

AN ADVISORY SERVICES PANEL REPORT

Minneapolis Minnesota



Urban Land
Institute

Minneapolis Minnesota

Connections and Linkages in Downtown

December 4-7, 2007
An Advisory Services Program Report

ULI—the Urban Land Institute
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About ULI—the Urban Land Institute

The mission of the Urban Land Institute is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. ULI is committed to

- Bringing together leaders from across the fields of real estate and land use policy to exchange best practices and serve community needs;
- Fostering collaboration within and beyond ULI's membership through mentoring, dialogue, and problem solving;
- Exploring issues of urbanization, conservation, regeneration, land use, capital formation, and sustainable development;
- Advancing land use policies and design practices that respect the uniqueness of both built and natural environments;
- Sharing knowledge through education, applied research, publishing, and electronic media; and

- Sustaining a diverse global network of local practice and advisory efforts that address current and future challenges.

Established in 1936, the Institute today has more than 40,000 members worldwide, representing the entire spectrum of the land use and development disciplines. Professionals represented include developers, builders, property owners, investors, architects, public officials, planners, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, academics, students, and librarians. ULI relies heavily on the experience of its members. It is through member involvement and information resources that ULI has been able to set standards of excellence in development practice. The Institute has long been recognized as one of the world's most respected and widely quoted sources of objective information on urban planning, growth, and development.

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About ULI Advisory Services

The goal of ULI's Advisory Services Program is to bring the finest expertise in the real estate field to bear on complex land use planning and development projects, programs, and policies. Since 1947, this program has assembled well over 400 ULI-member teams to help sponsors find creative, practical solutions for issues such as downtown redevelopment, land management strategies, evaluation of development potential, growth management, community revitalization, brownfields redevelopment, military base reuse, provision of low-cost and affordable housing, and asset management strategies, among other matters. A wide variety of public, private, and nonprofit organizations have contracted for ULI's Advisory Services.

Each panel team is composed of highly qualified professionals who volunteer their time to ULI. They are chosen for their knowledge of the panel topic and screened to ensure their objectivity. ULI's interdisciplinary panel teams provide a holistic look at development problems. A respected ULI member who has previous panel experience chairs each panel.

The agenda for a three-day panel assignment is intensive. It includes an in-depth briefing composed of a tour of the site and meetings with sponsor representatives; interviews with community representatives; and one day for formulating recommendations. On the final day on site, the panel makes an oral presentation of its findings and conclusions to the sponsor. At the request of the sponsor, a written report is prepared and published.

Because the sponsoring entities are responsible for significant preparation before the panel's visit, including sending extensive briefing materials to each member and arranging for the panel to meet with key local community members and stakeholders in the project under consideration, participants in ULI's panel assignments are able to make accurate assessments of a sponsor's issues and to

provide recommendations in a compressed amount of time.

A major strength of the program is ULI's unique ability to draw on the knowledge and expertise of its members, including land developers and owners, public officials, academics, representatives of financial institutions, and others. In fulfillment of the mission of the Urban Land Institute, this Advisory Services panel report is intended to provide objective advice that will promote the responsible use of land to enhance the environment.

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The panel wishes to thank the dozens of individuals who participated in the interviews and workshops and those who attended the final presentation. The ultimate success of the ULI panel depends on continued public involvement in the land-planning process.

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Foreword: The I-35W Bridge Collapse

On August 1, 2007, Minneapolis and the nation were faced with an alarming tragedy. During evening rush hour, as people were going home from work, the Interstate 35W bridge over the Mississippi River suddenly collapsed. Thirteen individuals —wives and husbands, mothers, fathers, and children—lost their lives. Others were injured. Miraculously, many people on the bridge at the time were able to scramble to safety.

The city's citizens and emergency forces displayed both heroism and compassion in assisting others. Immediately, the city considered not only how to physically repair the freeway but also how to repair the wounds left by the rupture in the city's fabric.

Subsequently, a team of staff members from the city of Minneapolis began meeting to discuss the challenges and opportunities that the bridge collapse had brought into focus. Although not specifically related to the bridge, one of the themes that emerged from these discussions was the strong desire to reconnect the eastern side of downtown and the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood.

Several planning studies have been completed or are underway in these areas, but no overarching plan or vision exists for the entire area that encompasses Downtown East and Cedar-Riverside as well as other areas, including Elliot Park and the downtown central business district (CBD). As part of that effort, the Urban Land Institute was asked to work with city staff to consider the surrounding neighborhoods.

Surrounding Neighborhoods

The I-35W bridge and freeway network surrounding it are, in some ways, a metaphor for the separations and connections that are occurring in Minneapolis today. The bridge physically links several communities. But one might ask: are the commu-



Location map.

nities connected? As an engineering form, the bridge network did several things:

- It carried 140,000 cars and trucks a day, 60 percent of which flow in and out of downtown.
- It joined a healthy downtown that is growing eastward with new condominiums and cultural offerings to the rest of the region.
- It linked the university powerhouse, its campus, cultural centers, and housing to the downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.
- It served as a gateway and access point to the hospitals and medical facilities adjoining the university.

The I-35W bridge collapse occurred on August 1, 2007.



- It offered access and egress for sports fans and concertgoers to attend events at the Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome.
- While providing access, the network separated the neighborhoods from the rest of the city.

As a 1960s' social and urban planning form, the bridge represented a different era. Freeways, bridges, and concrete flyovers were thrown into cities in the name of automobile efficiency, speeding through communities with no unnecessary stops.

Planners have learned a few things since then. Minneapolis has added miles of bike and pedestrian trails and is investing in more light rail and also considering a streetcar system. Social and economic connections are gaining equal footing with the engineering requirements of the modern, global city.

The reconstruction of the I-35W bridge offers new hope to truly connect neighborhoods and community functions that today are isolated from one another, making a stronger city. In many respects, new connections, truly joining the neighborhoods and communities of the city, will be the strongest memorial and tribute to those who were not able to complete their crossing of the bridge on August 1.

The panel's effort focuses on four areas: the I-35W bridge area on the south bank of the river and surrounding transportation network; the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood, including Seven Corners; Downtown East, including the Mill area, Washington Avenue, and the Metrodome; and the West Bank of the University of Minnesota campus. In discussions with city staff and some stakeholders,

the panel discussed the various roles and functions these areas serve.

The Cedar-Riverside neighborhood is dominated by large institutional campuses: the University of Minnesota's West Bank campus, Augsburg College, and Fairview-University Hospitals. It also includes significant housing, retail, and entertainment uses. Seven Corners provides music, theater, arts, and entertainment for neighbors and downtown users. With a mix of housing, Cedar-Riverside is a portal for new immigrants and offers housing at affordable and workforce levels. The university and hospitals provide major employment—more than 10,000 jobs at all income levels. In addition to employees, thousands of visitors a day come to study or seek services.

The Downtown East area has undergone revitalization in recent years with the construction of new housing along Washington Avenue and South 2nd Street. An arts corridor has developed along 2nd Street, as well, with the construction of the new Guthrie Theater, the Mill City Museum, and the recently completed MacPhail Center for Music. Most of the new housing in this area is upscale condominiums appealing to empty nesters.

The stadium area contains unique challenges. On Vikings game days, and for major events, moving close to 80,000 people in and out of the area is difficult. Congestion and bottlenecks act as a deterrent to surrounding development. At the same time, a number of vacant and underused parcels immediately surrounding the stadium could afford attractive new sites for office and downtown expansion.

The Panel's Assignment

The ULI panel was asked to address the following questions:

- How can neighborhoods separated by the I-35W network be better connected to each other and to downtown?
- How can the expanse of freeway network be mitigated?
- Do opportunities exist for redevelopment and growth, and if so, where?

- How can a vision for the area be defined and advanced?

Summary of Recommendations

The panel's recommendations are summarized as follows:

- Improve the physical and social connection between the city's two major economic engines: the Downtown/CBD and the University of Minnesota.
- Focus public realm improvements and economic incentive initiatives along the Washington Avenue South/Cedar Avenue/Riverside Drive corridor. Use the public realm and urban design elements to link the Downtown East and Cedar-Riverside neighborhoods.
- Establish an ongoing dialogue and regular meetings between the university and the city regarding a shared strategic vision. Focus on those efforts that the university and the city can pursue jointly to achieve that strategic vision. Find common ground regarding issues of real estate, urban design, and transportation that will allow the relationship to flourish.
- Explore a new way to plan. Transform the small-area planning process into an intentional neighborhood planning process with a focus on a larger shared strategic vision for the city and the university. Incorporate strategies and incentives that allow Downtown East and Cedar-



City officials, including Mayor R. T. Rybak and Council Member Cam Gordon, brief the panel.

Riverside neighborhoods to begin to think as one area.

- Encourage and support a mix of housing types and income levels, particularly in the Downtown East neighborhood and along the waterfront. Concentrate unit types and price points to attract the university faculty and research populations and draw other university, hospital, and college elements across the great divide of I-35W.
- Explore “capping” Washington Avenue SE (the “gulch”) with an air-rights platform to provide new acreage at the Cedar Avenue street level. Use this platform to establish new developable real estate and to provide a better link between areas south and north of Washington Avenue SE.

Market Considerations

The city of Minneapolis is the heart of a thriving metropolitan center that anchors the northern part of the Midwest. Once the world's flour-milling capital and a hub for timber, Minneapolis is the primary business center between Chicago, Illinois, and Seattle, Washington. The region's financial and commercial hub, the city also has a thriving world-class arts and theater community. The city itself is a patchwork quilt of parks and leafy spaces, all coexisting with big-city bustle and fueled by the steady chug and flow of the Mississippi River. Minneapolis is also a center for education and the medical community.

The Twin Cities has a population of 3.2 million and is the 15th-largest metropolitan area in the United States. The city of Minneapolis has a population of 387,970. The broadly defined metropolitan area has a median family income of \$68,000.

As the CBD of the metropolitan area's economic base, Minneapolis has a strong economy centered on financial activities, professional and business services, education, and health services. The historic manufacturing sector has slowed but continues to be the single-largest economic sector, followed by government, professional and business services, retail, and education and health services.

As part of the ULI panel process, the panel reviewed a variety of information and interviewed people from all economic sectors. The briefing materials provided to the ULI panel included market information with a specific focus on the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood and the Downtown East area. The following sections summarize the key economic drivers in the city, specifically in these two neighborhoods.

The University of Minnesota

Throughout the United States, universities, particularly large research universities, are using their prestige to attract the best and brightest

teachers and researchers. Much of their success depends on the community in which they are located, because the best and the brightest are looking for excellent quality of life and living conditions.

These individuals are a subset of the creative class, a group of people who are a key driving force for economic development of postindustrial cities in the United States. The main advantage to a creative class is that it stimulates new ideas, high-tech industry, and regional growth. Even though the creative class has been around for centuries, in the 1960s and 1970s, the United States became the first large country to be home to a creative class that deals with information technology. In the 1960s, less than 5 percent of the U.S. population was part of the creative class, which is now 26 percent of the population. A strong creative class is vital in today's global economy. Fierce competition has developed around which cities can attract this group. Quality of life is key to this competition.

The University of Minnesota is one of the most comprehensive public universities in the United States and ranks among the most prestigious. It is both the state land-grant university, with a strong tradition of education and public service, and the state's primary research university, with faculty of national and international stature. The university has a student population of 50,402, making it the fourth largest in the country.

The panel believes that the university and the city must pursue a joint strategy to attract these prized researchers, which will result in continued growth of the local economy. The results of a successful program can be staggering. For example, *Engines of Economic Growth*, a detailed report published in 2000 on the economic and social effects of Boston College, Boston University, Brandeis University, Harvard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Northeastern



Looking back toward the city from the University of Minnesota.

University, Tufts University, and University of Massachusetts Boston, determined that these universities provided \$7 billion to the local economy. In 2005, research and development work from the University of Minnesota alone accounted for almost 20,000 jobs in the regional economy. Interviewees noted that the university employs approximately 17,000 people, and a reasonable estimate is that 80,000 people a day are drawn to the main campus. By any measure, the university is a major economic driver.

On a smaller scale, the same can be said for Augsburg College, located in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood. This small but well-respected liberal arts college offers undergraduate liberal arts and sciences as well as master's degree programs in business, education, leadership, nursing, physician assistant studies, and social work. The college plays an important role in the larger Minneapolis community, takes advantage of its proximity to the university, and is deeply involved in music, art, and theater studies. With approximately 3,800

students, Augsburg is another economic driver in the study area.

Hospitals and Medical Centers

The University of Minnesota Medical Center, Fairview, is the main university hospital for the University of Minnesota Medical School. The West Bank campus and hospital complex is known as the Riverside Campus. It is owned and operated by Fairview Health Services and is staffed by physicians of University of Minnesota Physicians and community physicians. It was previously known as Fairview-University Medical Center.

Fairview includes inpatient and outpatient facilities and is connected with six community clinics and many specialty clinics. Comprehensive services range from primary care, emergency care, and the delivery of thousands of babies each year to care of patients with the most complex conditions. Areas of specialization include organ and blood and marrow transplantation, heart disease,

The Mill District is an integral part of the city's effort to reclaim older industrial areas for residential, mixed-use, and entertainment uses.



cancer, neurosciences, pediatrics, and behavioral illnesses.

The Medical Center and, located within it, University of Minnesota Children's Hospital, Fairview, were created in 1997 as a result of the merger of the University of Minnesota Hospital and Clinic and Fairview Health Services. Consistently named among the nation's top hospitals by *U.S. News and World Report*, University of Minnesota Medical Center is among the most respected teaching institutions in the nation, balancing responsiveness to patients' needs and wishes with access to innovative treatments and technology to delivery of superior health outcomes.

The medical and health care facilities play an important role in supporting the university's medical and life science focus and contribute to the research focus of the university. As an economic driver, the hospital is contributing significantly to the area's economy.

Market Analysis

The commercial market analysis completed by ZHA, Inc., in July 2007 shows interesting market fundamentals in the downtown area, including the following characteristics:

- A surprising concentration of offices exists in the CBD. This concentration is higher than that of other cities of similar size and demographic

makeup. The ZHA study attributes some of this phenomenon to the skyway complex that was a response to the city's weather issues.

- Downtown will experience the need for between 292,000 and 488,000 square feet of office space annually over the next 15 years.
- The CBD will continue to be the leader in new Class A office space in the entire region.
- Outlying areas (those outside the CBD) will experience interest as office locations with the progress of public improvements, specifically, transit improvements and other public realm components.
- Washington Avenue South will likely accommodate new retail development.
- If the proper public improvements take place, the city could accommodate a higher retail-to-office ratio.
- Residential, although currently limited, has a potential to remake the Downtown East neighborhood.

Downtown East

Based on the concentration of office buildings in the CBD, the Downtown East neighborhood provides some opportunities for new offices, which may come primarily through rehabilitation of existing industrial space for local organizations, rather than any significant new construction. At the time the panel visited Minneapolis, a lull—but not a cessation—of residential development existed in Downtown East. The higher-end condominium market will likely pick up.

Although the focus of new downtown retail will be in and around the Nicollet Mall area, opportunities for new retail exist in Downtown East. As the population grows with new and conversion condominium availability, the need for local service retail increases. Also, the ability to make Washington Avenue South/Washington Avenue SE and Cedar Avenue locations for restaurant and food establishments increases. Finally, industrial will continue to turn over to mixed-use formats that cater to young professionals and the creative class

who are looking for short commutes and proximity to the arts districts.

The Mill District, 2nd Street, and Washington Avenue South

The renaissance that has defined the Mill District, 2nd Street, and the Washington Avenue corridor over the past decade follows a familiar and successful formula that dozens of cities throughout the United States have experienced. The city should be commended on the change in regulations that spurred the development community, through a series of public/private ventures, rehabilitation projects, and new construction, to redevelop this former industrial district into high-end living and commercial space. This redevelopment has been augmented by the establishment of an arts and entertainment district centered on iconic structures, such as the Guthrie Theater and the Mill City Museum. It is an extension of downtown and provides the city with a successful formula for redevelopment.

By redefining downtowns, the type of housing and arts-oriented uses in this area make the city attractive to the creative population the university is seeking. The panel feels that leveraging this type of development is appropriate in conjunction with a joint economic strategy that the city and university should pursue. This area provides a link, both physically and psychologically, between downtown, the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood, and the university.

Cedar-Riverside as a Gateway Area

Although the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood is defined by several focal points, it has acted as the traditional bohemian district to the university. The Seven Corners area is well known as the music and bar district and is home to dozens of eating establishments and community theaters. The arts flavor of the area is enhanced by the presence of the University of Minnesota's West Bank Arts Quarter, which is home to the university's art programs. In fact, the university is the only one in the nation with all of its arts disciplines located together in a single district.

Continuing south along Cedar Avenue, the food and theater establishments provide an interesting, albeit coarse, mosaic of one- and two-story com-



Above: Second Avenue continues to undergo transformation into a trendy mixed-use area. Left: the Riverside Plaza development is a recognizable landmark in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood. Built in the 1960s, the apartment complex is facing the challenges characteristic of a mixed ethnic area.

mercial establishments and single-family homes, many divided into apartments and duplexes. The entrepreneurial spirit of business establishments caters to those with an unconventional artistic lifestyle. The area abounds in self-expression and is a gathering place for artists, actors, musicians, poets, dancers, and painters. The numerous theaters in this neighborhood are a key attraction that can be exploited in attracting the new residents. From the panel's perspective, the funk-

ness of the neighborhood can be considered an economic driver.

Riverside Plaza is home to between 2,500 and 3,500 people, many of whom are immigrants and refugees. Currently, most immigrants in the neighborhood come from East Africa. The high number of Somali refugees, in particular, has earned the neighborhood the nickname “Little Somalia” or “Little Mogadishu.” East Africans are the latest wave of foreign-born residents, following the Europeans of a century and more ago, and the Vietnamese and other Asians of just 20 years back. Although some challenges are associated with this community, the panel sees the area as a thriving, active part of the city’s fabric. This accessible location for an immigrant population offers both proximity to nearby jobs in downtown and the university and learning opportunities.

Metrodome

Built in 1980, the Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome is located west of I-35W between 4th and 5th streets. Located on the Hiawatha light-rail transit (LRT) line, the Metrodome is currently home to the Vikings football organization. Sunday afternoon football games are events within the city attracting thousands of spectators and visi-

tors. “Tailgating” is a popular pastime in the surrounding surface parking lots. The Metrodome has been recognized as one of the loudest domed venues in which to view a game, partly caused by the domed roof’s recycling of sound throughout the stadium.

The Metrodome hosted Major League Baseball’s Minnesota Twins and the University of Minnesota’s football team; however, each of those teams is now building its own stadium. The panel did not interview anyone from the Vikings football organization or the Sports Authority, but many people the panel spoke with did express concern about the current viability of the Metrodome. Plans apparently exist to rehabilitate the stadium or to build a new stadium, making it more friendly to spectators and adaptable to various events. Even though it hosts only eight Vikings home games each year, it is still an economic driver that must be considered in any future strategies for the city.

In recent years, the Metrodome has experienced significant competition for nonsports events, such as concerts, from the Target Center in north downtown and Xcel Energy Center in St. Paul.

Development and Planning Recommendations

The following section makes development and design recommendations by geographic area. The panel is not suggesting a specific chronological order for the recommendations, but to build interest and support, starting from both ends of the study area (CBD and the university) and working toward the middle may make sense.

Central Business District

The panel commends the city's intentional effort to focus development in a compact, walkable CBD. The strategy is having powerful results in securing the CBD as a desirable district for business, living, and learning. West of Portland Avenue, the scale and density of uses are appropriately more intense than envisioned for Downtown East, which should find its own identity and economic success as a mid-rise district.

Mill Area and South Waterfront

In the east end of the Mill District, the Mill City Museum, Guthrie Theater, and MacPhail Center for Music are precious anchors with new residential and other uses doing well. Redevelopment of those portions of the study area along I-35W is less certain of the same success.

Recapture of the waterfront is well established on the north side of the river but still offers opportunities on the south side. Waterfront sites are a limited commodity and should be carefully considered and planned. The ten-year future of Gold Medal Park is far from certain, and far-sighted users covet other key sites. Providing public access over time, adequate density, and appropriate uses and compatible design are essential to this important element of Minneapolis.

Chicago Avenue and Washington Avenue South Intersection

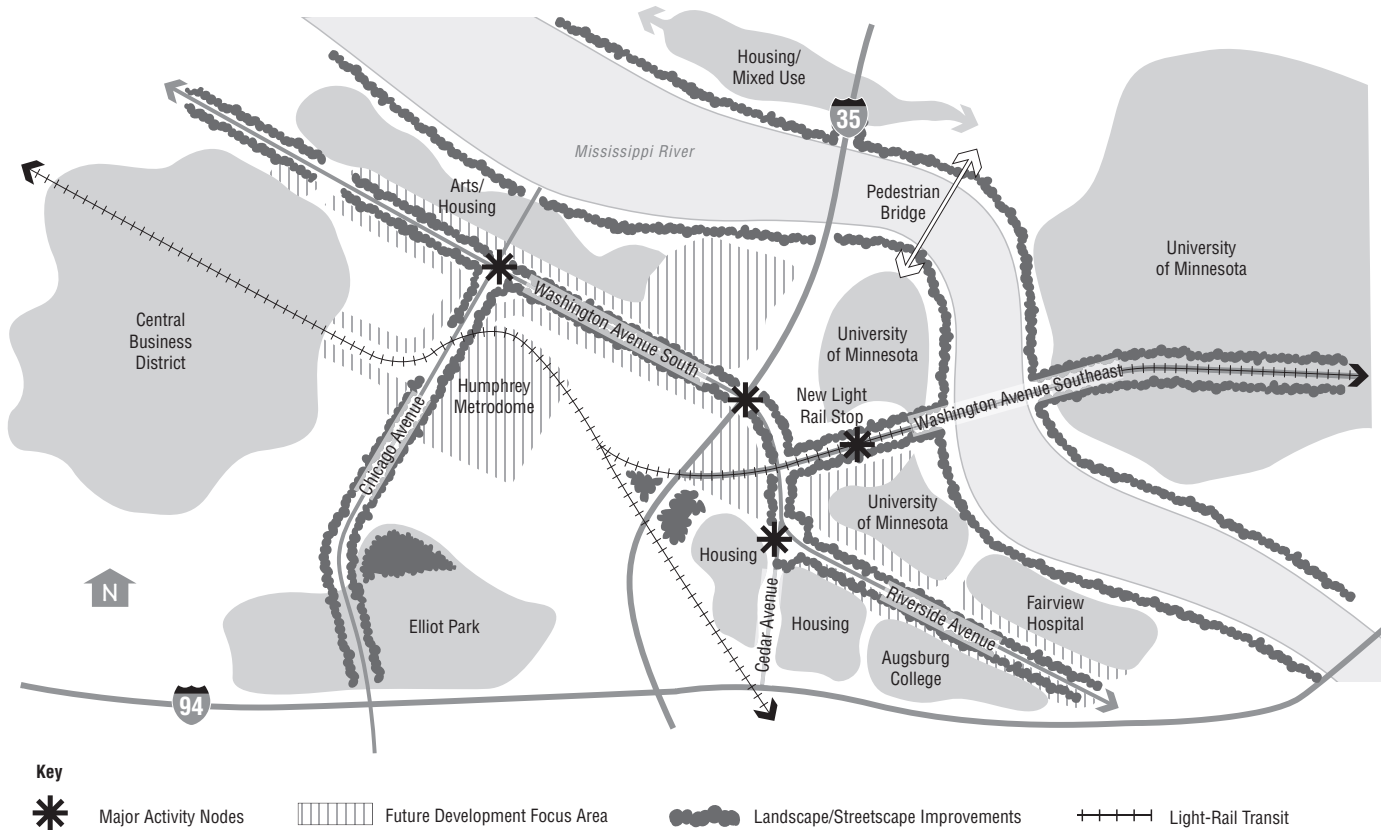
As Downtown East comes to life, the intersection of Chicago Avenue and Washington Avenue South presents a new 100 percent corner. Chicago is a natural connection from the Elliot Park neighborhood to the downtown CBD. It bounds the north end of the Metrodome parcel and continues to the Milwaukee Railroad shed on Washington Boulevard, the Mills neighborhood, and the waterfront. The Chicago and Washington intersection has historic fabric, vacant land, excellent access, visibility, and traffic—a recipe for very special development. The city should carefully consider this area when it sets regulations and design guidelines to not underdevelop this key junction.

Metrodome Area

When originally sited, the Metrodome was an island in an underdeveloped industrial area. Expectations in that era were for neighborhood transformation and rejuvenation. As in many other cities across the nation, the building form and peak-load parking requirements have had just the opposite effect.

Today, the stadium sits at perhaps the most critical location in Downtown East. Perhaps more than any other factor, it holds the future of the neighborhood. It is strategically located not only at a light-rail station, but also midway between the powerhouse anchors of the University of Minnesota and the CBD.

Moreover, the Metrodome represents a precious large land assemblage that can be used to create both a neighborhood and a regional anchor. Little question exists that over time, as downtown grows, it will be forced to move east. The speed, character, and quality of that development will be largely determined by the character of the land use at the Metrodome site. Whether or not it continues to be



The Washington Avenue South/Cedar Avenue/Riverside Avenue corridor is the unifying link between Downtown, the university, college, and hospital. Major activity nodes at Chicago Avenue, I-35, Seven-Corners and Cedar-Riverside should be enhanced with public realm improvements and redevelopment incentives.

used as a sports venue, the site should be required to densify in a mid-rise configuration, incorporate a mix of uses, and provide a landmark design sensitive to the neighborhood it dominates as well as the identity of downtown.

Washington Avenue East/Cedar Drive/Riverside Avenue Corridor

The backbone of Downtown East should be a connected and enhanced Washington Avenue South/Cedar Avenue/Riverside Avenue. These streets should be knit together with streetscape and urban design into “complete streets” that are beautiful and equally welcoming to pedestrians, cyclists, transit, and automobiles. The diverse neighborhoods and destinations will shape the changing character of the boulevard, not to dilute or pasteurize commercial districts that include Seven Corners, Riverside, Metrodome, and Mill District, but to enhance and beautify them.

These destinations make this corridor a natural for a streetcar as well. The length of the line and the support it offers business and retail districts would spur development compatible with the vision for Downtown East. As are dozens of other communities, Minneapolis could use parking revenues, a benefit district, and tax increment financing (TIF) to fund this development with minimal, if any, federal funds. With or without the streetcar, the sense of entrance and gateway to each neighborhood should be emphasized, because that is indeed the true magic of this district.

Capping the Gulch

Some of the interviewees referred to the Washington Avenue SE right-of-way as the “gulch.” Physically and figuratively, this deep ravine includes a constant stream of traffic that makes crossing at the road level impossible.

Critical to creating the new Washington Avenue South/Cedar Avenue/Riverside Avenue corridor

is the connection at the “knuckle” where a new light-rail station will be sited at Cedar Avenue and Washington Avenue South. An exciting opportunity exists to bring development to the edges and even deck over the Washington Avenue SE trench to create value from five-plus acres of “new land” and air rights. The cost can be offset with new acreage created by building a platform over the road. Additionally, the platform improves the connection between the Cedar Avenue area and Seven Corners both visually and from a vehicle and pedestrian perspective.

The panel encourages the city to look at examples of road and right-of-way capping in other cities. Interstate 670 in Columbus, Ohio; U.S. Route 101 in Los Angeles; and the rail yards at Washington, D.C.’s Union Station are just a few examples of areas that have proposed capping or decking to recover buildable land from right-of-way.

Tools

Over the next ten years, the city should set some goals. The panel recommends considering some of the following possibilities.

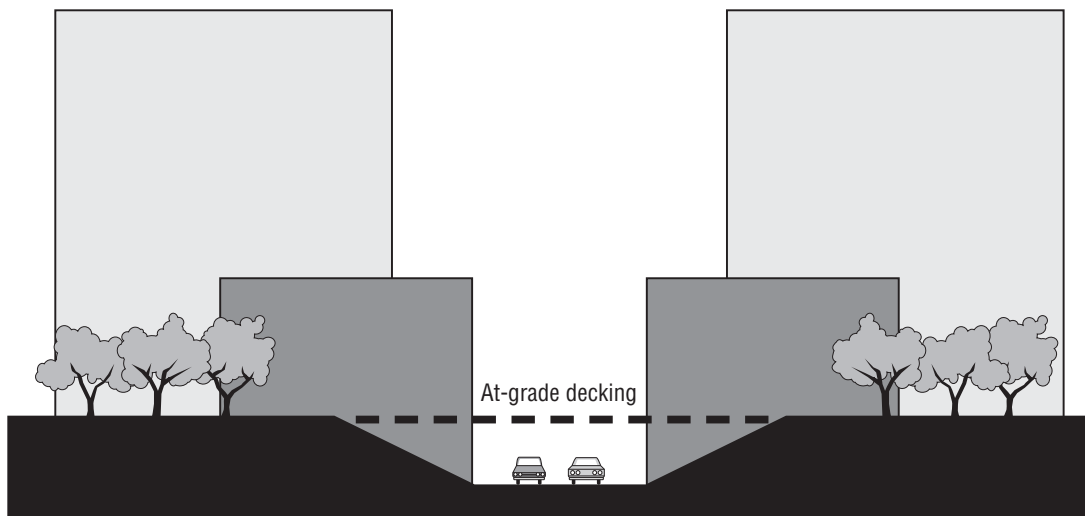
Increased Housing Numbers

Minneapolis currently has more than 20,000 downtown housing units, and the city’s planners expect to expand that number by another 10,000 units

over ten years. The expansion of housing in the intervening areas between Downtown East and the Cedar-Riverside area (“the intervening area”) will be key—combined with the concurrent development of office-commercial space—in seeding the foundation for restored connectivity between downtown Minneapolis and the University of Minneapolis area.

In addition to driving for mere numbers with this housing goal, the panel recommends describing the character of those units. The panel sees an opportunity for this intervening area as a destination for mixed-income dwellers employed in staff and faculty positions in nearby Minneapolis educational institutions, notably the University of Minnesota and Augsburg College. Few of these new housing units should be high-end condominium development. Instead, the panel recommends a denser character of middle-income condominium development.

Combined with a clarified riverfront parks and recreation system and expanded access to commercial and entertainment opportunities—both existing and projected—developing a mixed-use neighborhood will create a reason for greater cooperation between the city and the university on improved pedestrian, transit, and automobile connectivity through the I-35W corridor.



Street and light-rail transit right-of-way

A conceptual section showing the decking of Washington Avenue Southeast in the vicinity of the proposed transit station. All around the world roads are being capped or decked to recover buildable land from right-of-way.

Increased Office Space

Although the intervening area lacks a full mixture of uses, it offers undeveloped parcels suitable to attract flagship office development. The panel is strongly persuaded by the mill-town history and architecture of the area, as well as its proximity to the Mill District (arts and entertainment destinations). A vision for increased office in this area could be like the Lower Downtown (the “LoDo” District) area in the northern part of Denver, Colorado. That area successfully integrates commercial development with corporate office space. Connected to nearby Coors Field, the LoDo District has become a destination place in downtown Denver.

Downtown East could fulfill a similar role. A flagship office development directly east of the Gold Medal Park—and with a footprint large enough to attract such a local institution such as Valspar Corporation—would anchor this area as a connector between Downtown East and the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood. Combining such a flagship development with small office rental opportunities, the area would beg for increased access—overcoming the I-35W barrier—with the university areas to the east. Additionally, a flagship office development on the river would seed the expansion of office, residential, and retail development south of the river, ideally in coordination with a clarified sports and entertainment development for the land comprising and surrounding the existing Metrodome.

For a ten-year goal, the city could assemble parcels south of a dedicated river park and recreational area, east of the Gold Medal Park and west of I-35W. The focus would be on retaining the historical mill character of this area through a flagship office-retail development with sufficient footprint and office capacity to attract Valspar or a similar tenant.

Increased Retail and Entertainment

The intervening area contains the entire DNA necessary for successful retail and entertainment: location, history, historical architecture, and creativity of people. The Guthrie Center already attracts world-class theater and performance entertainment to the Minneapolis area, and the Guthrie has an established connection to downtown Min-

neapolis. The historical aesthetic attributes of this area are a destination in themselves, both by visitors from the downtown Minneapolis area and those from the adjacent river recreational trails. Fine-grained retail mixes easily with residential development, starting with and extending east from the Guthrie. A clarified vision for expanded retail and entertainment in the area east of this Guthrie development would catalyze corollary residential development and provoke an improvement in the east-west connections.

Increased retail and entertainment will connect with the established and nascent theater presence of the Mixed Blood Theatre and other theaters in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood. Situated between these poles of theater and entertainment development—and north of the Metrodome—the area would serve as a destination both during sporting and other entertainment events and during off-peak times. Creating a diverse offering of retail complementary to the mixed-use, mixed-income vision for the area would cement it as an anchor between Downtown East and the Cedar-Riverside neighborhoods. The presence of a vibrant, new district, imbued with office, entertainment, retail, and commercial opportunities, could serve as an attractive destination point to the benefit of all Minneapolis institutions, particularly the university, college, and hospital.

A ten-year goal should be branding the area with its arts and entertainment focus. Branding the Mixed Blood Theatre, the Guthrie, and other venues as one area will take advantage of the “cluster” effect that is so prevalent in retail and tourist development.

University and Augsburg Expansion

The U.S. Census Bureau reports 48,651 workers in the education sector in Minneapolis. More than 20,000 of those workers are employed by the University of Minneapolis, with neighboring Augsburg College employing approximately 370 faculty and staff. Enrollment at the University of Minnesota (Minneapolis campus) exceeds 47,000, and the enrollment of Augsburg College is reported at 3,785. The educational sector is the second-leading employment sector in Minneapolis after the health care sector.

Competitive, sustainable modern economies are knowledge economies, and the city of Minneapolis benefits immeasurably from its wealth of institutions of higher learning. Additionally, the University of Minnesota is a preeminent research institution in such areas as medicine and engineering. Combined with its proximity to world-class medical institutions such as the Mayo Clinic and the health care employment base, the city of Minneapolis reaps great benefits from its concentration of medical activities that originate with the university. Additionally, the city of Minneapolis is a vibrant metropolitan area with a growing economy and a wealth of employment, retail, and entertainment opportunities. Minneapolis has been recognized as one of the most active communities in America, near a plethora of recreational and destination activities. Connecting the prominence of the city and the university starts with building a stronger relationship between the two.

Historically, and over the past 10 to 15 years in particular, universities have formalized their relationships with neighboring urban areas to achieve mutual benefits. The relationship formed between Yale and the city of New Haven, Connecticut, is a prime example. These relationships recognize the benefits each entity may gain from a shared vision that links the success of the urban area with the success of the educational institution in the form of jobs, increased enrollment, and economic development (attraction of education-related industries). The panel recommends creating a formal process that would cultivate such a relationship between the University of Minnesota and the city of Minneapolis, culminating in shared vision that is used as strategic guidance for future development in Minneapolis.

The embodiment of this relationship should be the development of the intervening area between Downtown East and Cedar-Riverside. This area should attract students from the Cedar-Riverside educational institutions to its retail, restaurants, bars, and entertainment, while also offering a creative vibe in which students, staff, and faculty can live and work.

Other Focus Areas

The panel believes that other important issues should be explored by the city, the university, and

neighborhoods, including a focus on waterfront activities, vacant and underused land, and financial techniques for funding improvements such as TIF and business improvement districts (BIDs). They should also explore making improvements to the existing street grid.

Park and waterfront expansion. The rediscovery of the Mississippi River's attractiveness as a designated heritage river has created opportunities for development, recreation, and improved transportation connections. Completion of the West River Parkway and the east river road will enhance accessibility to the river and connectivity to the city. Development of the trail network creates potential for recreational walking, running, and cycling, as well as enhanced opportunities for non-motorized trips as part of daily travel routines.

Along the waterfront, development opportunities also exist, which must be carefully balanced with preservation. The Marcy Homes area, for example, may come under increased pressure for redevelopment as a result of that site's appeal. On the West Bank, some undeveloped parcels on the bluffs near the I-35W bridge are being considered as a park, but they could also generate significant opportunities and revenues for the city from housing and mixed-use development.

Vacant and underused land. The panel has observed examples of selected redevelopment throughout the central area—along 2nd street and the Mill District, in the Seven Corners area, and in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood. The one area that has yet to experience such redevelopment is around the Metrodome, built in the 1970s. A redevelopment plan by the Sports Authority may help jump-start long-promised development in this underused area; at the same time, a “plan B” should be developed in anticipation of a possible Vikings move when their lease expires in 2011. This plan could involve street realignment and reconnection that could substantially improve the potential attractiveness of development parcels.

TIF and BID financing. One of the leading examples of TIF in the nation is that used for Nicollet Mall, still one of the most successful such projects. Perhaps surprisingly, this early model has not yet generated a follow-up example for a broader down-

town BID. In part, this absence is because of downtown property owners' concerns about the high levels of current property taxes. Some concerns over the manner in which the taxes from Nicollet Mall are being spent may also be causing downtown businesses to take a wait-and-see attitude to a BID. This financing mechanism offers such a potentially useful opportunity to maintain downtown as a first-class business and entertainment center that the city and leading business officials should work to find a useful solution.

Reconnecting the urban street grid. In 2007, MnDOT completed a study to address safety, growth, and congestion on the downtown Minneapolis freeway system. The critical network of 12 interchanges and 80 bridges along seven to eight miles of freeway serves 500,000 trips daily, of which 60 percent are estimated to have one end in downtown. The study anticipated the reconstruction of the I-35W bridge. Surprisingly, this careful analysis of through capacity, safety improvements, and better connections to the existing street grid did not deal with the issues of reconnecting critical streets severed when the downtown freeways were built in the 1960s.

The panel recommends that, as part of a broader vision for the downtown and nearby neighborhoods, selected improvements be made that will improve accessibility to these growing areas, enhance mobility, and relieve the freeway system itself. As previously noted, capping the gulch is one manner

of reconnecting neighborhoods. Other communities, notably Boston, San Francisco, and Columbus, have actually removed freeways or reconstructed them to help better serve the communities in which they were built. The panel strongly recommends that MnDOT, Hennepin County, and the city of Minneapolis use this opportunity to fix these urban planning mistakes of the past, with the support of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The best way to reconnect the emerging neighborhoods discussed here is through the surface road and pedestrian network. Many of the streets that once provided an interconnected grid were cut off when the downtown freeway system was built in the 1960s, a common strategy eventually stopped in cities such as New Orleans, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C., when the consequences of building major roads through vibrant inner-city neighborhoods were understood.

Following the recommendations made by MnDOT's thorough study of the freeway system in downtown Minneapolis could result in \$2 billion invested in reconstruction and expansion to serve growth and improve safety. To properly complete this network as well as to reinforce the development strategies proposed, the panel recommends selected surface street connections and improvements.

Implementation

Sometimes fresh perspective can lead to unexpected shifts. Perhaps what seemed a telescope is really a kaleidoscope, and a shift reveals an unexpected insight. That is what the panel attempted to do during its brief visit. Following are some of the ways to take advantage of the revealed possibilities.

Getting There from Here

First of all, the panel was impressed by the quality of the city's small-area plans—developed with the robust neighborhood participation the city is known for. Two of these—Downtown East and the Elliot Park Master Plan—grounded the panel in the city's sensibilities regarding the future. That said, if one views the city as a jigsaw puzzle, with pieces scattered all over the table, some assembled in clusters—the two plans—everyone knows it is much easier to put the puzzle together if you have not misplaced the box with the picture on top. Seeing the potential in some of the clusters, the panel found itself asking about the puzzle lid: where was it? Where is the big shared vision, the sense of what Minneapolis can and should be in the 21st century, the picture of the assembled puzzle? How will the community's assets be leveraged to expand the wonderful quality of life here?

The panel's assignment was about connections, finding ways to cross the divide created by 1950s and 1960s transportation facilities. That can be done; however, other disconnections may be less apparent. Minneapolis has a healthy downtown CBD and is home to a great university—not a mile from the current edge of downtown—yet that mile, the I-35W corridor, may as well be the Grand Canyon, though far less beautiful. The time has come to imagine connections as invisible networks, for the Internet and global communications have taken us all to a new level, unimaginable by the highway planners who created the lasting connections that today divide the city.

The downtown buildings are familiar; what is happening in them is unseen but is the future. Imagine the invisible connections: the networks of creativity and energy that link major global businesses in downtown Minneapolis with financial markets and supply chains and customers all over the world—Asia and Europe, and beyond. Arts groups in the Mill District are similarly exchanging ideas, resources, and business deals with their counterparts in London, New York, Sydney, and beyond.

The university is also a familiar presence: nearly everyone the panel met is a graduate—go Gophers! But Minneapolis is more than a college town, more than students and tailgaters and bars. Think about what is going on at the university that is invisible to most of us. Within eyesight from downtown, across the trench and the I-35W divide, another major node of knowledge, creativity, and energy is also connected worldwide—to scientists and researchers in India, China, and villages in Africa—as are all top research and teaching universities. Creative collaboration takes place 24/7 between innovators at the university and their counterparts around the globe.

Imagine better connections between these two nodes—downtown and the university—now physically divided by I-35W. The future lies in lowering the barriers so the knowledge and creativity that is this great city's biggest asset can be optimized. That calls for reimagining boldly the ways in which barriers like the trench are eliminated. These two entities must ensure that the flow of Minnesota's brightest and most entrepreneurial future leaders is made possible, that destinations on both sides of I-35W draw people back and forth, encouraging them to bump into each other more often, drawn to *this* university, *this* downtown, over all the choices available to them worldwide.

Suggestions for Making It Happen

The panel suggests the following:

First, it may be time to break away from small-area plans and undertake a bold strategic plan that views the river and the area between the downtown CBD and the university as the city's strongest physical asset, one that could benefit significantly from a shared vision. With a shared vision, one can evaluate important proposals like sports and entertainment facilities strategically and more consciously consider how major public/private investments do—or do not—catalyze greater vitality, better activity connections, and destinations and spaces that draw people to live, to work, and to have fun.

Second, lessons can be learned from other thriving, transformational university/community partnerships. Not so long ago, universities turned inward, dealing with neighbors and cities when they had to. Today, world-class institutions—and the University of Minnesota is one—know they compete globally for talent, for research funding, and for intellectual connections. They know quality of life is a key factor in competitiveness.

Improving the town-gown climate takes effort and commitment, but the rewards are immense. City and university leaders can look to Ohio State University's Community Partners initiative, which led to decking an interstate highway to restore the lively walkable street grid and create immensely successful development opportunities; or to the University of Pennsylvania's visionary new strategic plan that boldly envisions Penn's growth by forging connections to Center City Philadelphia, across even more-serious physical barriers than I-35W—railroads and a river. In Philadelphia, with strong consensus on the value of such an investment, and understanding its economic potential and consequences, public support for infrastructure investments is emerging, and philanthropic and private investment is also coming forth.

Third, shift the way the city engages in community engagement. Episodic public engagement, such as the episodes surrounding development projects, can often lead to conflict. Although the panel supports the efforts currently underway in

the small-area plan format, those engagements happen and then the community moves on to the next thing. Having a community of interests where ongoing dialogue takes place can prevent communication breakdowns. Learn together, and in learning and working together build the trust that benefits all. Create a platform for regular dialogue among the educational and medical institutions, the neighborhoods, small businesses, property owners, downtown leaders, and city and state officials.

The University Alliance was mentioned as an example of community dialogue that is project specific, around the new stadium. Interaction between the community and the city also occurs, as reflected in the excellent work completed for the Cedar Riverside and Elliot Park neighborhoods. A broader, less project-focused approach is needed that is more about fostering a climate of collaboration and shared benefit.

A good model is in Atlanta, where Emory University has convened and is nurturing the fledgling but promising Clifton Community Partnership. Here, after years of conflict, the informal (that is, not a part of formal government) process of creating a shared vision and urban design guidelines for the areas within a mile of campus has allowed all voices to be heard; has prevented any from dominating; and in doing so, has revealed great community benefit for the neighborhoods, property owners, and the university. It has also led to Emory's undertaking significant congestion mitigation actions.

With strong consensus behind the urban design guidelines, local government is very supportive of enacting the needed zoning overlays that will smooth the way to action. Thus, the Clifton Community Partnership, a platform for constant interchange, is fostering trust and a sense of collaboration. Messy? Sometimes. Effective? Yes, if the measure of effectiveness is getting better things done, adding livability while meeting the business needs of the university, and lowering barriers and building connections.

Fourth, the city should be mindful of the important role media and communications play in molding the public climate for visionary change. The

strategic planning process should include an integrated and sustained communications program throughout the implementation process. Seldom does a bold redevelopment or capital project go from vision to plan, design, finance, and construction during any one electoral cycle. Yet, too often, leaders neglect the importance of tending the public opinion climate, to sustain the story of where individual development projects—decisions about LRT station locations, streetscape and green space improvements, sports facilities, buildings, and more—are taking the city and how they relate to the consensus-based vision. With the strategic plan as jigsaw puzzle box lid, excellent and sustained communications—visual as well as written—are what relate the various pieces, the clusters as they come on line over time, in the public mind to the vision.

Conclusion

The ULI panel members bring insights from many other cities and communities that are struggling without a shared vision. The panel knows the city is capable of coming together and taking action when instinct says that is what is needed. When the bridge collapsed, the citizens of Minneapolis did not stand on the riverbanks waiting for official help. With disregard for all caution, the city jumped right in and amazed the world. The I-35W bridge will open in late 2008. A crisis prompted unprecedented cooperation among city, county, state, and federal agencies; businesses; and institutions. Interstate 35W will resume its critical role in keeping the people and the economy of the metropolitan area flowing and connected.

Developing the shared strategic vision, focusing on linkages along the Washington Avenue South/Cedar Avenue/Riverside Avenue corridor, capping the gulch—each of these is not a crisis; one cannot expect mountains to move, ideas to flow, or money to drop from heaven. But in many ways, taking the steps to link a robust downtown with what is arguably Minnesota's most important economic asset, its great research and teaching university—to open the flow of people, ideas, investment, and imagination—could be an amazing unintended positive consequence of the tragedy of August 1, 2007. Could this connection become the lasting memorial, a living acknowledgment that all who lost their lives that day were connected in invisible ways to everyone in the region?

About the Panel

Maureen McAvey

Panel Chair
Washington, D.C.

McAvey is executive vice president for the Initiatives Group at the Urban Land Institute in Washington, D.C. ULI is the premier research and education organization within the real estate and land use industry. In her position, McAvey is responsible for all research and content programs currently underway at the institute. Prior to her current position, McAvey was the ULI Senior Resident Fellow for urban development. She has over 25 years of experience in real estate development, consulting, and the creation of public/private financial structures.

She was director, business development, for Federal Realty Investment Trust (FRIT), a New York Stock Exchange—traded owner and manager of retail developments and mixed-use developments. In that capacity, McAvey assisted in the establishment of a public/private financial structure of a mixed-use retail/housing development in Arlington County, Virginia. She also completed a similar public/private partnership with the city of San Antonio to further FRIT's Houston Street mixed-use project there. As part of the San Antonio project, tax increment financing, Urban Development Action Grant funds, and an Economic Development Administration grant assisted in funding necessary public improvements.

For the city of St. Louis, McAvey served as the director of development. In that mayoral cabinet-level capacity, she was also executive director of the St. Louis Development Corporation, leading seven development-related boards and commissions. Major accomplishments included construction of a new neighborhood commercial center, anchored by a 60,000-square-foot, 24-hour grocery; a privately financed \$1 million master plan for the revitalization of the downtown area; negotiation of

development agreements to secure a new 1,000-room convention headquarters hotel; and a neighborhood planning effort.

Before her post in St. Louis, McAvey led the real estate consulting practices in Boston for Deloitte & Touche and for Coopers & Lybrand. While in the “Big Six” firms, she directed the due diligence efforts for over \$12 billion in securitization projects for major banking and financial institutions. Her clients included institutional developers, major corporations, utilities, colleges, and universities. Consulting efforts ran the gamut of new financings, restructuring, troubled projects, strategic planning, and mergers and acquisitions.

Robert Dunphy

Washington, D.C.

Senior Resident Fellow, Transportation, at the Urban Land Institute, Dunphy created ULI's program of transportation research and has been responsible for the institute's research, books, conferences, public policy, and public outreach on transportation and land use, transit, and parking. In his previous role as transportation research director, he directed studies of seven large regions recognized for their efforts in implementing consistent regional transportation and development policies, reported in his book *Moving Beyond Gridlock: Traffic and Development*. Dunphy is the author or project director of numerous other books, including *Development around Transit*, *Residential Streets*, *Dimensions of Parking*, *Parking Requirements of Shopping Centers*, and *Transportation Management through Partnerships*, as well as a forthcoming book on transit-oriented development and the transportation chapters in *Implementing Smart Growth at the Local Level* and *Transforming Suburban Business Districts*. In addition, he created “Myths and Facts about Transportation and Growth,” a popular brochure

that presented hard facts on often-soft issues and became the first in a series.

Dunphy has collaborated on a number of studies of national and research interest for the Federal Transit Administration, the governor of Maryland, and the District of Columbia. Dunphy is active in national committees of the Institute of Transportation Engineers and the Transportation Research Board, for which he chairs the Transportation and Land Development committee. He is a member of Lambda Alpha International, an honorary land economics society. Dunphy is a frequent speaker on issues of transportation and smart growth, transit-related development, and parking for national and local groups including ULI district councils, business and leadership organizations, transit associations, and government agencies. He served on Maryland's Transportation Solutions Group, organized by Governor Parris N. Glendening to advise on a controversial suburban highway proposal.

Barry Elbasani

Berkeley, California

Elbasani is a founding principal of ELS Architects. He is responsible for overseeing all projects and ensuring that the firm's vision and underlying philosophy are sustained. Elbasani is committed to design solutions that respect their environmental and cultural context, achieve architectural and technical excellence, and create places that celebrate and enhance the experience of urban life.

Under his direction, ELS has earned a national reputation for its success in urban planning and the design of major downtown retail and mixed-use projects, and performing arts, educational, and cultural, sports, and recreational facilities. Additionally, he has extensive experience in renovation and urban design.

His completed projects include Stonebriar Centre, near Dallas, Texas; Village of Merrick Park in Coral Gables, Florida; and Church Street Plaza in Evanston, Illinois. He is currently working on Victoria Ward Village Shops, a mixed-use urban village in Honolulu, Hawaii; a mixed-use campus gateway at Fresno State University, California;

Summerlin Town Center in Summerlin, Nevada; and Chiva City in Valencia, Spain.

Elbasani's retail and mixed-use experience is broad and includes several renovations and the design and planning of open-air, enclosed, and festival retail centers. He was principal-in-charge for Pioneer Place in Portland, which has been profiled in ULI publications and received an AIA Design Award. The Grand Avenue in downtown Milwaukee received the Award of Excellence in Urban Retail, awarded by the ULI in 1988. Denver Pavilions, North Point Center, Woodlands Mall, and Stonebriar Centre have all received design awards from the International Council of Shopping Centers.

Elbasani received a bachelor of architecture degree from Cooper Union School in 1964 and a master of architecture in urban design from Harvard University in 1965. He is registered to practice architecture in California, Georgia, Florida, New Jersey, New York, and Texas and is certified by the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards. He is a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects and the Institute for Urban Design; is a member of the Urban Land Institute Mixed Use Council, the International Council of Shopping Centers, and Lambda Alpha International; and has lectured at the University of California at Los Angeles's real estate school. He has served on ULI's Advisory Panels for Downtown San Jose, Cincinnati, West Palm Beach, and the Nationals Baseball Stadium Arena in Washington, D.C.

Daniel L. Glasson

Washington, D.C.

Glasson is a Visiting Fellow at the Urban Land Institute on loan from the Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) in the U.S. Department of Defense. He joined OEA in June 2006 as a project manager. OEA is a field activity of the Department of Defense with a primary mission of assisting communities affected by defense program changes, including base closures or realignments (BRAC), base expansions, and contract or program cancellations. Among Glasson's multiple assignments, he serves as an OEA project manager for the Aberdeen Proving Ground (Maryland);

Fort Benning (Georgia); the Guam Military Complex; the state of Maryland; Compatible Growth/Joint Land Use Study projects in Florida and New Jersey; and several army and air force reserve centers in Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

Glasson is a Presidential Management Fellow (PMF), inducted into the PMF program in October 2006. Prior to joining OEA, he was a project manager for the Economic Development Administration's (EDA) University Center for Economic Diversification at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. He assisted Michigan communities affected by automobile and other manufacturing plant closures, managing market and feasibility analyses and proposing economic turnaround strategies.

Glasson was also involved in urban redevelopment planning for several Michigan communities, including Traverse City and Jackson. Before joining EDA, he was a consultant for Accenture. Glasson holds a master of urban planning degree and a Certificate in Russian and East European Studies from the University of Michigan. He is a member of the American Planning Association, a Fulbright Scholar alumnus (Poland, 2004–2005), and a returned Peace Corps volunteer (Poland, 1998–2000).

Mary Means

Alexandria, Virginia

Means is founder and president of Mary Means + Associates, Inc., a planning and community development firm that helps cities, towns, counties, and civic interest groups make their communities better places to live, work, and visit.

She has extensive experience in community-based strategic planning, often involving the need to bridge boundaries: jurisdictional, organizational, socioeconomic, and disciplinary. She has headed teams responsible for large community vision plans, regional heritage development efforts, urban neighborhood plans, county growth-management efforts, and scenic road corridor-management plans. Her active involvement in national networks, coupled with an active calendar of conference engagements, keeps her abreast of best prac-

tices in community development, civic engagement, and heritage tourism. Before forming Mary Means + Associates, Means was vice president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, where she is best known for having created the National Main Street program.

Means has led many successful community-based strategic planning efforts that have galvanized support for positive change in struggling downtowns, older neighborhoods, and fast-growing communities. The Rutland, Vermont, Redevelopment Strategy served as blueprint for \$45 million in new investment and dramatic change in the city's image and civic health. The Spotsylvania County (Virginia) Comprehensive Plan marked the emergence of deep community support for strong growth management policies. The Akron (Ohio) Downtown Vision Plan defined development strategies that quickly led to strong community support for a new downtown baseball park and other arts and entertainment projects.

A recognized national leader in heritage development, Means has prepared concept plans, feasibility studies, and management plans for large national heritage areas, trails and greenways, and scenic byways in several states. She led the multi-disciplinary teams that prepared plans for the Delaware & Lehigh Canal National Heritage Corridor and the Lancaster-York Heritage Region. Her background in history and avid interest in kayaking serve the firm's interpretive planning assignments well. Means was a founding member of the National Center for Heritage Development and served as program chair for three national heritage development conferences.

She has a master's degree in history and a bachelor of arts in humanities. She was Loeb Fellow at Harvard University's Graduate School of Design.

Marilee Utter

Denver, Colorado

Utter is president of Citiventure Associates LLC, a Denver-based real estate development and consulting firm specializing in transit-oriented development, urban infill, and public/private transactions. Her areas of particular expertise include

mixed-use projects, bus- and rail-anchored developments, large-scale master planning, reuse of historic buildings, and recapture of environmentally affected sites.

Utter's background in both public and private real estate has led to nationally published articles and numerous engagements focused on innovative approaches to community redevelopment and urban issues. Projects of note include leading the Development around Transit efforts on the T-Rex project and more than 25 other sites in the Denver region; redevelopment of a failed regional mall, Cinderella City, into a one-million-square-foot mixed-use transit-oriented town center; redevelopment of a 350,000-square-foot historic downtown department store, the Denver Dry Building, into housing, retail, and office spaces; and master plan and zoning for 65 acres in Denver's Central Platte Valley, transforming the urban rail yard into the region's premier commercial, residential, and recreational district.

Previously, Utter was transit-oriented development specialist for the Regional Transportation District (Denver); regional vice president for Trilium Corporation, a real estate development company; director of asset management for the City and County of Denver; and vice president of Wells Fargo Bank.

Utter holds a BA in mathematics and French from Colorado Women's College, an MBA from the Anderson School of the University of California at Los Angeles, and a certificate in State and Local Public Policy from Harvard's Kennedy School. Her professional affiliations include the Counselor of Real Estate designation and membership in the Urban Land Institute, CU Real Estate Center, and the Congress for New Urbanism. She serves on the board of several community organizations, including the Metropolitan State College of Denver Foundation and the Center for the Visual Arts.



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