



# RICHMOND HIGHWAY CORRIDOR PLACEMAKING



Technical Assistance Panel | January 31–February 1, 2024

# About

## Urban Land Institute

Urban Land Institute is a global, member-driven organization comprising more than 48,000 real estate and urban development professionals dedicated to advancing the Institute's mission of shaping the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide. ULI's interdisciplinary membership represents all aspects of the industry, including developers, property owners, investors, architects, urban planners, public officials, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, and academics. Established in 1936, the Institute has a presence in the Americas, Europe, and Asia Pacific regions, with members in 84 countries.

Cover photo: Richmond Highway corridor. (ULI Washington)

© 2024 by the Urban Land Institute

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

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

## ULI Washington

ULI Washington is one of ULI's largest District Councils worldwide, with over 2,000 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. .

### ULI Washington Leadership

#### **Anthony Chang**

ULI Washington Chair  
Managing Director  
Silverline Equities

#### **Deborah Kerson Bilek**

Executive Director  
ULI Washington

### This study was sponsored by:

The Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation (SFDC) and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOC).

## Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) Program

The objective of ULI Washington's Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) program is to provide expert, multidisciplinary advice on land use and real estate issues facing public agencies and nonprofit organizations in the Metropolitan Washington Region. ULI Washington has completed over 65 technical assistance panels (TAPs) to date. Drawing from its extensive membership base, ULI Washington conducts two-day Panels offering objective and responsible advice to local decision-makers on a wide variety of land use and real estate issues, ranging from site-specific projects to public policy questions. The TAP program is intentionally flexible to provide a customized approach to specific land use and real estate issues. Learn more at [washington.uli.org/get-involved/technical-assistance-panels](https://washington.uli.org/get-involved/technical-assistance-panels).

#### **Aileen Horn**

TAP Committee Co-Chair  
Director of Hospitality  
KGD Architecture

#### **Joshua Olsen**

TAP Committee Co-Chair  
Senior Vice President for Acquisitions  
Monument Realty

#### **LaToya Thomas**

TAP Committee Co-Chair  
Principal & Founder  
Brick & Story

# About

## Technical Assistance Panel

### Panel Chair

#### **Nkosi Yearwood**

Community Planner  
Montgomery County Planning Department

### Panelists

#### **Nastasia Buckley**

Design Manager  
Marriott International

#### **Connie Fan**

President  
LSG Landscape Architecture

#### **Maria Lashinger**

Principal  
Gorove Slade

#### **Ellen McCarthy**

Faculty of Urban & Regional Planning  
program  
Georgetown University

#### **Anna McCorvey**

Senior Equitable Development Manager  
The River East Design Center

#### **Rob Meeks**

Senior VP/Principal  
Peerless Properties

#### **Shane Pomajambo**

Owner  
Art Whino

#### **Steven Segerlin**

Head of Commercial Development  
Amtrak

### UI Washington Project Staff

#### **Deborah Kerson Bilek**

Executive Director, ULI Washington

#### **Marc Gazda**

Manager, ULI Washington

#### **Kaushambi Shah**

Urban Designer and Report Writer

## Acknowledgments

ULI Washington is grateful to Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation (SFDC) for sponsoring this TAP, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOC) for their co-sponsorship, and to the Fairfax County Department of Planning and Development for their invaluable support of this effort.

SFDC is a nonprofit economic development organization dedicated to promoting the redevelopment and revitalization of the Richmond Highway Corridor of U.S. Route 1 from the beltway to Fort Belvoir in Fairfax County, Virginia. Since 1981, SFDC has helped direct nearly \$2 billion of private investment to the Richmond Highway Corridor. As Southeast Fairfax continues to grow with more residents and new business, their organization serves as a helpful resource for business owners, developers, property managers, and members of the community.

Special thanks to Evan Kaufman, Executive Director of the Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation for sponsoring this TAP.

ULI Washington would also like to thank the following staff members of Fairfax County Government for their invaluable support in the preparation and convening of this Panel:

Joanne Fiebe, Program Manager, Office of Community Revitalization

Elizabeth Hagg, Deputy Director, Office of Community Revitalization

Nicholas Rinehart, Land Use and Development Liaison for the Office of Mount Vernon District Supervisor Dan Storck



## Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Executive Summary  | 1  |
| Scope and Background   | 5  |
| TAP Study Area Boundaries                                    |    |
| TAP Questions  |    |
| Existing Conditions  |    |
| Stakeholder Engagement                                       |    |
| Recommendations  | 11 |
| Managing the Impacts of BRT Construction on the Neighborhood |    |
| Guiding Placemaking at New Developments                      |    |
| Placemaking Types  |    |
| Site Selection Criteria                                      |    |
| Visualizing Placemaking Interventions Along the Corridor     |    |
| Governance and Management                                    |    |
| Conclusion   | 34 |
| Appendix: List of Stakeholders                               | 38 |
| About the Panel  | 40 |



## Executive Summary

From January 31 to February 1, 2024, a multidisciplinary Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) of ULI Washington members convened to evaluate the current conditions along the Richmond Highway Corridor in Fairfax County, Virginia, and envision its future. The TAP was sponsored by Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation (SFDC), and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOC), with support from Fairfax County.

The Richmond Highway Corridor in Fairfax County is on the verge of massive redevelopment. Older commercial properties are giving way to more mixed-use, walkable areas as envisioned in the [Embark Comprehensive Plan](#).



The TAP study area boundary within the Richmond Highway Corridor

The road widening and streetscape project on the southern section of the Corridor and the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system scheduled to open by 2031 each present opportunities for development and redevelopment, but they also pose significant challenges to the existing businesses and residents in the nearby communities.

The Richmond Highway Corridor has a rich history and is endowed with significant assets like George Washington's Mount Vernon, the Gum Springs Community, and Huntley Meadows Park. The and businesses along Richmond Highway are equally valuable. The area's neighborhoods consist of majority-minority populations with more than half of all residents identifying as either Hispanic or African American. While the area offers diverse, local businesses and



The Richmond Highway Corridor's location within Fairfax County, VA

restaurants that contribute to the Corridor's identity, many of its communities face challenges with housing costs, low area median incomes, and education gaps.

The transportation projects and growth planned for the area can yield transformative opportunities, but to ensure that existing residents and businesses flourish in this changing environment, it will be important to ensure that community voices are heard as the built environment evolves.

According to the Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation, one short-term strategy to support this is to install murals, art installations, public plazas, special signage, and other creative projects highlighting the area's assets through placemaking interventions. SFDC is actively developing a placemaking plan for the southern portion of Richmond Highway from Hybla Valley to Fort Belvoir and requested assistance from the ULI Washington in the form of a Technical Assistance Panel (TAP).



The Panelists for the Richmond Highway Corridor TAP



The Mount Vernon estate in Alexandria, VA

USER AMP25.93 ON WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



Huntley Meadows Park, Alexandria, VA

USER BOBISTRAVING ON FLICKR



Huntley Meadows Park, Alexandria, VA

USER BOBISTRAVING ON FLICKR

The **goals** of this TAP were to:

1. Recommend steps toward implementing a placemaking vision for the Corridor's revitalization
2. Identify opportune sites for placemaking interventions along the Corridor
3. Recommend strategies for enhancing community identity through equitable placemaking, acknowledging the BRT project.

Prior to the TAP, panelists had the opportunity to tour the neighborhood in person. During the TAP, panelists interviewed more than 35 stakeholders including community members, residents, leaders of community organizations, landowners, local business owners, operators of historic cultural assets and government officials and public sector representatives from Fairfax County government agencies. These stakeholders have been acknowledged in the Appendix.

During the TAP, the Panel discussed challenges faced by the community along the four-mile stretch of the Richmond Highway Corridor in the TAP area boundaries, brainstormed placemaking strategies, enlisted criteria for site selection process, identified seven potential sites for placemaking, and visualized intervention ideas for three of those sites. While their analysis and recommendations focused on the southern four-mile stretch of the Corridor for the purpose of the TAP, their ideas can be applied to the entire 7.5 miles of the Corridor with a modular approach. The Panel



ULI WASHINGTON



ULI WASHINGTON

The Panelists touring the TAP study area of the Richmond Highway Corridor



presented its analysis and recommendations to the sponsors and community members on the afternoon of February 1, 2024.

At the outset, the Panel studied and made recommendations for the Richmond Highway Corridor based on two modalities:

1. **The “Art Centric Corridor” experienced as an observer** from an automobile while driving on the Richmond Highway Corridor. Through this lens, the Panel recommended utilizing art in the form of murals, signage, etc. to enhance the identity, marketing and branding of the diverse neighborhoods scattered along the 7.5 mile stretch of Richmond Highway.
2. **The Local Experience of the neighborhood via live, work and play** as residents and visitors arrive at and depart from the planned nine BRT stations. The Panel recommended that each of the BRT stops be designed as different gateway communities with diverse offerings.

The Panel presented the following key recommendations for planning and design of placemaking interventions along the Corridor:

1. **Involve stakeholder communities** in determining placemaking sites and gestures.
2. **Mitigate impacts from the construction process** on the community proactively.
3. **Prioritize quality and programming** for the users with placemaking gestures in tune with the development size.
4. **Prioritize ownership, adjacency, and immediacy** of potential sites for placemaking interventions to maximize programming, user safety, and use.
5. **Plant trees now** to soften the landscape along the Richmond Highway Corridor which currently has a severe shortage of green cover.
6. **Manage placemaking sites** properly to enable their success in the community.



ULI WASHINGTON



ULI WASHINGTON



ULI WASHINGTON



ULI WASHINGTON

The Panel working during the two-day Richmond Highway Corridor Placemaking TAP



ULI WASHINGTON



ULI WASHINGTON



ULI WASHINGTON



ULI WASHINGTON



ULI WASHINGTON



ULI WASHINGTON

The Panel and guests during the final presentation of the Richmond Highway Corridor Placemaking TAP





## Scope and Background

## TAP Study Area Boundaries

The Embark Richmond Highway Comprehensive Plan and the BRT projects span a 7.5 mile stretch of the Corridor from the Capital Beltway (I-495) to Fort Belvoir. This TAP focused on the southern four-mile section from the edge of the Hybla Valley/ Gum Springs CBC at Lockheed Boulevard to the southern boundary of the Embark Plan and BRT project at Jeff Todd Way. The study area includes three Community Business Centers (CBCs): Hybla Valley/Gum Springs, South County, and Woodlawn, as well as associated suburban neighborhood areas.



The TAP study area's location within Fairfax County



The TAP study area boundary

## TAP Questions

The Panel was tasked with conceiving a plan for maintaining the Corridor's assets of strong community and business culture as well as strengthening its sense of place. Panelists addressed the following questions about the future of the Richmond Highway Corridor within the TAP study area boundaries:

- i. What are strategic areas and sites (including vacant buildings) that are well suited to placemaking efforts along the four-mile stretch of Corridor identified in this application?
- ii. What are specific modalities that can be utilized in each of the identified spaces to enhance the identity, character, and sense of place for the communities living along the Corridor? (i.e. types of art, parklets, lighting, landscaping, special events, etc.) Consider designating certain areas for recreation and/or entertainment with programming to reinforce retail options and destination location visits.
- iii. Given that the current condition of the Corridor is largely hardscape (buildings, asphalt, and parking lots), what are some ways to soften the hardscape or repurpose underutilized parking, asphalt, fencing, or dirt into more aesthetically pleasing and/or community activated spaces?
- iv. What are some strategies that could be used to mitigate upcoming roadway infrastructure projects and their negative effects on local small businesses and residents? What are some best practices from other communities who have been through this and demonstrable outcomes (qualitative and quantitative) of projects both regionally and nationally that contribute to livability?
- v. How can new development projects be integrated into the placemaking solution with additional public art investment, new public spaces, and appropriate commercial space to contribute to this implementation strategy?



## Existing Conditions

The Richmond Highway Corridor kickstarted development in the 1950s, and is primarily comprised of single-story shopping centers with some garden-style apartments and townhome communities interspersed. With a

few exceptions, most commercial buildings are surrounded by surface parking and lack of stormwater controls or green space.

Outside of the immediate Corridor, the majority of land is devoted to single-family and townhome housing with some large

parks, such as Huntley Meadows and the George Washington Memorial Parkway along the Potomac River. There are several aging mobile home communities. Many of the older apartment communities are market rate affordable properties serving as important workforce housing.



Thrift retail in the Woodlawn Center along the Richmond Highway Corridor



Potomac Square Shops & Offices along the Richmond Highway Corridor



Sacramento Shopping Center at the intersection of Sacramento Drive and Richmond Highway Corridor



Kimchi House Korean Restaurant along the Richmond Highway Corridor



Townhome community along the intersection of Towne Manor Ct and Richmond Highway Corridor



Woodlawn Garden Apartments along the intersection of Blankenship Street and Richmond Highway Corridor



The demographic and socioeconomic makeup of the area is one of the most diverse in Fairfax County. Certain areas of the corridor have average Area Median Incomes (AMI) of over \$120,000, while parts of Hybla Valley are closer to \$55,000 (as per Custom CoStar Analytics Report, TAP Briefing Materials). One of the stronger assets of the Corridor is its multicultural and multiethnic populations of Hispanic, African American, Asian, and Middle Eastern descent.

The Corridor contains five Community Business Centers (CBCs) where the highest densities and greatest mix of uses are present today and are planned in the future. Between the CBCs are Suburban Neighborhood Areas (SNAs) with mostly residential and small retail uses.

There are many nationally significant historic properties near the southern portion of the Corridor. These sites, among others, represent a significant tourism draw to the area with Mt. Vernon alone attracting one million tourists per year. These include:

- Gum Springs, the oldest, African American community in Fairfax County, founded in 1833 by West Ford, a former enslaved person at George Washington's estate
- Woodlawn Plantation, the Arcadia Center for Sustainable Food and Agriculture, and the Pope Leighey House (Frank Lloyd Wright Architecture)
- George Washington's Mount Vernon and Gristmill
- National Museum of the United States Army.



The Gum Springs neighborhood along the Richmond Highway Corridor



The Woodlawn Plantation



The mansion at Mount Vernon



The gristmill at Mount Vernon



The Pope-Leighey House



Architectural details of the awning of the Pope-Leighey House



The Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation (SFDC) has played a key role in revitalization and redevelopment efforts since 1981. SFDC, as a 501c3 non-profit, has been an economic development and placemaking partner of the County. It has helped elevate issues of the Corridor to the forefront of public policy and has helped lead multiple focus groups and community sessions regarding the development of the Embark Comprehensive Plan. Currently, the organization follows a three-point plan focused on site development, business development, and placemaking.

## Stakeholder Engagement

Over the course of the two-day TAP, panelists toured the site and surrounding area in person. They received a sponsor briefing and participated in a series of stakeholder interviews. They interviewed over 35 stakeholders spread out in five different focus groups, including county and public sector officials, community members, residents, leaders of community organizations, landowners, local business owners, and operators of historic and cultural assets. (A list of all the stakeholders interviewed during the TAP is in Appendix A).

### Stakeholder Consensus

At the outset of the stakeholder interviews with the public sector focus group, the Panel noted that stakeholders gave high importance to supporting the auto-oriented businesses along the Corridor that would



ULI WASHINGTON

Stakeholder meetings in session at the TAP workshop



ULI WASHINGTON

be impacted during the construction process. They emphasized on the need for beautifying and creating respectability through placemaking interventions for these businesses along with attractive “coming soon” signage.

Stakeholders took pride in the incredible diversity of ethnic eateries in the TAP study area, and suggested the need for kiosks and farmers’ markets where impacted eateries could sell food in temporary structures in parking lots along the Corridor. The Arcadia Center for Sustainable Food and Agriculture is known for pop-up food markets, and the stakeholders expressed interest in creating food opportunities similar to:

- Pedro & Vinny’s, a popular burrito stand in the CVS parking lot at 2599 Columbia Pike in Arlington, Virginia which is now converted to Burrito Bro’s.

- Water Park at Amazon HQ2 in Crystal City, Virginia which hosts Crush, a New York-style pizza place, and Water Bar, an open-air oyster and cocktail bar built on top of the park’s central fountain and water wall. The rest of the park has 350-foot kiosks that serve as “food incubators” with a focus on minority and women-owned businesses. The kiosk tenants are on short-term leases, and they curate a line-up of eleven restaurants offering diverse cuisine.

The **private sector focus** group highlighted the fact that people come to the TAP study area for jobs, and may want to see newer developments along the Corridor. However, stakeholders warned that large scale developments don’t foster small businesses and rents will threaten to rise with the onset of new development. The group recommended taking inventory of

existing assets like the fish truck near the Arcadia Center and facilitating low-cost reinforcements like sheltering and shade to encourage people to stay. The group voiced a need for music along the Corridor and suggested bandstands in public spaces with events like “Rock of Ages” that focus on the student population. The group further recommended engaging the George Washington Recreation Center for recreational activation of the Original Mount Vernon High School grounds.

The **community members and non-profit stakeholders focus group** emphasized the opportunity to tell the story of the area and preserve its history. Also, as the Corridor leans into positive change, the group emphasized the need for shade, supporting small businesses which form the backbone of the Richmond Highway Corridor, and a system to promote awareness of community events and planning efforts beyond individual community enclaves.



The former Pedro & Vinny's converted to Burrito Bro's along Columbia Pike in Columbia, MD



Food kiosks and seating at Water Park in Crystal City, VA



Water Park in Crystal City, VA as seen from above





# Recommendations

## Unity Through Connection: The Four Pillars

The Panel recommended placemaking interventions within the study area based on an overarching mission of Unity through Connection. The Panel identified four contingent actionable pillars that served as a framework for determining its specific recommendations:

### Pillar 1 – Highlight Identity

Through conversations with stakeholders, it was evident that the Richmond Highway embodies the concept “Out of Many, One People.” Boasting a rich diversity of ages, nationalities, ethnic groups, and incomes, the community knows there is power in collective community bonds, which cannot be seen but can be facilitated through dedicated space to provide the services needed. The diverse community identity tells a story that can be used for economic growth of the community.

### Pillar 2 – Promote Communication

Richmond Highway, having diverse and dispersed neighborhoods, needs a means to effectively disseminate information throughout the full Corridor. Currently, “getting the word out” is a grass-roots effort in the disjointed landscape, requiring organizers to go store-to-store and door-to-door. The Panelists recommended a more streamlined system for the future.

### Pillar 3 – Highlight History

Richmond Highway is a community of the self-empowered, with a history of radical community building and creating space for the historically marginalized and overlooked. The Corridor provides an opportunity to not only celebrate national history, but also to herald and celebrate the legacy of those who have thrived despite the disparate impacts of that history.

### Pillar 4 – Economic Support for Small Businesses

The strength of Richmond Highway is its small businesses. Marketing and physical space must be provided to support these businesses as the Corridor transitions, and the businesses need a means to gain strength in numbers that can funnel people to their individual locations.

## Managing the Impacts of BRT Construction on the Neighborhood

During the construction of the BRT along the Richmond Highway Corridor, there will be considerable disruption for businesses and residents. The Panel identified the following common challenges for roadway projects that require interventions beyond transportation:



Wallpaper depicting a treescape on a chain link fence at Capitol Crossing in Washington DC



Local artists creating art on local restaurant barriers in Needham, MA



Local artists creating art on barriers in Needham, MA



### Threats to Business:

- Property access and visibility
- Customer awareness that entity is still open for business
- New customer attraction/marketing/branding
- Tenant replacement and small business creation

### Threats to Residents:

- Construction noise and visual clutter
- Health and human safety
- Traffic congestion - shifting travel and purchasing patterns to other retail corridors
- Tenant attraction - lease-up for new buildings

The Panel recommended two strategic priorities during the BRT construction:

### Strategic Priority 1: Keeping the Corridor competitive during construction and disruption

To help broadcast the message that the corridor is still “Open for Business” during the roadway widening construction along Richmond Highway, the Panel recommended:

- Identifying a **community liaison** to help coordinate public access to properties along the Corridor – especially those whose frontage along the new right of way is affected by the project – with VDOT, Fairfax County and the Contractor.

- Supporting businesses with **super-graphic signage** that can be reused/relocated as construction phases shift, such as directional signage identifying points of access and marketing signage promoting business clusters and retail offerings.
- Inspiring and **beautifying key entrances** to shopping plazas to elevate retail corridor branding with tree planters and inflatables, pop-up murals on wood-framed walls and totems, artistic wraps over fencing, jersey barriers and traffic cans and cones.
- Creating **“roving” outreach kiosks/visitors centers** with coffee and music promoting the BRT project and local businesses and events.
- Deploying **renderings illustrating the future** of the Richmond Highway after construction physically and virtually with murals with QR codes to websites, social media, and augmented reality experiences.

The Panel discussed the use of digital tools like augmented reality to help the community envision the future buildout of the corridor. These tools could be hosted online to be accessible to a wider range of people than physical means of branding, and could boost interactivity and engagement with the planning process during construction. The Panel acknowledged that the implementation of such technology with placemaking efforts would need to be investigated further.



Lakefront Live music concert at Rio Lakefront, Gaithersburg, MD



A “streeter” on Gibbs Street in Rockville Town Center, Rockville, MD



## Strategic Priority 2: Protecting and fostering growth of small/family-owned businesses that makes the Corridor unique

The Panel recommended:

- **Creating trails and special events** showcasing business clusters (thrift stores, food, music, etc.) with neighborhood days, restaurant weeks, monthly event calendars, and a circulator trolley and bus traveling through and between plazas.
- **Establishing pop-up music venues** with local performers to elevate the vitality of plazas.
- **Facilitating greater flexibility to use outdoor spaces** with temporary permits like streeteries, parklets, beer gardens, etc. as was done during COVID.
- **Adding more green space, playgrounds, and recreational areas** near or within plazas to attract residents to continue frequenting retail.
- **Providing small business experts** offering pro-bono or discounted-rate advisory services on the County permitting process, business marketing/promotion, new space identification, etc.
- **Cultivating lists of prospective tenants and vacant spaces** (retail and residential) like a match-making service but also helping to demonstrate demand to developers during the construction process.

## Guiding Placemaking at New Developments

### Planning & Design of Placemaking

One of the initiatives for the upcoming BRT projects is to catalyze new development on the Richmond Highway Corridor, assembling and consolidation of parcels, as there are new offerings to increase the competitiveness of the area.

According to the Panel, as new projects come into the planning pipeline, and applications are submitted to the County for approvals, placemaking opportunities will have to be well thought out and in tune with the BRT construction process. The Panel recommended the following guidelines for placemaking interventions:

- **Prioritize areas where the people reside** with a concentration of residents, retail and employees within walking distance.
- **Create multiple small scale programmed spaces**, versus large parks and open areas which may seem far away from residential doorsteps and retail storefronts.
- **Create great spaces** that have good shading by day and creative lighting by night with lots of furniture.
- **Create opportunities for public space activation** by partnering businesses and organizations to activate, program, and maintain existing and newly created



Trade Street in Greer, South Carolina which is designed as a flexible-use, shared street that can be closed to vehicles for festivals.

public spaces through a diverse range of placemaking interventions.

- **Design side streets for humans first and cars second** (example - woonerfs/ curb-less sidewalks that encourage slow speed driving) because Richmond Highway is always going to be a high traffic Corridor.
- **Avoid island parks surrounded by cars**, instead connecting parks to retail or a building to increase use by community members.

### Placemaking & Proffers

Proffering is an important component of development projects in Virginia, separate from the design review and coordination process.

Panelists recommended the following guidelines with regards to proffers:

- **Manage expectations** and understand that not all projects that may happen along the Corridor will be large multi-building projects; there might be infill projects or small-scale buildings just three to four stories tall. Development teams with small scale projects are not going to be able to make financial contributions for large scale high quality open spaces. Moreover, asking every project to create park space can lead to low quality, poorly located, and disconnected places.

- **Consider and expand fee-in-lieu policies for open and park space** to prioritize creation of a few great places.
- **Create a cultural master plan** for parks, plazas, arts, and events, using grants and fee-in-lieu funds to deliver.
- **Negotiate retail to be clustered** and include a variety of sizes that serve the needs and price points of chain retail stores and small businesses.
- **For larger projects, ask for discounted rents** for a few smaller retail bays and prioritize local businesses.

### Placemaking Types

At the outset of the placemaking process along the Richmond Highway Corridor, Panelists emphasized the need for placemaking planning and recommended the following approach to placemaking at large:

- **Engage the community** for ideas to ensure interests of varying age groups, diverse ethnic groups and user types are considered while determining the type of placemaking intervention.
- **Utilize and empower local artists** and employ locally when possible.
- **Consider places of importance** that would benefit from additional placemaking efforts, including historical markers in the area.

The Panel recommended the following placemaking intervention types be implemented where appropriate along the Corridor:

#### 1. Murals

The Panel asserted that more murals along the corridor would serve as visual elements to enhance aesthetics, contribute to increased visibility and vibrancy, and act as a landmark that would aid in wayfinding for the benefit of residents and visitors. The Panel discussed three different types of murals and the impact that each would have on the surrounding community:

- A **“Community History” Mural** to tell the history of the nearby communities
- A **“Place Identifier” Mural** to serve as a landmark and distinguish the place as distinct in some way
- A **Mural Program**, a cohesive series of murals, including “landscape murals,” throughout the Corridor painted by a world-renowned artist to attract visitors - the Panel identified that Fairfax County has a trusted partner in SFDC to steward this work forward.

CAROL M. HIGHSMITH'S AMERICA, THE  
GEORGE F. LANDECKER COLLECTION,  
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



African American Culture and Heritage mural in the Anacostia neighborhood of Washington, DC





Pop-up demonstration station for a small business in New York City by Street Lab



Pop-up reading room in New York City by Street Lab



Pop-up obstacle course in New York City by Street Lab



Pop-up communal table in New York City by Street Lab



Pop-up community engagement station in New York City by Street Lab



Pop-up nature exhibit station in New York City by Street Lab



## 2. Fairgrounds

Fairgrounds, broadly speaking, are community gathering spaces that can accommodate activities like farmer's markets, festivals, and outdoor kitchens. Fairgrounds help to create a destination place, and with regular programming opportunities they attract local residents as well as visitors. These gathering places don't require much maintenance or overhead as they are activated only during an event.

The Panelists shared as a similar local example from the DMV area: the Perch Putt, an upbeat destination at The Perch, Capital One Center in Tysons, Virginia. In a "fun-for-everyone" partylike environment, Perch Putt offers 18-hole miniature rooftop golf course, with buses occupied by restaurants offering seasonal fare and a variety of beverages. Such outdoor gathering spaces would be tremendous assets along the Richmond Highway Corridor for restaurants and eateries that may not be getting the foot traffic they need to get noticed, or are whose business is suffering during the BRT construction phase.



The Perch Putt at Capital One Center in Tysons, Virginia.



A fairground with outdoor dining furniture, outdoor kitchen or pop-up eatery and art murals for the Wyncarib Grand Opening at Gro Wynwood in Miami, Florida.



### 3. Exterior Gathering

Exterior gathering locations provide opportunity for informal, programmed or unprogrammed gathering. They can add texture and visual interest to otherwise flat and monotonous landscapes. Some examples suggested by the Panel are:

- i. Architectural follies: sculptural art pieces that often resemble exaggerated and creative structures and provide shelter or places to sit



Outdoor seats and art sculpture at Taikoo Shing Road Park in Hong Kong



Bench at Castle Peak Bay Waterfront Promenade in Hong Kong.



An architectural folly in Parc de la Vilette in Paris, France.



"Blueprints," a steel structure at Addison Circle in Addison, TX



Play structure at Cripplegate Park in Worcestershire, UK



- ii. Large installations for youth and adults: sculptural pieces that draw people to them and constituent public spaces



The Cloud Gate sculpture in Millennium Park, Chicago, IL

JAMIE MCCAFFREY



Students at the "Beyond Limits" exhibition, 2009, Chatsworth House, Derbyshire, UK

USER KWTEXTOR ON WIKIMEDIA



Lobster Sculpture by Tony Woodward at Burnie Park, Tasmania, Australia

GARY HOUSTON



National Gallery of Art Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC

USER M.V. JANTZEN ON FLICKR

- iii. Parklets: temporary or permanent defined areas that offer seating or relaxation space



Huntington Drive Parklet designed by Shared Spaces Landscape Architecture & Living Streets LA in the El Sereno neighborhood of Los Angeles, CA

USER LADOT PEOPLE ST ON FLICKR

- iv. Arboretum/tree grove: opportunities to add some greenery or canopy cover to public spaces while acting as a nursery for young trees



The Lincoln Center Bosque, New York City, NY

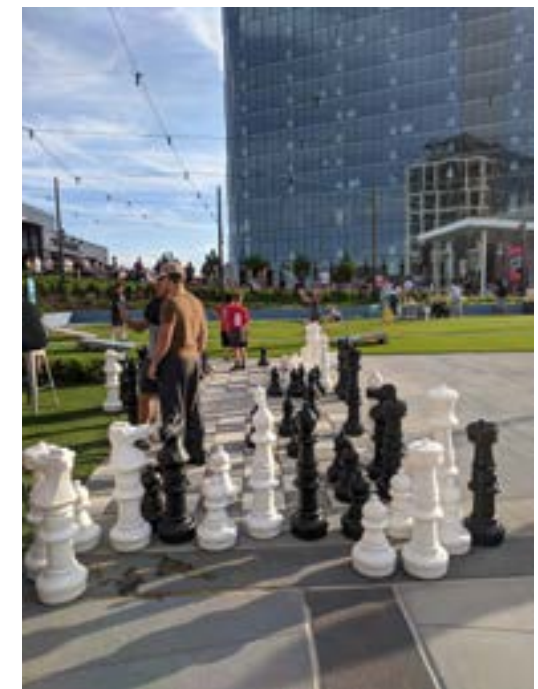
DEERROOT

- v. Activated activity spaces: gathering spaces such as an amphitheater that offer activities like performances, mini golf, skating, etc.



Skate Park that accommodates skateboards, inline skates, and BMX bikes in Gaithersburg, MD

CITY OF GAITHERSBURG, MD



Giant Chess Set at The Perch, Tysons, VA

ULI PANEL



#### 4. “Bread Crumb” Kiosk

Kiosks can provide both information and serve as a landmark or wayfinding element. Residents can get information on events or public meetings while visitors can explore local food and retail options. These kiosks can be low- or high-tech, depending on the purpose they intend to serve and the context to which they belong. The Panel emphasized positive aspects of the kiosks: they act as a

beacon and can help identify a place; they operate as trails by directing visitors to local eateries, shopping, or natural trails; and they facilitate connections within each CBC and to adjacent CBCs through the information they provide.

#### 5. Creative Center

Giving the community a central location to gather and explore creative opportunities is a benefit to artists and other creative

entrepreneurs. It also provides an opportunity to highlight a community’s cultural identity. The Panelists recommended planning events such as art shows and workshops to highlight the cultural identity of a place, facilitating incubator space for opportunities of growth and education of local small businesses, and conducting public meetings to provide better access to the community to engage with them.



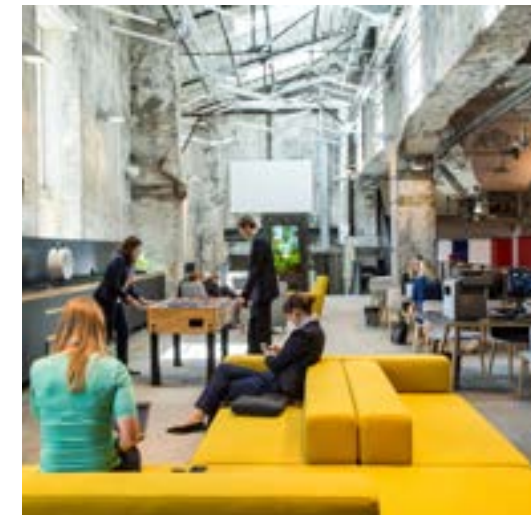
Map kiosk along Southport Avenue, Chicago, IL



Digital kiosk at Canary Wharf, London, UK



The Shop Local Market at The Parc, Tysons, VA



The Tallinn Creative Hub, Tallinn, Estonia



Mosaic Pop-Up Art Show in Mosaic, Fairfax, VA

They recommended that vacant storefronts be considered for temporary use as creative centers besides existing community gathering spaces and activity centers.

### Placemaking Types: Softening Hardscape and Rescaling

The Panel further shared ways to soften the hardscape, such as rescaling the bay in a parking lot. Considering that the Richmond Highway is a 178-foot-wide high traffic corridor, the Panel emphasized the importance of creating more pedestrian-scale experiences along the edges and development parcels. The Panel recommended adding furniture with pedestrian-oriented lighting and using a variety of textures to soften the automobile-oriented landscape. The groundcover materials could be temporary the parklet locations tested before investing in any permanent or high cost initiatives.

### Placemaking Types: Time, Cost, and Impact

The Panelists described these relevant Placemaking Types, ordered by increasing effort, potential cost, and longevity below:

- **Parklets:** Prefab seating, string lights on posts, and artificial turf could easily be installed at a low cost
- **Murals:** Use local artists and available sites like the newly renovated event center at Mount Vernon Crossroads
- **Farmer's Markets:** Wood framed shelters on gravel lots; could incorporate murals
- **Digital Kiosks:** remotely controlled to display different information
- **Cultural Centers:** Cultural centers would require intentional siting, but would be tremendous boons to the corridor

The Panel indicated that small-scale parklets, where turf can be installed over existing pavement and movable furniture brought in, is low-cost and actionable in the short term. This simple gesture can be used to test out a parklet location before a more costly investment is made. A simple mural by a local artist and a farmer's market where wood framed shelters could be installed on gravel lots with murals at the perimeter to enliven the space would represent a more significant investment, each with greater potential to create neighborhood identifiers and gathering opportunities. A more costly digital kiosk that can be reprogrammed to disseminate information to residents and visitors would serve both residents and visitors. Cultural Centers like arts and recreation centers are high investment, long-term interventions with a more permanent space, require full time staff and provide programming for the community.



Pop-up park in a parking space on George Street, Edinburgh, UK



Farmer's Market at Pike & Rose, North Bethesda, MD



## Site Selection Criteria

### Site Selection Criteria

Based on the four pillars of “Unity Through Connection,” the Panel enlisted the following site selection criteria for new placemaking initiatives within the TAP study area boundary:

#### 1. Historical significance

The Richmond Highway Corridor is a legacy corridor, and it will be important to curate the historic struggle of their community members via placemaking initiatives at strategic locations to celebrate their history.

#### 2. Accessibility and adjacencies

Sites for new placemaking projects along the Corridor will have to be easily accessible by pedestrians and automobiles for visibility and to make them successful in the community. The Panel advises these placemaking sites be chosen in adjacency with uses that generate foot traffic like shops, restaurants, daycare facilities and the like. Adjacencies with such active uses would enhance usership of the new placemaking projects and make them safe to use by the mere presence of passersby in the public realm.

#### 3. Ability to devise a strong marketing story

The Panel identified that although there are a few isolated interventions in the area, the Richmond Highway Corridor

lacks strong unifying elements to market its cultural history and ethnic diversity. Sites with high visibility along the automobile centric Corridor and foot traffic will be ideal to market the Corridor’s assets to residents as well as visitors.

#### 4. Types of ownership (VDOT acquired/commercially/private owned/publicly owned)

Ownership of a property being considered for a placemaking project will influence the ease with which the site can be partially or fully transformed to incorporate a new use. For example, a publicly owned site likely would be more easy than privately owned land to convert into a parklet for community use, and land acquired by VDOT would likely be easier to use for road widening and activations that tie more into the bus route and the vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian network.

#### 5. Prioritize gateway sites

Gateway sites, like those at the crossings to other attractions like Mt. Vernon, or sites at the intersections of streams and creeks that go under the highway, can help contribute to the civic identity of the Corridor. These sites are naturally positioned with high visibility, which means that the future use of these sites would send a message to users of the highway that this is a place that nourishes art and artists, respects and supports its communities, and embraces the natural features of the area.

#### 6. Temporary Sites for Programming

Testing new programming ideas via temporary and low investment placemaking initiatives will be important before establishing more permanent placemaking measures which require higher investments. To test ideas like a pop-up basketball court or food truck plaza, the Panel recommended temporary sites like parts of large unused parking lots in shopping centers, which are abundant along the Richmond Highway Corridor.

### Sites for Placemaking

The Panel recommended the following as potential sites for placemaking interventions within the TAP study area boundary:



Sites for placemaking interventions recommended by the Panel





Recommended location for a Placemaking Intervention at the intersection of Fordson Road and Richmond Highway

## 1. Gum Springs Gateway & Wetlands

Gum Springs is the oldest African-American community in Fairfax County. Tucked away next to the Richmond Highway five miles south of the Beltway, it was founded in 1833 by a former enslaved man, West Ford, and has endured for 186 years despite daunting hurdles. Over its 186 years, Gum Springs has endured slavery, the Civil War, Reconstruction, Jim Crow segregation, and governmental indifference. Despite the odds, its people continue to persevere and succeed. Historical events along with its connectivity to the Richmond Highway Corridor make this an important site for placemaking to commemorate the area's history and authentically engage the Gum Springs community in future planning efforts. The Panel recommended concentrating

placemaking efforts around the intersection of Fordson Road and Richmond Highway, which acts as the primary threshold between the historic Gum Springs community and the corridor under study.

Moreover, as a legacy residential community surrounded by commercial developments like the Gum Springs Shopping Center, Mount Vernon Crossroads Shopping Mall, Walmart, and Costco, the Gum Springs neighborhood is an ideal area to establish new placemaking projects. The Panel identified that humanizing the public realm around these sprawling retail developments would help instill a sense of ownership within the locals who not only have called this area home far longer than the national retailers, but also have insight into what gives this neighborhood its own unique cultural identity – an identity that warrants representation in the public art and activations in its public spaces. The adjacent parking lots serving larger shopping centers would be ideal settings to test different low-cost temporary placemaking measures before implementing permanent placemaking interventions. Early projects at the intersection with Fordson Road could spur additional pilot projects in parking lots along the corridor once the concept is proven to attract people here.



Recommended location for a Placemaking Intervention on the former 7-Eleven site at the intersection of Ladson and Richmond Highway

## 2. VDOT-Acquired Site (Former 7-Eleven)

The former 7-Eleven site at the intersection of Richmond Highway and Ladson Lane is adjacent to the Walmart and Costco. It is in close proximity to the Gum Springs Shopping Center and abundant small businesses, and is surrounded by a variety of residential communities. Having been already acquired by VDOT, having an unused parking lot, and having direct access from the Corridor, make this site ideal for temporary placemaking for testing, and then potentially being transformed into a permanent placemaking project for the community. The value created through placemaking here would help address the dire need for public green space and recreational spaces within the nearby residential communities, especially the Harmony Place Mobile Home Community.



Recommended location for a Placemaking Intervention at the Original Mount Vernon High School

### 3. Original Mount Vernon High School and Recreation Site

The Original Mount Vernon High School is located at the intersection of Richmond Highway and Mohawk Lane. The primary opportunity for placemaking on the surrounding grounds arises from the fact that there is already a robust planning effort underway for the school's renovation and reuse into a resource center for the neighborhood. The property's historic designation and the planned reuse make a compelling case for supporting with special community events like cultural festivals to activate the grounds on the publicly owned parcel. The rear connection to recreational uses poses an opportunity to activate the portion of the site that faces the highway in such a way that it draws people to explore the many other neighborhood amenities it has to offer.



Recommended location for a Placemaking Intervention at the crossing of Dogue Creek

### 4. Bridges/Stream Valleys

The bridges and stream valleys crossing Richmond Highway create opportunities for interim and temporary programming through activation with public art that could lead to more permanent programming with further investigation and placemaking planning. Eventually, parcels like those at the intersection of Buckman Road and the large area by Dogue Creek could support activities consistent with the stormwater control improvement plans incorporated into the Embark Richmond Highway plan, including light recreation and education- or entertainment-based programming that highlights the natural assets already present on the site to accompany the walking trails, educational signs, and other planned features for the facilities. Activating these parcels with eye-catching art and architectural follies

would help tell a story of mitigating the impacts of construction along the Corridor in tandem with mitigating the effects of stormwater runoff, which will only become more relevant with the increase in hardscape



Recommended location for a Placemaking Intervention in the parking lot of Aldi at Russel Road

### 5. Aldi Site

The Aldi store located at the intersection of Russell Road and Richmond Highway Corridor is part of a strip shopping center and surrounded by small businesses and a variety of residential communities. It has direct access from the Corridor. A combination of adjacency to other active uses facilitates significant foot and vehicular traffic around Aldi. Moreover, land is privately owned. These attributes make the parking lot adjoining Aldi ideal for testing out temporary and pop-up placemaking ideas.



Recommended location for a Placemaking Intervention at the Mount Vernon Crossroads shopping center

#### 6. Mount Vernon Crossroads

With the renovation of an event center currently underway in the building south of the main shopping center at Mount Vernon Crossroads and a large parking lot behind the property, this site would be a prime opportunity to create a more neighborhood-focused placemaking intervention. There are even shipping containers already on site that could be repurposed to enhance the public realm. The Panel asserted that this site would be able to play a critical role in providing a safe and comfortable connection from the heart of the Hybla Valley/Gum Springs CBC to the more residential parts of the neighborhood, including the community on Pelican Place, and even host more neighborhood-scale opportunities to engage in shared public space if the parking lot were reconfigured with green space and pedestrian paths.



Recommended location for a Placemaking Intervention at the intersection of Fordson Road and Richmond Highway

#### 7. Residences at North Hill

Located at the intersection of Nightingale Lane and Richmond Highway, the Residences at North Hill are surrounded by a variety of residential communities and are in close proximity to small businesses and two schools. The site is publicly owned, has direct access from the Corridor, and the topography of the open space adjoining the Corridor is ideal to create a public space like an amphitheater. While the buildings are elevated from the sidewalk level and seem disconnected from the Corridor, the sloping public space would connect better with the pedestrians.



Recommended location for a Placemaking Intervention at the intersection of Fordson Road and Richmond Highway

#### 8. Gerry Hyland Government Center

The Gerry Hyland Government Center, formerly known as the South County Government Center, is located at the intersection of Buckman Road and Richmond Highway. It is surrounded by small businesses, a variety of residential communities and directly across from the Original Mount Vernon High School campus. The Panel identified two sites in this zone being acquired by VDOT for staging the construction of the BRT station that would be ideal for short-term placemaking and conveying marketing messages with direct visibility from the Corridor during the phase preceding VDOT's staging process. In the long run, a more permanent placemaking intervention could be made as these sites will be next to the future BRT station and in close proximity to the Government Center.



## Sites for Placemaking

|   | Gum Springs Gateway & Wetlands | VDOT Acquired Site (Former 7-Eleven) | Mount Vernon High School & Recreation Site | Bridges/ Stream Valleys | Aldi Site           | Mount Vernon Crossroads | Residences at North Hill | Gerry Hyland Government Center |
|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|-------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Historical Significance   | x                              |                                      | x  |                         |                     |                         |                          |                                |
| Accessibility & Adjacencies   | x                              | x                                    | x  | x                       | x                   | x                       | x                        | x                              |
| Ability to devise a strong marketing story                            | x                              |                                      | x  |                         |                     | x                       | x                        | x                              |
| Types of Ownership  | Commercial/ Private            | VDOT                                 | Public/ Residential                        | Varies                  | Commercial/ Private | Commercial/ Private     | Public/ Residential      | Public/ Residential            |
| Gateway Site  | x                              |                                      |  | x                       |                     |                         |                          |                                |
| Temporary site for programming with potential to convert to permanent | x                              | x                                    | x  | x                       | x                   | x                       | x                        | x                              |

This table shows the strengths and characteristics of each site identified as ideal locations for Placemaking Interventions within the Study Area

## Visualizing Potential Sites with Placemaking Interventions Along the Corridor

The Panel shared placemaking ideas and sketches for the following three sites during the TAP.



The Residences at North Hill as seen from Richmond Highway

### 1. The Residences at North Hill

The Residences at North Hill development at the intersection of Richmond Highway and Nightingale Hill Lane opened in Summer 2023 and is currently open for leasing. According to the Panel, partly because the property is elevated from the Richmond Highway Corridor level, it fails to address the human scale at the sidewalk level of the Richmond Highway Corridor. Therefore, the Panel proposed supplementing the development with additional buffer landscaping between the property and the Richmond Highway. The Panel observed that the topography is appropriate for a theater to facilitate performances and public gatherings like a movie night or music concert. Currently, however, when standing on this elevated site, all that can be seen is heavy, fast-flowing traffic on Richmond Highway.



ULLI WASHINGTON



ULLI WASHINGTON

Views of open spaces at the Residences at North Hill

The Panel asserted that a space like the amphitheater at Douglass School in Leesburg, VA, could serve as appropriate precedent for a theater built into a sloped topography. At this project, an adaptive reuse of the first African American Secondary School in Loudoun County, architects Beyer Blinder Belle designed community gathering spaces into the topography surrounding the school building. One of these spaces was an amphitheater, hardscape and softscape working cohesively to ensure comfort within the sloped amphitheater space. While the edge of the amphitheater is designed with hard edges to address ADA compliance and facilitate easy use for senior citizens and those with handicaps, the rest of the amphitheater is a grassy lawn where users can spread out with blankets and foldable chairs.

At the newly renovated Douglass School amphitheater, topography, hardscape and softscape work cohesively to ensure comfort within the sloped amphitheater space.



Exercise equipment in the North Hill open space area adjoining the Richmond Highway Corridor

ULI WASHINGTON



The Panel's concept sketch for additional human-scale furnishings and vegetation in the public spaces by the Residences at North Hill

ULI WASHINGTON



The Panel's concept sketch for an outdoor theater and movie screening location

ULI WASHINGTON



## 2. Aldi Shopping Center Site

The Aldi Shopping Center site is located along the intersection of Richmond Highway and Russell Road. The Panelists envisioned a test pop-up park in initial phases of placemaking interventions in the parking lot of the Aldi store. They suggested a series of kiosks or an arbor to define the space, with string lights and painted pavement to add an element of fun. This phase would be protected and more inward facing from the heavy traffic along the Richmond Highway. There could be vendors serving food and beverages, including from rented vehicles. This effort could expand further into a large-scale intervention once the early phases of intervention established the site as a gathering place. The Panel recommended testing out other placemaking ideas like a temporary pop-up basketball court using up a few bays of the parking lot, a temporary playground, and a dog park.

In a later phase, painting the asphalt and bringing in sand to create a pop-up beachscape, like The Beach in Pike & Rose,



(above) Existing view of the Aldi site along the Richmond Highway Corridor  
(below) proposed sketch for its transformation with pop-up uses



The Aldi Shopping Center as seen from Richmond Highway



A pop-up food market next to the Munch Museum in Oslo, Norway.

North Bethesda, Maryland, would create an even more unique experience. Families could sprawl out on picnic blankets and beach chairs under umbrellas, while children enjoy playing with the sand.

If a pop-up dog park idea is successful, the site could eventually support a concept like the Bark Social which replaced The Beach in Pike & Rose mentioned above. Bark Social is a social club for dogs and dog lovers in North Bethesda, Maryland where dog owners can relax, socialize, and enjoy a great beverage in a “block party”-like environment. The club has over 25,000 sq. ft. of space where Bark Rangers patrol and supervise play and cleanup. They also have a climate-controlled clubhouse, equipped with TVs for game days, free wi-fi, a variety of beers on tap, and a retail shop where one can purchase swag, treats, toys and more for the dogs.

Further, the Panel shared an example from a beachfront in Oslo, where arbors placed at intervals demarcated restaurant seating, and food vendors rented stationary buses from which they sold their food. Fish nets were spread out over wires with colorful flags to accentuate the overhead space, and gravel and planks were used to cover the ground. According to the Panel, overhead investment in such a retail space would be on the lower end. The Panel emphasized that such ideas should be tested in the community while still maintaining the existing retail frontage along Richmond Highway.



ULI WASHINGTON

Concept sketch of the Aldi Site with showing proposed configuration



JEFF HITCHCOCK

Berczy Park Dog Fountain, Toronto, Ontario



POLARISEYEVINE

Rooftop dog park in a luxury apartment building in Washington, DC



### 3. Gerry Hyland Government Center

The Panel identified two parcels adjacent to the Gerry Hyland Government Center: a parking lot for the Buckman Road KinderCare west of the Government Center's parking lot and an empty lot at the intersection of Richmond Highway and Mohawk Lane. The Panel saw tremendous opportunity in these sites for implementing a placemaking intervention primarily because they have been acquired by VDOT, they are next to a future BRT station, and they are in very close proximity to the Government Center. VDOT plans on using these sites for staging for the construction of the BRT station, and construction is anticipated to start in 2026. However, considering the project will be phased, the Panel recommended ideas for the phase preceding VDOT's staging process.

The parking lot sandwiched between the intersection of Richmond Highway and Buckman Road was formerly used by a Mexican eatery. The building was demolished and the land has been acquired by VDOT. The Government Center has a well-used day care center adjoining this site that generates foot traffic. Thus, the Panel recommended using the parking lot for community gardening. The Panel cited a similar example in downtown Detroit, where a temporary community garden is set up over an empty parking lot using inexpensive portable corrugated metal planters. These planters, filled with 18 inches of soil, grow produce suitable for consumption by the population of the local neighborhood. Local artists put up whimsical art expressions to enhance the



Aerial map of the South County Government Center site with a conceptual sketch showing proposed tree groves

ULI WASHINGTON

identity of the intervention. Existing trees could be preserved, and the concrete slab remaining from the knocked down building could be used for picnic tables and chairs while gardening. The leftover electrical and plumbing connections from the former building could even be used for gardening.



The parking lot between the intersection of Richmond Highway and Buckman Road, formerly used by a Mexican eatery.

GOOGLE MAPS



Conceptual sketch of a community garden at the former site of the Mexican eatery adjoining the Buckman Road KinderCare building

ULI WASHINGTON



On the empty lot at the intersection of Richmond Highway and Mohawk Lane, the panelists recommend an urban arboretum. There is a severe shortage of green cover along the Richmond Highway Corridor. According to Fairfax County's Department of Urban Forestry, coverage along the Corridor currently is 17% to 22%, while the rest of the County has coverage between 40% to 50%. This arboretum could be a low-cost investment to increase tree canopy coverage along Richmond Highway. The Panel estimated the cost at about \$25,000 for 50-60 trees, the funds for which could be acquired through a community improvement grant. On Earth Day, the community could even adopt the idea of "plant a tree, own a tree, take care of a tree" and plant trees all along the Richmond Highway Corridor. Under the trees, benches or seats could be set up for people to enjoy leisure time, especially construction workers who would be working on the upcoming BRT project. If this project is implemented soon, then by the time construction is completed along Richmond Highway corridor, the trees will be healthy, robust, and big enough to provide ample shade and definition to public spaces and sidewalks anywhere on the corridor.



The Lincoln Center Bosque, New York City, NY



Looking north-east at the proposed site for an urban arboretum at the intersection of Richmond Highway and Mohawk Lane



Concept Sketch of an urban arboretum in the lot on the corner of Mohawk Lane



## Governance and Management

According to the Panel, “work does not end where placemaking begins.” Along with good placemaking ideas, it is critical to have a robust program for place management to ensure the continued dignity and soundness of the spaces and installations implemented as part of a corridor-wide placemaking effort. The Panel recommended the establishment of a place management organization to implement the following actions for place management:

“

Work does not end where  
placemaking begins.”

—ULI PANEL

1. **Help plan projects and coordinate implementation among the stakeholder parties.** Planning of placemaking projects and implementation should be a coordinated effort with participation from a variety of stakeholders like community members, property owners, businesses, County government, and others, to ensure a wide variety of interests are addressed, and to set up the project for success in the community.

INTERNATIONAL DOWNTOWNS ASSOCIATION - PROFESSIONAL DOMAINS 2017)



2. **Promote and communicate on a routine basis.** Creating awareness of each placemaking project, promoting its use by frequent programming and marketing of events, and using appropriate communication tools like banners, flyers, social media, etc. would be important to make the project a success. The Panel encourages a deeper exploration of the best physical and digital modes of transmitting information to the end users to this end.
3. **Manage spaces closely, especially with regard to maintenance and security.** Successful placemaking projects need to make a good first impressions on users and need to make people feel comfortable. Comfort includes

perceptions about safety, cleanliness, and availability of spaces to sit. Thus, it would be important to create routines for regular trash removal and security presence to make it a successful project in the community. The Panel observed concerns from the communities in the study area around vandalism and other undesirable results; managing with a close eye on the appropriate use of public space behind the scenes will enable authentic engagement with these newly created places.

4. **Monitor and make necessary adjustments depending on project goals and usage**

Testing out placemaking ideas and programs, monitoring participation by various user types, tracking what activities interest a variety of demographics and making necessary adjustments will be important in making these placemaking initiatives a success in the communities in the study area.

The Panel further recommended that the Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation take on the role of the place management organization for Placemaking interventions along this corridor, and recommended the following key responsibilities the organization could take on:

1. **Coordinate communications from VDOT and BRT regarding upcoming construction actions.** It will be important to inform various stakeholders in the community during the widening of the Richmond Highway and construction of the BRT process. According to the Panel, SFDC could take the lead role in coordinating with VDOT and BRT to keep the community informed about start dates, timelines, temporary road closures and traffic route changes, and other changes.
2. **Coordinate implementation of placemaking projects with County offices.** SFDC tracks all major developments in the Richmond Highway Corridor. The TAP site area is within the nine-mile stretch of Richmond Highway

covered by SFDC and designated as a Community Revitalization District (CRD). This allows for expedited land-use and zoning review. Thus, SFDC could take the lead in coordinating implementation of placemaking projects with the appropriate Fairfax County offices.

3. **Coordinate small business outreach.** During the construction process, SFDC could be the ombudsman with the construction firm to minimize obstruction to small businesses who will be impacted. SFDC could help provide signage and other communication systems to let customers know how to access these businesses during construction, act as matchmaker for businesses to be relocated, and facilitate temporary or permanent sites to continue business operations.
4. **Coordinate promotional events with Celebrate Fairfax.** Celebrate Fairfax is a 501c3 nonprofit community building organization for Fairfax County. Established in 1981, their vision is “connecting and celebrating

our community” and their mission is to “develop and support community experiences that bring people together and create a sense of belonging.” They work in partnership by collaborating with the stakeholders in the community and their work is multi-layered focusing on placemaking, events and special initiatives. SFDC would benefit by promoting new placemaking projects along the Richmond Highway Corridor with the help of Celebrate Fairfax to identify the appropriate scale and cultural components of events and artistic representations of the historical and present demographic makeup of the nearby communities.

5. **Actively manage placemaking projects.** SFDC’s Marketing, Community, Appearance, Planning and Transportation (MCAPT) Committee aids with promoting the public image of the Richmond Highway Corridor. This committee could potentially take the lead on making placemaking projects clean and secure for users.



---

# Conclusion

The Panel envisioned the Richmond Highway Corridor revitalization based on two modalities:

**The “Art-Centric Corridor”** experienced as an observer from an automobile while driving on the Richmond Highway Corridor. Through this lens, they recommended utilizing art in the form of murals, signage, arbors, and other highly visible elements to enhance the identity, marketing and branding of the diverse neighborhoods scattered along the 7.5 mile stretch of Richmond Highway.

**The local experience of the neighborhood** as residents and visitors arriving at and departing from the upcoming nine BRT stations. The Panel recommended that each of the nine BRT stops should be designed as different gateway communities with diverse offerings, each enabling opportunities for living, working, and social gathering.

The Panel’s specific recommendations for planning and designing placemaking interventions along the Richmond Highway Corridor based on near-term, mid-term and long-term timelines include:

## Near-term recommendations

1. **Plant trees now** to soften the landscape along the Richmond Highway Corridor which currently has a severe shortage of green cover. Trees planted in arbors will mature into healthy street trees by the time construction of the new sidewalks begins.

2. **Involve stakeholder communities** in determining placemaking sites and gestures.

3. **Mitigate impacts from the construction process** on the community proactively.

### Priority 1: Keep the Corridor competitive during the construction and disruption

- Identify a **community liaison** to help coordinate access issues with VDOT, Fairfax County and the Contractor.
- Support businesses with **super-graphic signage** that can be re-used/ re-located as construction phases shift – directional signage identifying points of access and marketing signage promoting business clusters and retail offerings.
- Inspire and **beautify key entrances** to shopping plazas to elevate retail corridor branding with – tree planters and inflatables, pop-up murals on wood-framed walls and totems, artistic wraps over fencing, jersey barriers and traffic cans and cones.
- Create **“roving” outreach kiosks/ visitors centers** with coffee and music promoting the BRT project and local businesses and events.
- Deploy **renderings illustrating the future** of the Richmond Highway after construction physically and virtually with – murals with QR codes to websites, social media, and AR experiences.

### Priority 2: Protect and foster growth of small/family-owned businesses that make the Corridor unique

- **Create trails and special events** showcasing business clusters (thrift stores, food, music, etc.) with – neighborhood days, restaurant weeks, monthly event calendars, circulator trolley and bus traveling through and between plazas.
- **Establish pop-up music venues** with local performers to elevate vitality of plazas.
- **Facilitate greater flexibility to use outdoor spaces** with temporary permits like – streeteries, parklets, beer gardens, etc. like during COVID.
- **Add more green space, playgrounds, and recreational areas** near or within plazas to attract residents to continue frequenting retail.
- **Provide small business experts** that can provide pro-bono or discounted-rate advisory on County permitting process, business marketing/ promotion, new space identification, etc.
- **Cultivate lists of prospective tenants and vacant spaces** (retail and residential) like – match-making service but also helps demonstrate demand to developers during the construction process.



## Mid-term recommendations

### 4. Planning and Design of Placemaking at New Developments

- **Prioritize areas where the people reside** with a concentration of residents, retail, and employees within walking distance.
- **Create multiple small scale programmed spaces**, versus large parks and open areas which may seem far away from residential doorsteps and retail storefronts.
- **Create great spaces** that have good shading by day and creative lighting by night with lots of furniture.
- **Give ownership of public space to businesses** to activate, program and maintain it.
- **Design side-streets for humans first and cars second** (example - woonerfs/curbless sidewalks that encourage slow speed driving) because the Richmond Highway is always going to be a high traffic moving Corridor.
- **Avoid island parks surrounded by cars**, and instead connecting that park to retail or a building to increase use by community members.

### 5. Placemaking and Proffers at New Developments

- **Manage expectations** – and educate the community about the value

of infill projects and small-scale buildings with small-scale and yet quality open spaces.

- **Consider and expand fee-in-lieu policies for open and park space** to prioritize creation of a few great places.
- **Create a cultural master plan** for parks, plazas, arts, and events, and deploy fee-in-lieu funds or other grant sources to deliver them (including land acquisition).
- **Negotiate retail to be clustered** and include a variety of sizes that serve the needs and price points of chain retail stores and small businesses.
- **Ask for discounted rents for larger projects** for a few smaller retail bays and prioritize local businesses.

### 6. Placemaking Types at New Developments

- **Engage the community** for ideas to ensure interests of varying age groups, diverse ethnic groups and user types are considered while determining the type of placemaking intervention.
- **Utilize and empower local artists** and employ locally when possible.
- **Consider places of importance** that would benefit from additional placemaking efforts, including historical markers in the area

- **Implement a variety of placemaking interventions** in the form of murals, fairgrounds, exterior gathering spaces, “bread crumb” kiosks and creative centers.

### 7. Site Selection Criteria for New Developments

Embrace “Unity through Connection” to guide the site selection process: activate sites that can **highlight a local identity, promote communication and connection, highlight history, and provide economic support for small businesses**. Balance historical significance, site access and accessibility, potential for a narrative, ownership type, urban context, and appropriate phasing of potential interventions to select further sites.

## Long-term recommendations

### 8. Manage Placemaking Sites and Support Their Success

- **Appoint SFDC as the place management organization for the corridor.**
- **Help plan the projects and coordinate implementation** among the various stakeholder parties.
- **Promote and communicate on a routine basis** with frequent programming to create awareness and of the placemaking project and attract residents and visitors.

- **Manage placemaking site closely**, especially maintenance and security to ensure comfort and safety for its users.
- **Monitor and make necessary adjustments** depending on project goals and usage after testing placemaking ideas in the community with temporary and low investment initiatives.

The Panel expressed great appreciation for the opportunity to study the conditions along the Richmond Highway Corridor, develop their holistic recommendations, and present their ideas to aid placemaking efforts within the Corridor.



---

## APPENDIX: List of Stakeholders

**Alinah Kargar**, Arcadia Center

**Allen Brooks**, Building Momentum

**Anna Ricklin**, Fairfax County Health  
Department

**Anthony Ganguzza**, Burke & Herbert

**Barbara Byron**, Fairfax County Board of  
Supervisors

**Carlos Heard**, BF Saul & Co.

**Christina Cisneros**, Federal Realty

**C.J. Cross**, Chalkboard Restaurants

**Supervisor Dan Storck**, Mount Vernon  
District, Fairfax County Board of  
Supervisors

**Elisabeth Lardner**, FCRHA

**Ellen Young**, Belle View Condo Association

**Graham Owen**, Fairfax County DPD

**Heather Johnson**, Woodlawn & Pope-  
Leighey House

**Holly Dougherty**, Mount Vernon Springfield  
Chamber of Commerce

**Ingo Christ**, BGB Analytik

**Ivana Escobar**, United Community

**Jack Perkins**, Elm Street Development

**Josh Shumaker**, Council of State and  
Community Development Agencies

**Juan Pablo Echeverria**, Arcadia Center

**Katherine Ward**, Mount Vernon Council of  
Civic Associations

**Leila Gordon**, Reston Community Center

**Marianela Funes**, Tenants and Workers  
United

**Mark Viani**, Bean Kinney

**Marty Sanchez Lowery**, Mount Zephyr  
Civic Association

**Mary Paden**, South County Task Force

**Michael Spotts**, Habitat for Humanity

**Queenie Cox**, Gum Springs Homeowners  
Organization

**Rachel Flynn**, Fairfax County

**Ricky Foley**, Fairfax County Department of  
Transportation

**Supervisor Rodney Lusk**, Franconia  
District, Fairfax County Board of  
Supervisors

**Sandy Paik**, Tower Companies

**Scott Sizer**, Fairfax County

**Sonya Breehey**, Coalition for Smarter  
Growth

**Stacey Shaw**, Kettler

**Stephen Keat**, Economic Advisory  
Committee/SFDC

**Stephen Tarditi**, Fairfax County Economic  
Development Authority

**Tammy Mannarino**, Fairfax County History  
Commission

**Tracy Strunk**, Fairfax County Department  
of Planning and Development

**Vanessa Aguayo**, Fairfax County  
Department of Transportation





## About the Panel



**Nkosi Yearwood**  
Community Planner  
Montgomery County  
Planning Department  
Wheaton, Maryland

Nkosi Yearwood is a community planner with the Montgomery County Planning

Department. He has developed and led comprehensive transit-oriented and mixed-use infill plans for the Shady Grove and North Bethesda (White Flint) areas, including the 2010 White Flint, 2018 White Flint 2 Sector Plans and the 2021 Shady Grove Sector Plan. He is currently the project manager for University Boulevard Corridor Plan. Nkosi has also created zoning standards for transit station areas and managed design review for private and public development, including Pike & Rose in North Bethesda and Shady Grove Station Westside (Montgomery County Service Park redevelopment). His education includes a BA in Architectural History from the University of Maryland, College Park, and an MS in Architecture from the University of Cincinnati. He is a resident of the City of Hyattsville; a member of Lambda Alpha International (George Washington Chapter); a 2014 graduate of the Urban Land Institute (ULI) Washington Regional Land Use Institute; a member of ULI Washington's NEXT cohort; and is a Board member of Green Spaces DC.



**Nastasia Buckley**  
Design Manager  
Marriott International  
Washington, DC

Nastasia is a licensed architect and owner's representative with

five years of experience in both the private and education sector.

As an architect, Nastasia's body of work includes both national and international projects. Her experience ranges from medium-sized master-planning for community/public clients to various mixed-use developments, which include residential and retail programming. Of repute, Nastasia has contributed as a lauded collaborator and architect on major multifamily projects totaling more than 1200 units and more than 1 million SF.

As an owner's representative/project manager, Nastasia leverages her technical experience and her project management acumen to provide leadership for a range of education projects, such as the renovation of a historic research library and the creation of a student lounge in the historic Healy Hall on Georgetown's campus. Nastasia has shown herself to be particularly skillful in the management of historic preservation and adaptive reuse projects, which often have unforeseen conditions that push the limits of the original project scope, budget, and schedule.

As a general trait, Nastasia enjoys the entire

process of project delivery, from pre-development to project closeout. As such, Nastasia consistently seeks to stay engaged with new developments in real estate, design, and construction to be a competent collaborator at all stages of the project life cycle.

As a Jamaican-American, Nastasia believes in the capacity of real estate development to empower people and communities towards brighter and equitable futures. Nastasia views her role in the industry as one of stewardship, where she supports the inclusion of a diverse group of community members in the development of the built environment that impacts them. As such, Nastasia constantly seeks to engage all stakeholders and end-users at the appropriate phases while still leveraging her technical skills, construction knowledge, and analytical competences. By seeking to serve the people most impacted by built projects at every stage, Nastasia aspires to bring thoughtful and community-conscious projects to true fruition.

Nastasia also dedicates her time to the mentorship of young professionals, both through helping students transition from school to the workforce and through study support for the completion of the architectural registration examinations. Nastasia is devoted to empowering young people to make a difference and to be impactful in the AEC industry, regardless of age, gender, and/or background.

Nastasia is currently transitioning into roles



in real estate development. She hopes to leverage her technical and managerial competencies, as well as her natural proclivity towards advocacy, to make a larger impact in the DMV and surrounding communities.



**Connie Fan**  
President  
LSG Landscape  
Architecture  
Washington, DC

Ms. Fan joined LSG in 1996 and is the president of the firm.

A Fellow with the

American Society of Landscape Architects, she was trained both in architecture and landscape architecture. Her design work focuses on place making that reflects the cultural, environmental, and architectural surroundings for the land. A frequent recipient of ASLA awards, Ms. Fan's designs create beautiful, memorable places, as well as enhancing real estate value. Her work includes a wide variety of projects ranging from commercial, institutional, and planning projects to public streetscape revitalization. She brings energy and enthusiasm to all phases of every project, a dedicated approach with extensive benefits to the client. Ms. Fan is a LEED Accredited Professional with a focus on sustainable site initiatives and smart growth. She leads sustainable design efforts at LSG.

Outside of the office, she is actively involved with the Urban Land Institute, Fairfax County Development Process Review Committee,

McLean Planning and Zoning Committee, McLean Planning Committee American Society of Landscape Architects and AIA National Design for Aging and AIA DC.



**Maria Lashinger**  
Principal  
Grove Slade  
Fairfax, VA

Maria Lashinger is a Principal at Grove Slade Associates, Inc. leading the firm's work in Fairfax

County and the surrounding towns and cities. She is a licensed Professional Engineer in Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia and is a Professional Traffic Operations Engineer. She has 20 years of experience providing transportation engineering and planning services on projects that have shaped the region. Her skills conducting transportation impact studies, parking analyses, site access and circulation evaluations have contributed to successful retail, office, residential, and mixed-use developments as well as numerous public facilities in the County.

Maria is an advocate for multimodal transportation and works to accommodate all modes of travel with a focus on providing safe bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. At Grove Slade, Maria has grown in her career from a transportation engineer to a project manager and is now one of the owners of the firm. She leads a team of engineers, designers, and planners in the Fairfax office

working on projects throughout the County.

Maria earned her bachelor's degree from The Pennsylvania State University and a master's degree from the University of San Francisco. She is a member of ULI, ITE, and NAIOP and is a volunteer with Think Big for Kids. She currently resides in Stone Ridge, Virginia with her family.



**Ellen McCarthy**  
Faculty of Urban &  
Regional Planning  
program  
Georgetown  
University  
Washington, DC

Ms. McCarthy has over forty-five years of

experience in the city planning field. She currently teaches in the graduate Urban Planning Program at Georgetown University. As a Principal with The Urban Partnership, LLC, she consults with a variety of private development companies and non-profit organizations on land use, zoning, affordable housing and economic development issues.

Previously, she worked for several DC law firms, consulting with developers, large institutions, homeowners and nonprofits regarding planning and land use issues. Prior to her work with legal clients, she served as Director of the DC Office of Planning (OP), overseeing the completion of the first new Comprehensive Plan for the District of Columbia in more than 20 years, which was unanimously adopted by the City Council. She also revamped the zoning and historic

preservation operations of the office, and represented the Mayor on the National Capital Planning Commission.

Prior to that position, as Deputy Director of OP for Development Review, Historic Preservation and Neighborhood Planning, she oversaw the complete rezoning of the SE/SW Waterfront; negotiated zoning approvals for new campus plans for virtually all of DC universities and represented the Office of Planning's position to the Zoning Commission and Board of Zoning Adjustment on a host of major projects.

Ms. McCarthy holds a Master's Degree in City Planning from Harvard University. She graduated Phi Beta Kappa with High Honors from the University of Maryland.

She is an active member of the Urban Land Institute (currently co-chairing the DC Placemaking Initiative), the Advisory Council for the DC Office of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), the Steering Committee of Ward 3 Vision, a group which advocates for compact, walkable neighborhoods through redevelopment of Upper Northwest DC, and has served on the boards of numerous planning, preservation and affordable housing entities. She has been recognized with awards from a variety of organizations, including the National Capital Area Chapter of the American Planning Association, Partners for Livable Communities, Fannie Mae and Georgetown University.



**Anna McCorvey**  
Senior Equitable  
Development  
Manager  
The River East  
Design Center  
Washington, DC

Anna McCorvey is a practicing architect in

Washington, DC whose initial interest in architecture was spiked at an early age through public housing. At the early age of 5 she noticed the subtle and sometimes flagrant differences between the housing and schools from one part of town to the next. Her desire to understand these differences and address them led her to a Bachelor of Architecture degree from Howard University and a Master of City Planning degree from the University of California Berkeley with a housing and community development emphasis. Upon graduating, she spent 6 years working on affordable and low-income housing developments, schools, day care facilities and recreation centers, many of which were in some of DC's most underserved communities. With a strengthened commitment to design equity in underserved communities, she founded The River East Design Center (REDC) in 2018. As a nonprofit community design center, REDC is a resource to communities that desire to learn more about architecture and planning and be active in development projects in their neighborhoods.

After designing a mobile retail kiosk for one of the 11th Street Bridge Park's small business initiatives, Anna was invited to join the 11th

Street Bridge Park team as their Senior Equitable Development. In this role, Anna oversees a series of programs designed to prevent displacement in communities surrounding the park by equipping residents and businesses to thrive in future economic changes.

Anna is a resident of DC's Anacostia neighborhood and enjoys short runs along the Anacostia River, traveling anywhere she has never been and Sunday night funk music at JoJo's Restaurant.



**Rob Meeks**  
Senior Vice President  
Segall Group  
McLean, VA  
Prior to joining Segall Group and his own consulting company, 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 2.5 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.

He 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 and landlords. 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.



### **Shane Pomajambo**

**Owner  
Art Whino  
Great Falls, VA**

Born and raised in Queens, NY, Shane Pomajambo has been an avid art

collector for over twenty years and gallery owner since 2007. He opened Art Whino seven years ago bringing the much-needed Lowbrow voice to the nation's capital. With over 140 curated exhibits centered on this art movement, the gallery ranks among the top five galleries for lowbrow artists today and continually pushes to bring attention to this art form that Pomajambo is so passionate in sharing with the rest of the world. Large group exhibits such as the G40 Art Summit, which has become a yearly show bringing in artists from around the world to Washington DC for a month-long event, increase awareness of the gallery and its mission. Projects such as The Richmond Mural Project have played an integral role in gaining momentum for mural art world in the US, with one of the largest concentration of

murals in the nation. Pomajambo's publications, "Art Whino Mag" and the books "Newbrow: 50 Contemporary Artists" bring new brow and mural art to the public at large in an accessible printed format.

In the spring of 2016 Shane Pomajambo will release the "Art of the Mural", a four-part book focusing on 50 of the top muralists worldwide in each edition. With 200 muralists in the series, it will be the all-encompassing book focusing on Murals with a special Foreword and 4-part essay by the critically acclaimed New York Art Critic Carlo McCormick. In 2013, Shane Pomajambo created his nonprofit Blind Whino SW Arts Club to motivate and inspire art throughout DC, providing the space as an art beacon and art cultivator. Through the efforts of all these projects, Pomajambo has achieved many honors such as being named Best of DC by the City Paper eight years in a row and has created a social media following over 250,000 strong.



### **Steven Segerlin** **Head of Commercial Development Amtrak Washington, DC**

Steven Segerlin is a city planner and real estate developer specializing in design

and financing strategies for large, complex, mixed-use projects and portfolios. He is a licensed urban planner & transport planner, and holds a B.S. in Building Science (Real

Estate Development) and M.B.A. with concentration in finance from Auburn University.

Steven's projects support state and local governments and transit authorities to create inclusive, connected, livable cities that are financially & environmentally sustainable. This includes the design and delivery of real estate development programs focused on economic development and housing production/affordability, urban revitalization, urban infill and densification, entertainment, placemaking and amenities, historic preservation, and transit-oriented development (TOD).

His client experience includes real estate developers, local governments in the United States & worldwide, Federal Transit & Railroad Administrations, and the World Bank. For these clients, Steven prepared land use, transport, and real estate development plans to guide the smart growth of large cities from New York and Seattle to Bogota and Paris. These endeavors required making pitches to mayors, legislative councils, and department directors as well as presentations to community organizations and the public to coordinate project entitlements and financing plans.





## **Kaushambi Shah**

Freelance Urban  
Designer & Report  
Writer  
Rockville, MD

Kaushambi Shah is an  
Urban Designer/  
Planner with a  
background in

Architecture. She has 12 years of experience in the private sector, including design and planning in the domestic as well as international realm. Besides working on projects in U.S. cities like Philadelphia, Washington, DC, Baltimore, Boston, Fairfax, and smaller towns in New York, she has worked on projects in India, China, Saudi Arabia, and Abu Dhabi. Her project experiences range from design of entertainment cities, mixed use town centers, campus plans and redevelopment, resort communities, residential communities, waterfront developments and transit oriented development.

She has a Bachelor's in Architecture from the University of Mumbai, India and a Masters in Urban Design from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. She has served as a TAP report writer for multiple ULI Washington TAPs, including: "Research Boulevard: It's Not an Office Park!," "What's Next for Westfields?," "Creating an Eastern Gateway in Falls Church," "The Exchange: Transforming the Virtual Circle and Reconnecting the Neighborhoods," "Rockville Town Center: Strengthening Its Vitality" and "Westphalia: Reimagining Opportunity, Break the Cycle!".