

# ULI Washington Land Use Leadership Institute

mini Technical Assistance Panel (mTAP)

## Woodlawn CBC



### PANEL FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Mini Technical Assistance Panels (mTAPs)

ULI Washington's Regional Land Use Leadership Institute is a 9-month academy designed to raise awareness and strengthen collaboration among real estate industry leaders from all sectors, in order to better prepare them to tackle the region's complex land use issues. The thirty selected participants are experienced professionals from the region's leading public agencies, institutions, nonprofits and private-sector real estate/land use firms. Through a mixture of lectures, tours and activities, participants engage and collaborate with other real estate professionals on the most complex land use challenges that confront the region.

The culminating exercise for the Leadership Institute was a series of mini-Technical Assistance Panels (mTAPs), where teams of Leadership Institute participants worked over a two-month period to address a particular local land use challenge. The mTAPs are modeled off of the more-extensive Technical Assistance Panel program that ULI Washington offers on an ongoing basis (see [ULI Washington's TAP website](#)). ULI Washington has partnered with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments to identify priority mTAP sites that embody key elements of the vision outlined in the Region Forward plan and that can serve as models for other communities. The mTAPs were provided free of charge to local sponsors.

This document outlines the panel's findings and recommendations on how the sponsoring city or county can achieve local planning goals while also making the greatest regional contribution toward sustainable and equitable development. The panels also created a PowerPoint presentation that accompanies this outline.

## Woodlawn CBC

### Panelists

Jay Klug, JBG Rosenfeld  
Ana Kostova, US Bank  
Soo Lee-Cho, Miller, Miller & Canby  
Matthew Steenhoek, PN Hoffman & Associates  
Henry White, General Dynamics  
David Zaidain, National Capital Planning Commission

### Assignment

*Regional Benefit:* Adapting transit-oriented development for aging suburban commercial corridors to enhance economic competitiveness.

*Region Forward Goal:* We seek transit-oriented and mixed-use communities emerging in Regional Activity Centers that will capture new employment and household growth.

#### *Problem Statement:*

While the region has experience creating TOD in urban contexts, suburban TOD presents distinct challenges. The Woodlawn Community Business Center (CBC) lies along Richmond Highway (Route 1) in Fairfax County, just north of Fort Belvoir. Woodlawn is one of six discrete CBCs along Route 1 that make up the Richmond Highway Commercial Revitalization District. Route 1 serves both as a major north-south travel route and also as the Main Street for surrounding neighborhoods. Richmond Highway is served by local and regional bus lines, and the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation is considering the feasibility of bus rapid transit and light rail along the corridor. There are two major road improvement projects under way in the vicinity of Woodlawn that may increase pressure for the area to redevelop: the widening of Route 1 to six lanes immediately south of Woodlawn and the construction of Mulligan Road, an east-west connector between Route 1 and Telegraph Road.

With the potential for new transit investments, as well as an influx of approximately 16,000 additional civilian and military workers at Fort Belvoir due to the BRAC plan, Fairfax County hopes to raise the profile of the Woodlawn CBC. However, the CBC's low density development pattern, large amount of surface parking, small parcel sizes, and environmental constraints all hinder its ability to capitalize on these opportunities. The County seeks input on options for improving the safety, attractiveness, and vitality of the Woodlawn CBC, including opportunities for new office and residential uses, parcel consolidation, urban design and streetscape improvements, and performance parking strategies.

#### *Panel Questions:*

1. The Woodlawn CBC is divided into five sub-units (see Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, page 67). Given current conditions and expected demand for mixed-use and commercial space, where should the county focus its efforts to attract new development?

2. Significant parcel assemblage will be required for any significant new development along the corridor. What can the county do to support the necessary assemblage?
3. While substantial investment has been made in residential development and increased retail activity in the Woodlawn CBC, there has been very little office development. What is limiting the current demand for commercial office development along the corridor? What strategies can overcome these obstacles? What incentives could the county provide to make the Woodlawn CBC competitive with other office markets?

The Comprehensive Plan talks about complementing nearby tourist attractions given the CBC's proximity to historic sites such as Woodlawn Plantation and Mount Vernon, as well as the future Army Museum. Is there a possibility to tap into the tourist market? What is the potential draw for tourists to this part of Richmond Highway as a destination, i.e. some combination of restaurants, lodging, entertainment and/or recreational uses? Are there effective marketing strategies that could help achieve this goal?

## Findings and Recommendations

### Site Background

Mount Vernon Planning District is located in the southeastern portion of Fairfax County

- The predominant land use is low density, single-family residences in stable neighborhoods
- This 7.5 mile stretch of Richmond Highway (Route 1) bisects the Planning District and it serves as the main “commercial spine”
- Bounded by Fort Belvoir and Mt. Vernon to the south and by the City of Alexandria and Huntington Metro Station to the north

Woodlawn CBC covers a relatively small portion of the overall Planning District

- A total of 65.25 acres of land located at the southern end of the Planning District
- The intersection of Richmond Highway and Mt. Vernon Memorial Highway, located immediately to the south of the CBC, serves as the logical gateway to what is also known as “Upper Richmond Highway”
- New connector road (Mulligan Road) will connect CBC to Kingstowne/Springfield area (Franconia-Springfield Metro Station / Blue and Yellow Lines)
- The mTAP’s analysis and recommendations focus on two of the five sub-units that comprise the CBC, specifically, sub-units A-3 and A-2:

Total of 18.34 acres

Current Zoning / Land Use Recommendations:

A-3 (Sacramento Center) (6.97 acres)

Zoning: C-8

Max. Density: 1.5 FAR - 455,420 sq.ft. of g.f.a.

Max. Height: 40 feet

A-2 (Woodlawn Shopping Center) (11.37 acres)

Zoning: C-6

Max. Density: 0.7 FAR - 346,694 sq.ft. of g.f.a.

Max. Height: 40 feet

### SWOT Analysis

The mTAP performed a broad analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that will affect the future development of the Woodlawn area. A summary of that SWOT analysis is below:

#### **Strengths**

- Active commuter traffic flow on Route 1
- Adjacent residential
- Served by transit service (REX, Fairfax County Connector)
- Historic/green adjacent context
- Visitor traffic (Ft. Belvoir Hospital)

- Adjacent road improvement projects (new roadway connections)

### **Weaknesses**

- Traffic congestion
- Lack of quality retail and depth of retail market
- Lack of character and sense of place
- Fragmented property ownership
- Historic viewshed requirements limit development potential
- Represented by two County supervisorial districts

### **Opportunities**

- Active commuter traffic along Route 1
- Ability to capture consumers from outside district (New Army Museum, proximity to Mt.Vernon could bring consumers in)
- Established residential communities (multi-family and single family neighborhoods)
- Potential transit expansion
- Historic / green area context
- Expanded visitor traffic
- Road improvement projects

### **Threats**

- Corridor at a market disadvantage
- Increasing congestion
- Funding constraints
- Absence of common vision for redevelopment

### **Recommendations: Character and Sense of Place**

The transformation of the overall character of the Woodlawn CBC and the Richmond Highway corridor is a component of the mTAP recommendations. The following actions are recommended for the County to undertake to improve the overall character of the corridor and create a sense of place within it:

- Focus Architectural Design on Federal Style Historic precedents similar to Mt. Vernon, Woodlawn Plantation, and Old Town Alexandria. Design standards or form-based codes should be adopted to ensure that architecture is of an appropriate quality and character.
- Create increased connectivity to the site by extending Cooper Road across to site. All new signalized intersections should have striped pedestrian crosswalks and have intervals and signalization that work for pedestrians and vehicles. Sidewalks along Richmond Highway and along other adjacent roadways should be improved to provide a continuous accessible pedestrian route in the vicinity of the project.
- Develop the massing of the project to be pedestrian scaled through the creation of 6-8 “mini” blocks with buildings between 3 and 5 stories tall. This massing pattern reflects the development/massing models seen in precedent neighborhoods and projects. See precedent images from Arts District Hyattsville, Barracks Row, Clarendon, Kentlands, King Farm, Old Town Alexandria, Reston, Rockville, and the Yards for examples of appropriate block size, massing, height, and character.

- Focus development around central park space in the project. The historic building asset should be utilized to enhance the character and authenticity of the development. Opportunities for parks should also be explored in the forested areas at the east and west end of the site.
- Develop strong streetwall along Richmond Highway that includes ground floor retail. The use of existing access/service road along Richmond Highway should be considered. The streetwall should be broken down and articulated much like the precedent neighborhoods mentioned above. “Gateway” opportunities at the intersections of Sacramento and Cooper should be explored.
- Generous pedestrian sidewalks with street trees, furniture, and on-street parking should be included for all internal roadways. Retail should line ground floor and retailers be encouraged to develop transparent and active storefronts.
- Existing residential neighborhood should be respected by breaking down the massing and increasing the visual buffer between taller main structures and the adjacent neighborhoods.
- Surface and structured parking access should come from the rear of site to provide enhanced pedestrian experience, continuous streetwall, and “traditional” urban massing.

### **Recommendations: Development Program**

- The mTAP recommends a town center development program with a centralized parking garage that can serve multiple uses including commuters, residents and customers.
  - Block sizes are small to encourage phasing. As such, portions of the existing shopping centers may remain in production until full build out.
  - Commercial component targets a mix of neighborhood demands such as grocery, service retail and medical office as well as tourist demand such as larger restaurants which cater to larger group business. The latter may require certain areas of surface parking to accommodate Motor Coaches.
  - Residential component is proposed to be mid-rise apartments. Will be located over ground floor retail in stronger retail locations.
  - Parking ratios for these buildings will be reduced because of shared parking credits from centralized garage.

### **Recommendations: Funding and Development Incentives**

#### Funding Sources

- Background
  - Economic viability of projects in the area has been challenging for private developers.
  - Public financing sources and incentives are needed as a component of the capital stack to meet developer’s underwriting and investment criteria.
  - Co-investment by public agencies demonstrates commitment to an area and can spur growth and prosperity.
- Current public investments
  - Fairfax County is investing in commercial revitalization projects such as: utility improvements, sidewalks, lighting and public open space (allocated funds).

- Investment in road infrastructure - \$180M set aside for the widening of Route 1.
- Public private partnership
  - Developer(s) obligated to purchase and assemble the site, develop according to Plan and advance all funds for local infrastructure, the parking structure and the public plaza.
  - Tax increment financing (TIF) issued by an authorized entity used to fund/reimburse the developer for the cost of installing the infrastructure, constructing the parking and creating a public space.
  - TIF criteria favor older areas in need of redevelopment and projects have to be significant enough to change the feel of the area.
  - Repayment through future incremental tax revenue generated by the proposed mixed-use project.
  - Precedents in Fairfax County: TIF bonds used in Merrifield and Crystal City.

#### Development Incentives

- Density bonus
  - Provide targeted land assemblage benefit – i.e. density bonus for land assemblage of approximately 18 acres.
- Approval process
  - Simplify and shorten the plan check and entitlement process.
  - Reduce/waive certain fees and permits (city fees, plan check, development impact fees).
  - Reduce required parking ratio (in light of the County parking structure).
  - Reduce required affordable housing component.
- Tax incentives
  - Tax abatement programs would attract reinvestment in the area.
  - Rebates from future property taxes.
- Direct investment and/or guarantees by County/SFDC (if allowed)
  - Low cost loans / Pre-development loans to assist with project assessment.
  - Mezzanine financing.

#### **Regional Benefits**

The recommendations provided in this mTAP fit within broader regional goals and provide benefits to the County and Washington region. These benefits are summarized as follows:

- Improvements could help reduce automotive traffic congestion in the area.
- Better quality retail and restaurants could support the region and bring in more tax dollars to Fairfax County and the Commonwealth of Virginia.
- Creating a sense of place and making Woodlawn a central hub for all of the local attractions supports the current hotel expansions and other regional activities.
- Transportation options can create a better “place” and assist in regional transportation goals:
  - Additional parking creates morning and evening traffic and can accommodate motor coaches and “pass-through” traffic.
  - Pedestrian friendly connections create the desire of the existing local community to walk to the shops, supporting foot traffic as an additional mode.

- New Shuttle Service, BRT or future light rail can create connections to and from other transit nodes and destinations within the area (Ft. Belvoir Hospital, Army Museum, etc.) helping bolster consumer access as well as tie into the regional transportation system.

## Panel Bios

### ***Soo Lee-Cho***

#### **Associate Attorney, Miller, Miller & Canby**

Soo Lee-Cho is a member of the land use department at Miller, Miller & Canby. Ms. Lee-Cho's practice includes land use, zoning, real estate, administrative and municipal law. She focuses on representing clients in zoning and land use matters before various administrative boards and commissions, elected and appointed bodies, including the Montgomery County Council, the Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission Planning Board, the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission, the Montgomery County Board of Appeals and Sign Review Board, the City of Rockville Mayor and Council, Planning Commission and Historic District Commission, as well as the City of Gaithersburg Mayor and Council and Planning Commission.

Ms. Lee-Cho has represented a wide array of clients, including corporations, real estate investment trusts, developers/builders, retailers, commercial landowners, private educational institutions, hospitals and churches on matters including master planning, local map amendments, subdivision, site plan review, zoning text amendments, special exceptions, variances, building and occupancy permits. This work includes representation of clients on legislative matters at both the local and state levels.

Ms. Lee-Cho's work includes experience in a number of issues, including transit-oriented development, traffic management, adequate public facilities controls, mixed-use planned development, environmental issues, urban design, affordable housing and historic preservation.

Ms. Lee-Cho joined Miller, Miller & Canby in 2002 after a five-year association with the law firm of McClain-Hill Associates in Los Angeles, California, where her environmental and land use practice focused on environmental quality act compliance, entitlements procurement, and zoning and general plan amendment, in connection with residential, commercial and mixed-use development.

Ms. Lee-Cho also served, from November 2000 to June 2002, as a voting member of the California Coastal Commission, an independent quasi-judicial state agency responsible for regulating land and water uses along California's 1,100 mile coastline in accordance with Coastal Act policies relating to public access and recreation, terrestrial and marine habitat protection, visual resources, landform alteration, agricultural lands, commercial fisheries, industrial uses, water quality, offshore oil and gas development, transportation, and development design.

### ***Jay Klug***

#### **Principal, JBG Rosenfeld**

As a Principal at JBG Rosenfeld Retail (JBGR), Jay is responsible for the acquisition, entitlement, financing, construction, and asset management functions for specific retail and mixed-use development projects. Specifically, Jay is leading JBGR's Tysons West development and entitlement project near the planned Spring Hill Road Silver Line Metro station in Tysons Corner, VA as well as handling the retail components of various JBG/JBGR retail mixed-use developments in the District of Columbia, including the proposed retail and residential project at 1st & H Street, NW. Additionally, Jay oversees a team of financial analysts and acquisitions/development associates who underwrite and help execute JBGR's many retail mixed-use projects. Prior to joining JBGR in 2005, Jay held positions in the Federal Government including the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee. He holds a B.A. from Duke University, an MBA from Harvard Business School, and is an active member of ICSC and ULI. Jay hails from rural southeast Iowa where he grew up on a family-owned corn and soybean farm.

***Ana Kostova***

**Portfolio Relationship Manager, Vice President, US Bank**

Ana is Vice President, Commercial Real Estate Division of US Bank in McLean, VA. She is responsible for a variety of functions within the bank, including managing a team of underwriters, loan structuring and origination, portfolio management, client analysis and risk management.

Ana has been with US Bank for over 8 years. She spent the first two years originating and underwriting affordable housing projects in Las Vegas, NV, followed by a career in market rate commercial real estate. Ana moved to the Washington DC area in 2006, where she actively participated in the development of the newly established presence of US Bank on the East Coast.

Ana holds two Master degrees: MBA from University of Las Vegas, Nevada and MA in International Economic Relations from The University of National and World Economy, Sofia, Bulgaria. Ana is actively involved with a variety of professional organizations, including ULI, ICSC and RELA. She is also on the board of Adagio Ballet, a local non-profit organization supporting talented young dancers.

***Matthew Steenhoek***

**Associate Project Director, PN Hoffman & Associates**

Matthew Steenhoek joined PN Hoffman in 2005 and is currently an Associate Development Director for the Southwest Waterfront Project. Matthew is responsible for management of the transportation, sustainability, and urban design components of the Southwest Waterfront. He is also involved with the development of temporary urbanism and interim uses on the Southwest Waterfront site during project design. Prior to his involvement on the Southwest Waterfront, Matthew was a Development Manager on Constitution Square in NoMa. Constitution Square is a 1.6 million-square-foot LEED-ND Gold Certified mixed-used project with luxury residential apartments, a Hilton Garden Inn, a Harris Teeter grocery store, office buildings for the General Services Administration and the Department of Justice, and 30,000 square feet of street-level retail. Matthew received his Bachelors of Architecture from the University of Maryland and is currently completing his Masters of Urban and Regional Planning at Virginia Tech. He is also a LEED Accredited Professional.

***Henry White***

**Director, Real Estate, General Dynamics**

Henry White is Director of Real Estate with General Dynamics Corporation, a Fortune 100 government contractor headquartered in Falls Church, Virginia. He has a Bachelors of Science in Civil Engineering from Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania and a Masters of Business Administration from Georgetown University in Washington, DC. Henry's role as an executive at General Dynamics involves leading real estate development projects throughout the world. These projects include constructing new facilities, developing real estate master plans, lease negotiations and strategic planning. Henry is a member of Corenet, Virginia Supervisor of Officials for USA Hockey and also serves on the board of directors for a non-profit association, the Jack and Abby Neonatal Foundation.

***David Zaidain***

**Senior Urban Planner, National Capital Planning Commission**

David Zaidain is a Senior Urban Planner with the National Capital Planning Commission in Washington DC. During his eight years at NCPC, David has successfully managed several high profile projects including the RFK

Stadium Site Redevelopment Study and the CSX Freight Railroad Relocation Study. He is currently managing the update to the Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital which includes the creation of a new Urban Design Element as well as developing policy options for the implementation of the Southwest EcoDistrict redevelopment project. David has also worked for Skidmore, Owings and Merrill in Chicago, Illinois and was Director of Development for Anderson Township - a community in the Cincinnati, Ohio area. He holds a Master of Science in Real Estate from the Johns Hopkins University, Carey School of Business and a Masters in Community Planning from the University of Cincinnati.