs) of up to 3.0 or 4.0 are encouraged. While the panel foresees this area as containing primarily office space, it recommends that one-third of the development be earmarked as housing or hotels in order to support and balance the office development. Supporting retail space also should be included in and around this redevelopment area. Parking for both office and residential buildings should be structured and, if redevelopment reaches proposed densities, may also have to include underground parking.



Panel members evaluate information found in their briefing materials.

The Central Corridor. While the northern gateway should be the predominant location for high-rise Class A and B office buildings, specific areas along Richmond Highway's central corridor should be the focus for changing the perception of the highway by developing mixed-use projects to attract professional office development. Twenty-five thousand square feet of office development per year is not a lot for the corridor, and the panel encourages the county to concentrate this professional office development in clusters to achieve critical mass and office development momentum, rather than spreading it out along the highway, which would have a minimal impact on the community.

The panel recommends that office development be integrated into compact, mixed-use urban villages, increasing the intensity recommended in the comprehensive plan to an increased FAR of up to 1.5 or 2.0. These offices could be either for-sale office condominiums or rental product and should account for 10 percent of each mixed-use project. While developing surrounding residential and retail uses will help attract office tenants, these accompanying uses also will be

necessary to subsidize office development. Given the limited demand, it is important that the county not require too much office development in any one mixed-use village.

Mixed-use urban villages should be strategically planned around proposed transit stops and located along the corridor in areas that can provide the depth and ownership structure necessary to assemble 30-acre parcels for redevelopment. Land parcels that are near or at the end of their existing uses' economic life will be ideal, since they present opportunities to either renovate or raze existing structures. These villages will mimic the central business centers outlined in the county's comprehensive plan. The panel recommends, however, that because of the limited demand for office development the county begins by focusing its energies on one center in the central core rather than on multiple centers. Over time, as the corridor becomes more established as a place with a mix of uses, the development of additional urban villages should be pursued. The Planning and Design section will address the urban village concept in greater detail.

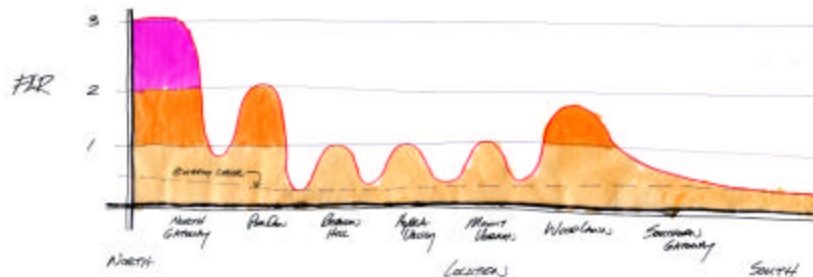


Figure 1. This image illustrates the proposed densities recommended throughout the Corridor.

The Southern End of Richmond Highway. While the impact of the BRAC recommendations on Richmond Highway may be limited, the panel believes that an opportunity exists to combine future BRAC-related office development with civic and cultural uses in a mixed-use project, which also might include a visitor center. The panel recommends identifying sites of more than 20 acres for this purpose and allowing an FAR between 1.0 and 1.5. Most of the sites that fit these criteria currently are occupied by shopping centers and aging garden apartment complexes adjacent to older, single-family residential areas.

Transportation Considerations

It did not take the panel long to realize that the traffic volume along Richmond Highway is a significant concern to members of the community. Because the corridor serves two purposes—as an alternate thoroughfare to I-95 for those commuting to and from Washington each day and as a main street serving the area's residents, who take advantages of the highway's shopping centers—it fails to serve either function well. Given the corridor's challenges and the heavy traffic volume that it experiences on a daily basis, the panel agrees that improvements are necessary.

Mixing Bowl and Wilson Bridge Impacts. The panel reasoned that ongoing construction and frequently changing traffic patterns at the I-95/I-395/I-495 Mixing Bowl and Wilson Bridge cause increased delays and congestion on I-95. Some traffic that normally would use I-95 now may use Richmond Highway instead. Completion of these projects likely will divert an unknown number of peak-hour trips from Richmond Highway back onto I-95. Completion of the Wilson Bridge project will ease congestion crossing the Potomac River, making Richmond Highway more accessible to and from the north, particularly at the northern gateway.

Highway Expansion. Richmond Highway will continue to be used for different reasons. To alleviate congestion and allow for additional capacity, the panel endorses the highway-widening plan that has been approved by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. Having reviewed the options for widening to six or, alternatively, eight lanes, the panel recommends widening the highway to accommodate three lanes and a turning lane in each direction, as well as a 34-foot median for future transit use. While it remains concerned that the highway widening will have a significant impact on the narrow parcels adjoining the highway, the panel notes that existing service roads will accommodate the expansion in many parts of the corridor.

Bus Service. Recognizing the importance of multimodal transportation, the panel believes that providing alternative means of transportation will be important to the corridor's future growth. Transportation improvements in the corridor historically have been directed toward the private automobile. The panel therefore endorses a more balanced approach that includes short- and long-term street, transit, and pedestrian improvements. Short-term transit improvements include more direct and frequent bus service, timed transfers between bus lines, bus turnouts and lay-by lanes, shelters for waiting passengers, and other passenger amenities. Intermediate-term improvements include bus rapid transit (BRT), which could operate within its own right-of-way in the median of a widened Richmond Highway.

Metrorail Extension. Because of the panel's limited duration, panel members did not have time to analyze whether the Huntington Avenue or the Franconia-Springfield Metrorail station is better suited to extend service to Fort Belvoir along Route One or I-95, respectively. With either alignment, this long-term improvement would provide a permanent, high-capacity transit alternative to the automobile.

The Metrorail extension may serve only modest numbers of new Fort Belvoir employees, since most of those employees presently live south or west of the military post. These employees would not be expected to drive past the post, transfer to Metro north of the post at Huntington Avenue or Franconia-Springfield, and then complete their trip by backtracking south to Fort Belvoir by Metro. Employees living north of the military post, however, would find this extension an attractive alternative to the automobile.

The panel recommends that if Metrorail service is extended to Fort Belvoir, Metro stations should be placed in locations that provide access to Richmond Highway's activity centers. (This suggests that a Route One alignment from the Huntington Avenue station would serve the corridor better than an alternative alignment to the west.)

In discussing whether and where to expand Metrorail, the panel looked to stations in Arlington as an example. Original plans for the Metrorail system placed Arlington's stations along the Interstate 66 (I-66) right-of-way, avoiding the county's commercial corridor and residential neighborhoods. Recognizing that Metro stations could help shape the county, Arlington County worked with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) to locate the stations within the center of Arlington. Today, Arlington's Metro stations are some of the most-utilized stations in the system.

Pedestrian Improvements. Pedestrians perceive Richmond Highway as unsafe and inconvenient to cross. The county and VDOT should consider pedestrian improvements such as continuous, well-appointed, ADA-compliant sidewalks and trails, marked crosswalks, countdown pedestrian signal heads, appropriate signal timings, and place-making plazas and other public spaces.



A pedestrian waits to cross Richmond Highway

BRAC Implications. The relocation of several thousand jobs to Fort Belvoir could have far-reaching transportation impacts on Richmond Highway. The extent of that impact has not been studied in detail to date. The panel believes that many, if not most, of the employees that will be reassigned to Fort Belvoir presently live south or west of Richmond Highway and commute to places north of it. These trips could be intercepted before they reach Richmond Highway and areas to the north. Such trips likely will outnumber the new trips on Richmond Highway that will be generated by employees who presently reside north of the highway. This offers the potential to reduce the number of trips using Richmond Highway. Moreover, any new trips likely would travel against the currently prevailing direction of traffic (in other words, southbound in the morning and northbound in the afternoon).

Travel Demand Management. The area's major employers should adopt travel demand management (TDM) strategies to reduce parking and traffic demands, particularly during peak hours. TDM measures include incentives to use transit, shuttle buses to the nearest transit station, alternative work schedules, and carpool/vanpool matching services.

Compact Mixed-Use Centers. Developing a complementary mix of residential and commercial uses in close proximity to one another is the most effective transportation improvement strategy. Compact mixed-use centers where one can live, work, shop, and play generate fewer vehicle trips, are more easily serviced by transit, and are more walkable and pedestrian friendly than single-use, low-density development.

Planning and Design Principles

The panel began its analysis of how to plan and design the targeted mixed-use developments in the northern, central, and southern areas of the Richmond Highway Corridor by reviewing Fairfax County's comprehensive plan, which, in the panel's opinion, is just that: comprehensive. The Richmond Highway Corridor Area section of the county's comprehensive plan provides a detailed and well-organized foundation for creating the sense of place that the corridor currently lacks.

Richmond Highway Function

In its determination of where redevelopment should be focused, the panel first looked at the function of Richmond Highway as it relates to development. As discussed in the Revitalization Strategies section, Richmond Highway serves dual functions as both a through road and a main street. As depicted in Figure 1, traffic along the highway moves predominantly from south to north in the morning and north to south in the evening. The network of east/west connections is very weak. The panel recommends strengthening the corridor's commercial function and reducing its role as a commuter route. This could be achieved by enhancing east/west connections with additional turning lanes and reduced traffic signal delays at key roads such as Fort Hunt, Huntington, Old King's Highway, Lockheed, Sherwood Hall, Mount Vernon Highway, and so forth. Another method would be to improve the connectivity of adjacent parcels by consolidating access points to reduce curb cuts on Route One, combining delivery zones to facilitate truck movement, and coordinating signal timing to highlight key destinations such as compact urban centers. Overall, these actions would make the highway work less like a commuter through road and more like a commercial corridor.

Development Patterns

Current policy proposes development patterns that would cross the highway, creating projects that would relate to each other on both its east and west sides. The reality is that Richmond Highway should be treated as a river. While development may take place on both sides, the focus should be on creating activity nodes that do not cross the highway.

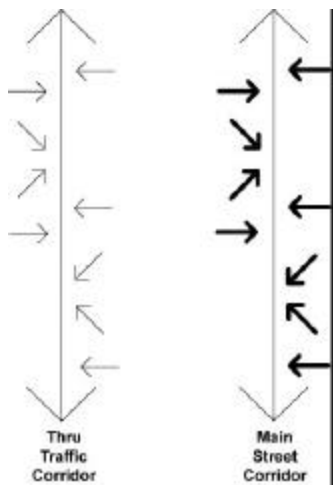


Figure 2. This figure depicts the current function of the Highway (Left) and the proposed function (Right) after strengthening east-west connections.

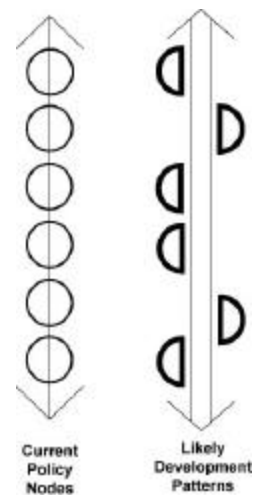


Figure 3. This figure depicts the difference between what policy denotes as opposed to likely development patterns.

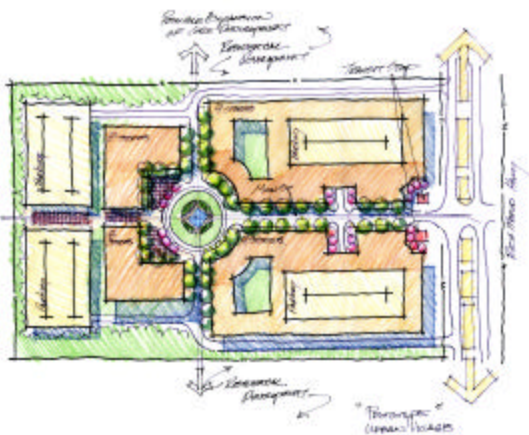
Placemaking Considerations

To ensure that new development will help create an identity for the community, the panel encourages the county to follow the comprehensive plan to develop urban villages that provide compact mixed-use development with pedestrian access and circulation. The panel also was struck by how well residents utilize the Fairfax County South County Center, which demonstrates the need for additional public amenities. By creating destinations where residents can live, work, and play, the county will be improving the quality of life for its residents.



The above pictures illustrate recommended placemaking principles. Photos courtesy of Alan Harwood, EDAW, Inc.

Urban Village Prototype. To illustrate these principles, the panel developed an urban village prototype. The concept (pictured below) is located along Richmond Highway at a transit hub. The road into the development creates a main street, providing residents and visitors with an enjoyable place to walk. In the area closest to the highway, the panel recommends the development of a four-story building wrapped around structured parking. Known as “Texas donuts” or “urban wraps,” these buildings hide structured parking while providing retail or office development on the first floor and rental or for-sale apartments on floors two through four. Moving further into the development, the panel recommends increasing building heights to eight to ten stories, with additional structured parking in the section of the project farthest from the highway. The taller buildings could accommodate a mix of retail, office, and residential uses. At the circle picture in the rendering, the panel proposes a fountain or other streetscape element that will create much-needed civic space and provide an identity for the village. The urban village also should include additional cultural or civic spaces, along with ample landscaping.



Urban Village Prototype – also pictured in Appendix.

This vision for an urban village is in line with the vision outlined in the comprehensive plan. However, in order to make the highest and best use of the land, subsidize the office component, and provide structured parking, the panel recommends increasing the allowable FAR for an urban village. While the comprehensive plan recommends an FAR of 0.5 to 1.0 for these village centers, the panel believes that an FAR of up to 1.5 is needed to accomplish the county’s goals. Regional projects such as Arlington’s Clarendon and Shirlington urban villages further illustrate this recommendation.

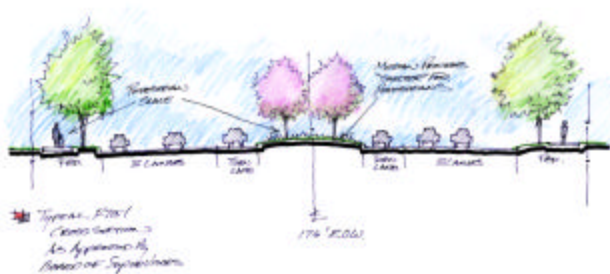
Northern Gateway Prototype. The panel recommends applying these placemaking principles to the northern gateway. This area will serve as the primary entrance to Richmond Highway and should incorporate appropriate signage and streetscape elements as outlined in the comprehensive plan. With an increased FAR of 3.0, 2.3 million square feet of development could be accommodated on an 18-acre redevelopment site at the northern gateway. This development could provide 1.5 million square feet of office space, 50,000 square feet of retail, and 750 residential units. Again, although the comprehensive plan recommends an FAR of 1.0 for this area, the panel envisions a much denser compact metropolitan area.



Prototype for the Northern Gateway – also pictured in Appendix.

Corridor Linkages

The expansion of Richmond Highway is a long-term investment that is needed yet feared by the community because of the number of lanes that are proposed. Given the reality of what the expanded highway will look and feel like, the county needs to work to change the community’s perception. The proposed six lanes plus a turning lane and a 34-foot median are a very reasonable proposition.



Richmond Highway Cross section illustrates how landscaping and pedestrian improvements will improve the overall feel of the Highway – also pictured in Appendix.

The investment in the highway should not be in concrete alone. Rather, the panel encourages the county to create an urban boulevard that is greener and more visually appealing than the existing highway. Landscaping will soften the appearance of the corridor, and beginning to clean up the highway will immediately improve the corridor’s image. In the panel’s rendering of the proposed future corridor—which also is depicted in the comprehensive plan—large trees and shrubbery along each side of the highway and landscaping in the center median create a sense of scale and help to balance the road.

Resource Protection Areas

The panel also would like to see the resource protection areas located along the corridor highlighted and viewed as assets to the corridor instead of impediments. These areas will provide a green network for the corridor and will help shape a built edge and enhance the corridor’s open space. The framework will enhance the quality of life for those who live along Richmond Highway as well as the county’s environmental stewardship.

Implementation

Although the panel found that the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan provides the foundation that the Richmond Highway Corridor needs for revitalization, it believes that this revitalization area needs to be made a priority and that action must be taken in order for a renaissance to take place.

The Role of the County

The designation of the Richmond Highway Corridor as one of seven commercial revitalization districts in Fairfax County is a tremendous step toward redeveloping the corridor. The panel believes, however, that the county needs to take a more active role. Redevelopment is taking place along the corridor, but in order to create and execute a coherent

new vision for Richmond Highway, local government needs to help foster redevelopment. To accomplish this, the panel recommends that the county either hire additional staff or assign current staff to focus on Richmond Highway. The panel also recommends that the county facilitate the following actions:



The Fairfax County South County Center has provided much needed civic space and services.

- Target county programs to revitalization areas—and to Richmond Highway in particular—to increase their impact and ensure that resources are not spread too thin.
- Encourage greater communication between the county and the Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation about planned changes and reinvestment along Richmond Highway.
- Consider applying an additional fee for new residential development along the corridor that does not have a 10 percent office component. The “in lieu of office” fee could be similar to the Housing Trust Fund. It could be used to assemble land that later could be sold to office developers.
- Program local activities and events around new development.
- Foster the creation of public and civic spaces as well as community activities.

The Role of the Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation

The Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation (SFDC) has assisted greatly in the redevelopment that already has taken place along the corridor. In the panel’s opinion, the county needs to make the Richmond Highway revitalization area a priority. To accomplish this, the SFDC must be expanded. With more staff and funding, it will be able to take on a heightened role to achieve the goals outlined in this report. The panel points out, however, that this additional staffing and funding can be realized in a nontraditional manner. For example, the

county could loan staff from various departments (such as the departments of Housing and Community Development, Economic Development, Planning and Zoning, Finance, and so forth) who would work together in the same offices while retaining access to the resources of their respective departments. This is a way to realign existing resources instead of demanding new resources. The SFDC's board of directors, which is the voice for the area's stakeholders, also must work with its staff, the county, and the commonwealth to revitalize the highway.

Removal of Blight

To enhance the overall image of the Richmond Highway Corridor and help attract economic development, a concerted effort must be made to remove blighting influences from the highway. To accomplish this, the panel recommends intensifying building code enforcement and increasing the funding for facade improvements. By continually cleaning up and investing in older residential properties, these small efforts will help to improve the overall image of Richmond Highway.

Substandard Housing.

The county also needs to facilitate the replacement of substandard housing with decent, sound, and safe affordable housing. A majority of the trailer parks along Richmond Highway, as well as the low-cost motels that serve as ad hoc affordable housing for at-risk residents, eventually will be demolished for future redevelopment. It will be important to provide those residents with relocation options such as cash, a new trailer location, or an affordable housing unit.

While development trends are creating an influx of high-end residential development along the highway, the county must make sure that it balances its demographics. To help accomplish this, the panel recommends strengthening the county's affordable dwelling unit (ADU) program by increasing the ADU requirement of 6 percent.

Funding

To remove blight and provide affordable housing opportunities for those who may be displaced by redevelopment, the panel recommends that the county pursue a number of avenues, including the following:

Community Development Block Grants. While Fairfax County already uses community development block grant (CDBG) funds, the panel encourages the county to use these funds to a greater extent. CDBG funds can help fund the development of housing for low- and moderate-income residents.

Federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits. Sponsored by the U.S. Department of the Treasury and administered in Virginia by the Virginia Housing Development Authority, the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) Program provides developers of affordable rental housing with federal tax credits.

Fairfax County Housing Trust Fund. The panel also recommends targeting the county's housing trust fund to leverage private investment for additional affordable housing.

Placemaking Principles

To implement the proposed placemaking principles, the panel recommends that the county facilitate the implementation of streetscape guidelines for the corridor as proposed by the panel and laid out in the comprehensive plan. In order to employ placemaking principles and, especially, streetscaping guidelines throughout the entire Richmond Highway Corridor, the county itself will need to invest selectively in areas where private investment is unlikely. The panel recommends that the county invest in public facilities such as recreation centers, community centers, and parks and that it create civic spaces for gatherings and activities.

Parking Districts

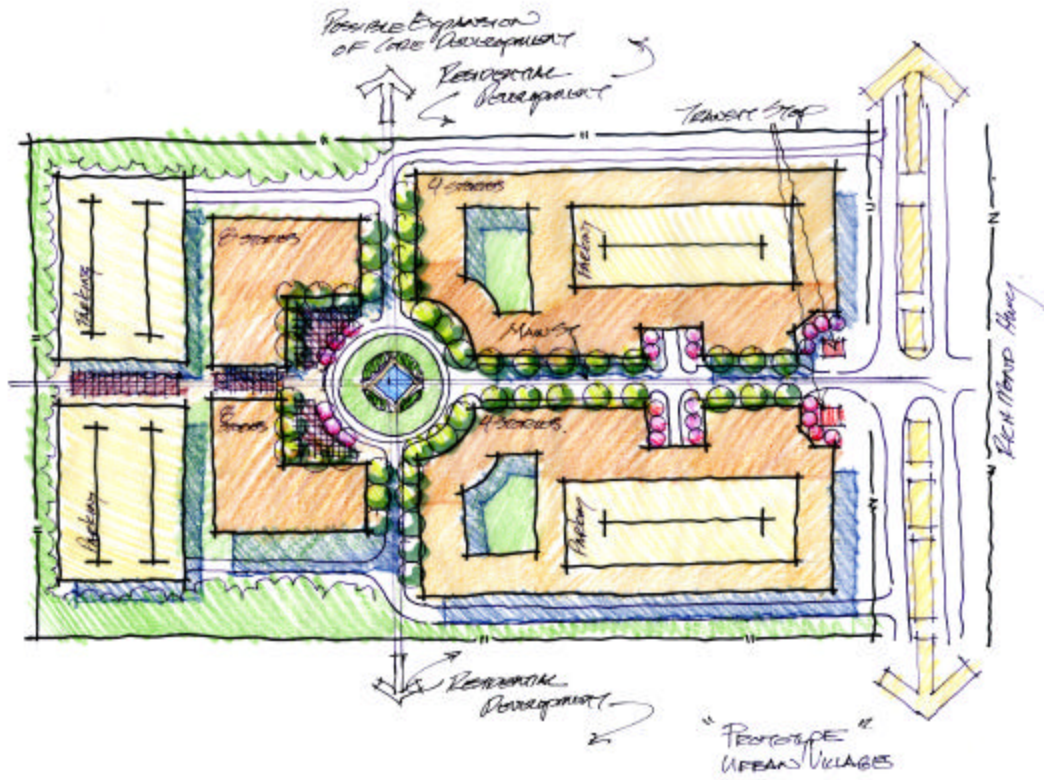
The panel also proposes the use of parking districts to promote economic development and transportation management. In a parking district, the county provides and maintains parking that is needed to support new development but cannot be provided by the developer. Parking districts have been used successfully throughout the region—particularly in Montgomery County, Maryland—to support public parking in commercial areas. The panel would like Fairfax County to consider using parking districts at activity nodes along the Richmond Highway Corridor, to help subsidize the high cost of the structured parking that will be required in the proposed urban villages.

Conclusion

The Richmond Highway Corridor has the potential to reinvent itself, creating a sense of place along the corridor that will attract residents, shoppers, visitors, and employers. To turn this opportunity into a reality, Fairfax County will have to work closely with the Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation and make this revitalization project a priority. With strong planning and design, increased funding and resources, and a constant finger on the pulse of revitalization opportunities, the panel believes that the corridor will be well positioned for success.

Appendix

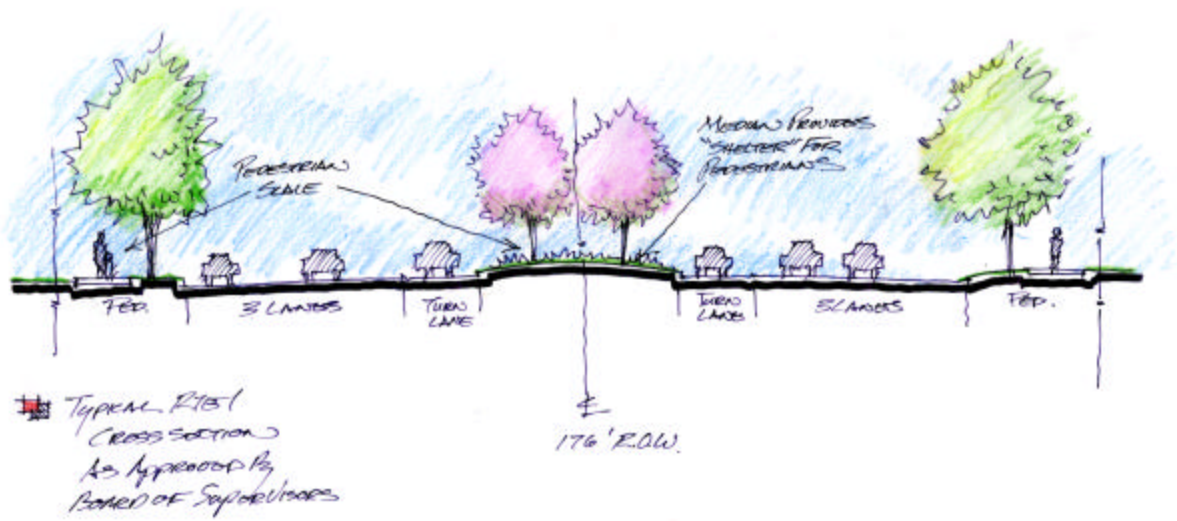
Urban Village Prototype



Northern Gateway Prototype



Cross Section of Richmond Highway



About the Panel

Judith Meany

Panel Chair

Lozier Partners

Waterford, Virginia

Meany is a real estate developer who focuses on urban infill projects as well as rural town land acquisition/disposition, environmental review, highest and best use development, infrastructure requirements, and financing. She currently is a managing partner with Lozier Partners, where she manages a partnership constructing Lofts 24, a 24-unit condominium building in downtown Silver Spring, Maryland. Meany is responsible for all phases of development, including approvals, financing, engineering consultants, and general contractor management, as well as marketing and sales.

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

Meany currently is an adjunct associate professor of urban planning in the School of Architecture and Planning at the Catholic University of America. She has been a Fulbright Teaching Scholar at the Polytechnical University of Tirana in Albania.

Meany is a member of the Urban Land Institute as well as Lambda Alpha International, the honorary society for the advancement of land economics, and the American Institute of Certified Planners. She holds a PhD in urban geography from the University of Maryland, a master of city and regional planning from the Catholic University of America, and a BA in political science from the George Washington University.

Leonard Bogorad

Robert Charles Lesser & Co., LLC

Bethesda, Maryland

Bogorad is managing director in the Washington, D.C., office of Robert Charles Lesser & Co., LLC. He has more than 25 years of experience in a wide range of market and financial analysis, consumer research, strategic planning, and impact assessment capacities concerning real estate and urban development issues throughout the United States.

Bogorad's areas of expertise include all types of residential developments, including large-scale mixed-use projects and master-planned communities, neotraditional communities, multifamily rental apartment complexes, condominiums, congregate and assisted-living facilities, and attached and detached single-family homes; metropolitan development trends; golf courses, golf course communities, and resort developments; and office and industrial projects. He frequently advises developers and retailers on product programming, sales forecasting, and site selection. He also has developed innovative models to

analyze the demand for specialized types of development such as retirement communities and low-income housing tax credit projects.

In addition, Bogorad has assessed the fiscal and economic impacts of real estate developments throughout the country and has developed strategies for downtown improvement, neighborhood and housing revitalization, and economic development for many local governments. He has been actively involved in the development review and approval process, working for landowners, developers, attorneys, and local governments. He has provided expert testimony before courts and regulatory bodies in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia. Bogorad has worked with numerous corporations and investors such as pension funds and their advisers, providing advice on their portfolio strategy to maximize the potential of their real estate holdings, assistance in facility location decisions, and review and valuation of particular potential investments.

Prior to joining Robert Charles Lesser & Co., Bogorad was senior vice president and director of the Washington office of Real Estate Research Corporation (RERC). Before joining RERC, he served as director of housing and neighborhood development for the Metropolitan Area Planning Council in Boston; as senior staff associate for the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities; and as a development consultant for a firm in New Haven, Connecticut.

After graduating from Harvard University, Bogorad received a master's degree in city planning from the University of Pennsylvania. He has spoken to organizations such as the Urban Land Institute, the National Association of Senior Living Industries, and the Northern Virginia Building Industries Association, and has written articles published in *The Journal of Real Estate Development*, *Mortgage Banker*, *Corridor Real Estate Journal*, *Industrial Development*, *Tax Credit Advisor*, *The Washington Post*, *Real Estate Finance Journal*, *Urban Land*, *Washington Business Journal*, and other publications. He is a full member of the Urban Land Institute, serves on the ULI Washington District Council Executive Committee, and was co-chair of the data and GIS committee for the Reality Check regional visioning process. Bogorad also is active in the Northern Virginia Building Industries Association (NVBIA) and is a member of Lambda Alpha International, the honorary society for the advancement of land economics.

Ryan Bouma

EDAW, Inc.

Alexandria, Virginia

Bouma is a landscape architect and land planner with a diverse project background, graphic talent, and extensive collaborative experience. Since joining the international consulting firm EDAW, Inc., he has been involved in community development, mixed-use master planning, and crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED), as well as urban plaza and park design.

Bouma believes that a site's constraints can become a project's greatest opportunities. This philosophy has resulted in award-winning projects in both the public and private sectors. He is equally comfortable working at a wide variety of scales. From the square mile to the square inch, Bouma places a strong emphasis on artful solutions and enjoys taking projects from concept to reality. He is a member of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) and has lectured on the topic of smart growth in the coastal environment.

Elizabeth Davison
Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Affairs
Rockville, Maryland

Davison is an urban economist who has spent her more than 30-year career in both the private sector, as a real estate and land use consultant, and in the public sector, as a planner and manager of a range of housing and community development programs. Since 1996, she has been director of the Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Affairs, which has more than 110 staff members and a combined annual budget of more than \$33 million in the arenas of community development, consumer affairs, commercial revitalization, affordable housing programs, and land use policy in Montgomery County, a suburb of Washington, D.C., with a population of more than 870,000. From 1991 through 1996, Davison was director of the Montgomery County Office of Planning Implementation. She worked for the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission from 1974 through 1980, in the research divisions in both Montgomery and Prince George's counties, conducting demographic and commercial revitalization studies.

Prior to joining the county, Davison was a vice president with Hammer, Siler, George Associates. Before that, she served as a vice president with Real Estate Research Corporation. In her 15-year consulting career, Davison conducted market and financial feasibility studies for real estate development projects, specializing in mixed-use development. She also prepared commercial revitalization, growth management, and infrastructure needs studies for local and state governments. Her clients included major corporations, nonprofit organizations, real estate syndicators, developers, banks and other financial institutions, universities, and federal, state, and local governments.

Davison's academic training was at George Washington University, where her undergraduate studies were in economics, and at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, where she undertook graduate study in economics and urban studies. Most recently, she completed the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University's program for senior officials in state and local government. She is a member of the Urban Land Institute, the American Planning Association, and Lambda Alpha International, the honorary society for the advancement of land economics. She has spoken at numerous conferences and has authored several articles on planning, real estate, and community development for national journals.

Alan Harwood
EDAW, Inc.
Alexandria, Virginia

Harwood is a certified urban planner with more than 20 years of experience in regenerating urban areas through community-based economic development and land use planning. He is a principal and vice president in the Alexandria, Virginia, office of EDAW, Inc., an international consulting firm.

Harwood's planning approach balances development interests and the public benefits of community building. His planning and project experience reflects a background in economic development, urban planning, and environmental protection. Harwood has completed more than 100 development projects for a wide range of clients, including government agencies and private sector organizations. In the past five years, he has prepared strategic revitalization plans for downtown Washington, D.C.; Alexandria, Virginia; Annapolis, Maryland; Wilmington, North Carolina; and Chester, Pennsylvania. His plans include innovative concepts, visually compelling illustrations, comprehensive recommendations, and detailed implementation actions.

Harwood received his undergraduate degree from the University of South Carolina and a master's of urban planning from the George Washington University. He also has taken classes in Rome. Harwood has

served on a ULI Advisory Services panel and his projects have won awards from the International Downtown Association (IDA), the American Planning Association (APA), the American Society of Consulting Planners (ASCP), the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), the National Building Museum, and the General Services Administration (GSA). Harwood is certified by the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) and is a member of the Lambda Alpha International, the honorary society for the advancement of land economics. He is a frequent speaker at professional conferences and Universities.

Matthew Holbrook

Opus East, LLC

Rockville, Maryland

Holbrook is director of real estate for Opus East, LLC, the regional operating company of the Opus Group, which is among the largest design/build firms in the United States. Holbrook has more than 12 years of experience in the real estate industry and currently is responsible for acquisition, development, leasing, and management of office, industrial, residential, and retail projects in the Baltimore/Washington region.

Prior to joining Opus, Holbrook was senior vice president of First Management Group (FMG), where he directed the firm's real estate investment, asset management, and development activities in California, Arizona, Ohio, and Washington, D.C. Before he joined FMG, Holbrook was a development director for Struever Bros. Eccles & Rouse, an innovative urban mixed-use developer based in Baltimore, where he managed multiple waterfront development projects.

Holbrook has expertise in brownfield redevelopment, including experience in environmental restoration, public/private partnerships, risk assessment and insurance, and adaptive use. He holds a bachelor's degree from East Carolina University and an MBA in finance and real estate from American University.

Jonathan Meyers

Washington Property Company, LLC

Bethesda, Maryland

Meyers is vice president of the recently formed Washington Property Company, LLC, where he is responsible for development and acquisitions. He previously worked at Atlantic Realty Companies from 2000 to 2005, beginning as an owner's representative and then moving into a position in development and acquisitions. Meyers assumed primary oversight for the development and construction of Prosperity Medical Center, a 255,000-square-foot medical office complex that currently sees more than 1.5 million visitors a year and has won several design, development, and conservation awards.

Meyers works closely with the brokerage community in seeking out new commercial and mixed-use development opportunities, and provides development oversight for Washington Property Company on all current projects and proposals. He recently guided a 430,000-square-foot mixed-use project through the city of Falls Church approvals process. The project will contain some 230 residential condominiums and more than 100,000 square feet of commercial space. He currently is working on several projects in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area.

Meyers has more than 12 years of experience in commercial construction and real estate. He has had responsibility for construction and development of more than 3 million square feet, including 2.5 million square feet of commercial space in the Washington metropolitan area alone. Meyers attended Brigham

Young University, where he studied zoology in a pre-med BS program. Today, he is active with the City of Falls Church Chamber of Commerce and works closely in Montgomery County with Charlie Nulsen, the president of Washington Property Company, who also is chairman of the Downtown Silver Spring Alliance. He currently is working on a substantial mixed-use project in Fairfax, Virginia, and pursuing other opportunities in the metro area. He is a member of the Northern Virginia chapter of NAIOP and the International Convention of Shopping Centers.

Sandy Silverman
Dorsky Hodgson & Partners, Inc.
Washington, D.C.

As the managing principal of the Washington D.C., office of Dorsky Hodgson & Partners, Inc., Silverman is responsible for overseeing daily operations and managing the design of projects in the residential, commercial, and senior living studios. His commitment to high-quality design, coupled with a disciplined adherence to project budgets and schedules, has been a key factor in his successful relationships with clients.

Silverman's 30 years of experience specializing in complex urban design solutions of various building types reflects his substantial range of expertise in feasibility analyses and site planning, as well as commercial, high-rise residential, senior living, institutional, and mixed-use projects. With the recent rebirth of urban housing, Silverman has focused on the development of many mixed-use, high-density rental and condominium residential projects along Washington, D.C.'s Metrorail corridors and in other urban downtown areas, including Boston's waterfront as well as downtown West Palm Beach, Fort Lauderdale, and Coral Gables, Florida. His firm currently is involved in more than a dozen infill projects containing a total of more than 2,500 units

Silverman is a member of the Executive Committee of the ULI Washington District Council and recently served as a panelist on the Laurel Hill Technical Assistance Panel in Lorton, Virginia. He has been published in several industry magazines and has served as guest speaker at professional conferences and panel discussions.

Joseph Svatos
Akridge
Washington, D.C.

As senior vice president of Akridge, Svatos is primarily responsible for the acquisition and development of new projects. His expertise in development and finance has contributed to the company's success in maximizing investor returns. For the past 22 years, Svatos has been associated with suburban office/R&D development and has acquired a vast understanding of real estate financing, development, leasing, and sales.

Prior to joining Akridge in 1988, Svatos opened and managed the Lee Sammis Associates, Inc., operation in Washington, D.C., building more than 1.8 million square feet of office/R&D projects in northern Virginia, suburban Maryland, and Richmond, Virginia, with Copley Real Estate Advisors. Copley's equity investment in Svatos's projects totaled \$200 million. From 1979 to 1981, Svatos was involved with the Prudential's real estate development activities in northern Virginia. He has been a featured speaker at numerous NAIOP and Urban Land Institute seminars.

Svatos received his master's degree in city and regional planning from the Harvard Graduate School of Design and his bachelor's degree in city and regional planning from the University of Virginia. He is director of the Northern Virginia chapter of NAIOP, a member of the Anne Arundel Trade Council and its land use committee, and an active member of the Urban Land Institute.

Martin Wells
Wells & Associates
McLean, Virginia

Wells has 28 years of experience in traffic, transportation, transit, parking, and pedestrian planning and engineering. He has worked for private real estate developers; federal, state, and local public agencies; and institutions in 33 states, the District of Columbia, and overseas. His experience includes traffic impact studies, transportation analyses of mixed-use developments, travel demand management studies, parking policy and needs studies, transit planning, and highway and parking facility design. Wells has provided expert testimony before numerous planning boards, elected officials, administrative hearing officers, and citizens' groups.

Barry J. Wright
Newmark
Washington, D.C.

Barry Wright joined Newmark in 2003. His work focuses on the representation of tenants throughout the greater Washington, D.C., region. He provides numerous services, including lease negotiations, market research, financial analysis, and strategic planning.

Before beginning his career in commercial real estate, Wright served as a consultant for companies such as Seta, Inc.; Keane Federal Systems, Inc.; and Marasco Newton Group, Ltd. He developed processes that increased efficiency and reduced capital expenditures for both commercial and federal clients. Wright applies this experience to his representation of tenants, by helping them develop strategic plans that provide long-term, value-added results.

Wright is a member of the Urban Land Institute, the District of Columbia Building Industry Association, and African American Real Estate Professionals. An active member of the community, he volunteers with the Big Brothers/Big Sisters of the National Capitol Area. Wright received his MBA in real estate and urban development from George Washington University and his bachelor of arts degree in public policy from the College of William & Mary.