Great Streets
Washington, D.C.

AN ADVISORY SERVICES PROGRAM REPORT
Great Streets
Washington, D.C.

A Strategy for Implementation

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ABOUT ULI–THE URBAN LAND INSTITUTE

ULI–the Urban Land Institute is a nonprofit research and education organization that promotes responsible leadership in the use of land in order to enhance the total environment.

The Institute maintains a membership representing a broad spectrum of interests and sponsors a wide variety of educational programs and forums to encourage an open exchange of ideas and sharing of experience. ULI initiates research that anticipates emerging land use trends and issues and proposes creative solutions based on that research; provides advisory services; and publishes a wide variety of materials to disseminate information on land use and development.

Established in 1936, the Institute today has more than 32,000 members from 90 countries, 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 America’s most respected and widely quoted sources of objective information on urban planning, growth, and development.

This Advisory Services program report is intended to further the objectives of the Institute and to make authoritative information generally available to those seeking knowledge in the field of urban land use.

Richard M. Rosan, President
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 such issues 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 team is composed of highly qualified professionals who volunteer their time to ULI. They are chosen for their knowledge of the topic and screened to ensure their objectivity. ULI teams are interdisciplinary and are developed based on the specific scope of the assignment. They provide a holistic look at development problems. A respected ULI member with previous experience chairs each team.

A key strength of the program is ULI’s unique ability to draw upon 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 Urban Land Institute’s mission, this Advisory Services report is intended to provide objective advice that will promote the responsible use of land to enhance the environment.
On behalf of the Urban Land Institute, the panel would like to thank the government of the District of Columbia for inviting it to participate in the discussion of the Great Streets program. Special thanks are extended to Mayor Anthony A. Williams for initiating the Great Streets program. His vision and leadership have made the District of Columbia one of the country’s finest cities.

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Introduction and Overview

The Great Streets Initiative is a program that will strategically use public investments to improve local quality of life and attract additional private investment to communities. The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) has allocated $100 million over the next four years to improve infrastructure and streetscapes and to catalyze private investment that improves neighborhood quality of life and creates a physical environment that is conducive to the expansion of retail, housing, employment, services, and other community needs. These public investments will improve the safety, mobility, economic strength, accessibility, and physical beauty of these corridors, the main streets of many of the most vibrant neighborhoods in the city.

The intent of the Great Streets program is to revitalize corridors along their entire length rather than a specific district or node and to improve the communities that border them. The program is a comprehensive initiative that brings together many public agencies that have a stake in the revitalization of the corridors. The other D.C. public agencies involved include the Office of Planning, the Office of Economic Development, the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Commission on Arts and Humanities, the Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Department of Environmental Health.

The Corridors

The six Great Streets corridors were recognized not only as being critical corridors in the District of Columbia, but also as being in areas with strong local organizations and leaders capable of partnering with public agencies to encourage “clean and safe” activities and to program public events and activities that use in a positive way the enhanced public spaces. The Great Streets corridors are gateways into the city and critical to providing essential links and mobility across and between neighborhoods of the city. They are recognized for their historical significance to the city and the nation.

The communities along the Great Streets also are working communities whose diverse neighborhoods are beginning to grow after a long period of disinvestment. Their major concerns are that their neighborhoods are safe and that they are perceived as safe.

The Great Streets program has designated the following six corridors in Washington, D.C., for investment:
**7th Street/Georgia Avenue, N.W.**

The Georgia Avenue and 7th Street corridor is 5.6 miles long and runs from Mount Vernon Square in downtown to Eastern Avenue at the District of Columbia border with Silver Spring, Maryland. Along this corridor are many activity nodes, including the D.C. Convention Center, Howard University, Georgia Avenue/Petworth Metro Station, Walter Reed Campus, and the Gateway.

7th Street/Georgia Avenue, N.W.
**H Street N.E./Benning Road, N.E./S.E.**

The H Street/Benning Road corridor stretches 4.7 miles from North Capitol Street across the Anacostia River to Southern Avenue at the District of Columbia/Maryland border. The fabric of this corridor is highly diverse. H Street from 2nd Street to the intersection of Maryland Avenue and Bladensburg and Benning roads is a medium-density urban retail corridor. Primarily a lower-density and auto-oriented street, Benning Road has a number of uses.

H Street, N.E., from Union Station to Benning Road.
Pennsylvania Avenue, S.E.

Pennsylvania Avenue, S.E., runs from 2nd Street, S.E., through Capitol Hill over the Anacostia River to Southern Avenue at the District of Columbia border with Maryland. This three-mile corridor is a major river crossing with access into and out of downtown Washington. It has major activity nodes at L’Enfant Square and Branch and Alabama avenues.
Nannie Helen Burroughs Avenue, N.E.
The Nannie Helen Burroughs corridor runs from Kenilworth Avenue to Eastern Avenue at the District of Columbia/Maryland border. As the shortest corridor, at 1.45 miles, Nannie Helen Burroughs is residential in nature with activity nodes at Division and Minnesota avenues.
**Minnesota Avenue, N.E./S.E.**

The Minnesota Avenue corridor stretches 3.5 miles from Sheriff Road, N.E., to Good Hope Road, S.E. The corridor is primarily residential and parkland in nature with activity nodes at the Minnesota Avenue Metro stop, East Capitol Street, Randle Circle, and Pennsylvania Avenue.
Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue/South Capitol Street

The Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue/South Capitol Street corridor spans 3.75 miles from Good Hope Road to Southern Avenue and the District of Columbia border with Maryland. The corridor connects the three neighborhoods of Anacostia, Congress Heights, and Belleveu. The activity nodes along this corridor are the St. Elizabeth’s Hospital complex, historic Anacostia, and the intersection of South Capitol and Mississippi avenues.
The ULI Process

Before arriving in Washington, D.C., the panel received a packet of briefing materials from DDOT that included information about the Great Streets program, the draft Great Streets Framework Plan, demographic and market information on the six corridors, upcoming and proposed projects on the corridors, and a list of links to related policy information. Upon arrival in Washington, D.C., panelists were briefed by representatives from DDOT and the deputy mayor for Planning and Economic Development. The panel toured the six corridors to determine the existing conditions and development potential. On the tour, it met with members of the community who explained the work that they are doing along the corridors, described their successes and challenges, and shared their hopes for the Great Streets program.

A major component of the ULI panel was public outreach and education through lectures, moderated discussions, and presentation of case studies from around the United States. Allan Jacobs, author of *Great Streets*, and former planning director of San Francisco, kicked off the public outreach events by giving a presentation on the key elements that make up Great Streets and sharing examples of Great Streets from around the world.

Panelists presented case studies of corridor revitalization projects in various stages of completion from around the country. The projects included Indiana Avenue in Indianapolis, Indiana; High Street in Columbus, Ohio; the Pearl District in Portland, Oregon; and Washington Street in Boston, Massachusetts. The case studies explained the planning process for creating Great Streets, detailed the complex partnerships that were formed to create change, and shared their success stories and lessons learned.

In addition, four panelists gave public presentations on specific characteristics of Great Streets and participated in a moderated discussion. The presentations focused on “green streets” and the role of landscape architecture in corridor revitalization; metered parking in Pasadena, California, and the importance of dedicating its revenue to fund streetscape improvements and programs to keep streetscapes clean and safe; the role of retail along great streets and the interface between public and private spaces; and the importance of transit along Great Streets.

The panel members then had a work session to examine and discuss the issues. The panel presented its findings and recommendations to DDOT staff members and the general public. This report summarizes the panel’s key recommendations and observations. It is divided into five sections:

- What Makes a Great Street?
- Great Streets Framework Plan Assessment
- Transportation
- Design
- Investment Impact
What Makes a Great Street?

Streets are about more than transportation and infrastructure. They are the place where private property meets the public realm. This interface must delicately balance a multitude of essential sectors and daily activities, including housing, multimodal transportation, commerce, and socialization. As the largest public spaces in cities, streets reflect the economic and social vibrancy of communities.

Great Streets are not just about streets; they are about people. They are where people want to be, where one feels comfortable and safe. They present interesting things to see, do, and discover. They have their own particular character and spirit that people embrace and make their own. Great Streets are economic drivers, offering a place where commerce can take place. Every element of Great Streets reinforces a sense of place. People go there because they want to be part of that vibrant sense of place.

By definition, Great Streets fulfill four responsibilities:

- They convey the quality, character, and aspirations of a neighborhood.
- They attract, stimulate, and sustain desirable economic and social activity involving any and all members of the community.
- They balance a diversity of transportation options without compromise to any mode.
- They secure and sustain stewardship by those who operate on and around the street.
To date, DDOT has completed a draft *Great Streets Framework Plan* to guide investments in street infrastructure and public realm improvements. The ULI panel was asked by DDOT and other involved agencies and community partners to review this document and determine the best way of targeting the limited public resources to gain the greatest public and private return in neighborhood quality of life, catalyzing retail and other private investment, and raising the bar overall on the quality of streets and public spaces in the District of Columbia.

**Strengths of the Plan**

The panel believes that the *Great Streets Framework Plan* is a strong guiding document that offers a bold and attainable vision for the redevelopment of the six corridors.

**Inclusive Planning Process**

One of the plan’s major strengths is that it is the result of an inclusive planning process. The community understands and supports the program, and the panel commends DDOT and the other involved city agencies for including the public in planning this initiative. This process is critical to maintaining interest in and momentum for the plan and the program.

**Acknowledges Existing Conditions**

The panel also commends the plan for recognizing the necessity of repairing the run-down physical condition of the streets as one of the first steps in revitalization. Addressing issues such as potholes, garbage, clogged or broken storm drains, dilapidated sidewalks, and dead street trees is essential in the development of Great Streets.

**Good Interagency Coordination**

Many different agencies are responsible for the multitude of issues addressed in the Great Streets program, and the framework plan coordinates among the key players. This interagency coordination is a critical element of the program because many different agencies have responsibility for and a stake in the redevelopment of the corridors.

**Focus of Investment around Strategic Nodes**

A major strength of the framework document is the plan to focus public investment around strategic nodes along the corridors. The limited public money available for the Great Streets program requires sound and cost-effective investments that will help spur future development. Focusing on specific nodes will create concentrated development opportunities that will serve as a catalyst for further change.

**Areas for Improvement**

Although the *Great Streets Framework Plan* has many strong components, the panel feels that several areas can be strengthened.
Institutionalize Coordination across All Agencies

The panel sees a need to institutionalize the coordination of the program across all city agencies to ensure that there is a central clearing house for information and accountability. Having one central agency that can hold the others accountable for their role in the Great Streets program is important in making sure that it is not one agency’s pet project while it is ignored by another.

Create a Process for Evaluating Readiness

The panel also feels that the document needs to include a process for evaluating a community’s readiness to receive infrastructure investment. The success of the program depends upon the community’s willingness to take ownership of the corridors, and an accurate way of measuring whether a community is ready to receive investment is necessary. Communities that are ready to receive investment are those that are feeling development pressures, have a market for re-development, and have established organizations that will take care of the investments.

Perform Complete Market Analysis

The panel believes that a market analysis should be undertaken to determine the feasibility of new retail, housing, office, and entertainment uses along each of the corridors. Infrastructure investments should be focused on strategic nodes that have the highest potential for development.

Avoid Excessive Retail Development

The panel feels that the amount of planned retail development along the corridors may exceed market realities. A comprehensive market analysis will help determine the proper amount of retail space.

Detail How to Balance Cars, Bikes, Transit, and Pedestrians

The consensus of the panel is that the framework plan lacks detail of how the corridors will balance the competing interests of automobiles, transit, cyclists, and pedestrians. This detail is important because the sharing of transportation modes will help determine the nature of the corridors.

Accurately Reflect What the Corridor Will Look Like in Pictorial Presentations

The images and renderings that are in the framework document may not accurately reflect the type of development that may be possible along the corridors. The panel recognizes the difficulty in graphically displaying a policy initiative, but presenting to the public the images that best reflect what could be developed is essential. DDOT runs the risk of offending the public if the images are inconsistent with the community’s vision of what the corridors should look like. Also, if what is ultimately built does not resemble the drawings, they may cause resentment or confusion.
Transportation

As the largest public spaces in cities, streets must fulfill a number of essential civic functions. One of those major functions is transportation. The movement of people into, out of, and within the city is critical to the health of a community. Great Streets balance all transportation modes without compromise. Creating such streets is a challenge. The panel believes the following policy changes are necessary to see the realization of Great Streets.

Maintain and Repair the Streets

The panel recommends that one of the first priorities for the District of Columbia is to bring all the streets to a basic level of maintenance and good repair. Because the physical condition of the streets is what people most notice and what sways the public’s perception, this step is essential at the start. When bringing the streets to a sustainable level of maintenance and repair, the city must design them to be Great Streets.

Make Great Streets Legal: Remove Regulatory Obstacles

The District of Columbia is home to some of the most prominent and well-known streets in the United States. Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Wisconsin, and Connecticut avenues are grand streets that ironically violate many of the city’s existing codes, regulations, and guidelines. In fact, five key elements of the city’s regulations currently stand in the way of Great Streets. Those regulations should be adjusted to require the conditions that make streets great and to forbid conditions that prevent greatness.

Design Code

Great Streets are invariably edged by buildings that engage and define the street. In the District of Columbia, zoning and design codes allow for buildings that support great streets, but the codes do not require them. In fact, strip malls, a development type particularly damaging to the creation of Great Streets, are not only allowed by the zoning codes affecting the corridors, they are a logical tool for meeting the city’s requirements. Such automobile-oriented development patterns are evident on many of the Great Streets corridors. The panel recommends the following changes to the design code to enhance Great Streets.

- Set building build-to lines to frame the street wall;
- Minimize or restrict curb cuts and use and preserve the existing alley system;
- Require that parking structures be “wrapped” with active uses or placed underground to minimize surface parking;
- Insist on building frontage transparency requirements to enliven storefront windows; and
- Require an adequate frequency and location of doorways to eliminate dead spaces in the streetscape.

Parking Code

In all of the District of Columbia’s most successful commercial main streets and mixed-use streets, parking is rarely provided for each building. Continuous retail storefronts are not interrupted by garage entrances. Parking is provided by a combination of on-street spaces and a handful of shared off-street garages. For new development, however, each building must provide its own on-site parking, with varying requirements for commercial uses over 3,000 square feet and for all residential units. Although the District of Columbia’s parking requirements are low by national standards, they do not respond to differing requirements of parking demand in the city’s diverse neighborhoods, nor do they allow flexibility for challenging sites.
Because some Great Streets corridors lack alleys, access to any provided parking must be from the front, requiring garage entrances to interrupt storefronts. For small parcels, locating parking underground may be physically impossible, and on larger parcels, economically infeasible. Required parking must therefore occur at the ground level, displacing square footage that would otherwise go to retail or other commercial uses. Because small parcels cannot meet the city’s parking requirements, pressure increases from potential developers to assemble parcels, despite the fact that the existing Great Streets corridors are dominated by continuous small parcels.

Except in historic districts, any time a change occurs in the “intensity” of a use, the city’s current parking requirements are triggered. As a result, converting an existing space to a restaurant is difficult because restaurants face the highest parking requirements. The panel recommends the following changes to the parking code to enhance Great Streets.

- Manage existing on-street parking better so that most commercial parking demand can be met on street.
- Eliminate or temporarily suspend all parking requirements in the Great Streets corridors. Combined with smarter on-street parking management, this change is one of the most powerful development incentives the city could provide.
- Set strong parking design requirements to minimize the negative impacts of parking on the vitality and walkability of the street.
- If parking minimums are maintained, establish in-lieu fees and encourage property owners to pay toward a common neighborhood parking garage.
- Require that all parking be shared and interconnected in order to maximize efficiency of parking.

The District of Columbia should follow the latest guidelines from the Federal Highway Administration’s Context Sensitive Solutions for Major Urban Thoroughfares and set design speed at the target speed for the roadway.

Similarly, the city should allow posted speed and target speed to vary considerably, as roads like Pennsylvania Avenue transition from a high-speed highway in Maryland to a neighborhood commercial street within the city. Currently, the city’s guidelines limit changes in design speed on a given corridor to no more than 10 mph.

**Geometrics.** The District of Columbia’s guidelines state that they are consistent with the more-detailed American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) guidelines, but they do not offer the same degree of guidance and flexibility as AASHTO. Under AASHTO guidelines, nine-foot travel lanes are acceptable under certain conditions, whereas the city’s guidelines simply urge a minimum of ten feet in all conditions.

The current guidelines require overly generous, inflexible intersection geometries, allowing motorists to turn corners at high speeds regardless of the presence of pedestrians or other factors. In fact, superelevations are required even on collector streets, banking the streets at curves like racetracks. Although these measures are appropriate on rural and suburban streets, they create unsafe conditions for pedestrians in the more-complex urban environments.

**Context-Sensitive Design Guidelines.** The District of Columbia has long recognized the shortcomings of its existing engineering guidelines and has created a set of Context Sensitive Design Guidelines in order to acknowledge that the same engineering treatment is not appropriate in all situations. Those guidelines are a great start, but they focus on process rather than on providing flexibility to the designer.
The District of Columbia’s streets are not so special that they need their own set of guidelines. The city could consider dropping most of its existing guidelines and instead referring designers to other manuals, such as the AASHTO guidelines, for major arterials and thoroughfares, supplemented by the Federal Highway Administration’s *Context Sensitive Solutions for Major Urban Thoroughfares* or the Institute of Transportation Engineers’ *Residential Streets* for local residential streets.

The District of Columbia’s guidelines can focus instead on how to address tensions between modes in the most complex situations, as well as how designers can support the goals of the Great Streets program.

**Street Construction and Infrastructure Guidelines**

The panel recommends that the DDOT ensure streets are built solidly so they do not become future maintenance headaches. The panel also recommends coordinating street and infrastructure improvements and repairs to avoid multiple service disruptions. The panel commends DDOT for having the foresight in planning to construct the H Street streetcar tracks when they do the streetscape improvement in the corridor even though the transit line is not scheduled to begin service for some time.

**Utility Reconstruction**

The District of Columbia should require utility companies to patch streets to the same standards by which they were originally built. This requirement is important to protect the city’s investment in the streets. In addition, the city and utility companies should coordinate infrastructure and road repairs.

**Address Pedestrian-Safety Hot Spots**

On Great Streets, pedestrians never feel threatened by auto traffic. DDOT should complete a safety analysis of all the corridors, focusing on bicyclist and pedestrian injuries and fatalities. The panel recommends that for all “hot spots”—those with multiple accidents—detailed pedestrian audits should be completed, making specific recommendations for improving pedestrian safety while at the same time improving pedestrian mobility.

The Minnesota Avenue Metrorail station is a good case in point, where a key crosswalk is missing to connect a local school with the station. Putting a fence in the Minnesota median will only force the schoolchildren into the intersection itself. Because they often outnumber cars, their movements should be accommodated through a crosswalk and median refuge, perhaps with all-red phases scheduled to correspond with school start and end times. The children’s safety should be paramount over a few seconds of delay for motorists, and the street design should tell the kids that they have at least the same level of respect as automobile commuters from Maryland.

**Decide Where Congestion Goes**

The entire transportation profession realizes that it cannot build its way out of congestion. Aside from implementing congestion pricing programs, like those in London, where drivers must pay a toll to enter the city depending on the time of day and volume of traffic, the best that can be done is deciding where the congestion goes, placing bottlenecks where they have the least detrimental effects on local communities and the overall transportation network. This principle is what supports the use of metering lights at freeway on-ramps, which increases the number of motorists who can use the freeway by queuing motorists back onto local streets and metering their flow onto the freeway.

In the District of Columbia, however, the street system is designed to create most congestion bottlenecks in the heart of neighborhood commercial streets, perhaps the worst locations for metering traffic. Benning Road is a good example: cars back up in the commercial districts at Minnesota Avenue and on the approach to H Street, but speed cameras had to be set up on the bridge and near the power plant because of excessive speeding. The panel recommends that the streets should be managed in the reverse, with traffic signals timed to meter the flow of traffic into the commercial districts, using the empty stretch as queuing space.

At the regional level, the city should look carefully at how Maryland’s streets feed into its streets. At Pennsylvania Avenue and East Capitol Street, for example, Maryland has designed its portions of these streets as high-speed, high-capacity highways, and the District of Columbia tries to maintain them as multiple-function urban arterials. With less capacity on the District side, the result is that all the congestion ends up in the city, particularly in the commercial districts in Ward 7. The District of Columbia goes to...
great lengths to accommodate the burden coming from Maryland by eliminating on-street parking during the peak periods at many locations and providing a reversible lane on Pennsylvania Avenue, but these strategies only serve to exacerbate congestion in the commercial districts.

The panel recommends that the city set the capacity of its streets on the Maryland border at levels no greater than the capacity of those streets in their most constrained location. That is, the city should not allow congestion in Ward 7’s commercial districts in order to alleviate traffic congestion in Maryland. The city can continue to accommodate the same number of cars coming from Maryland, but it can increase the mobility of its residents by shifting congestion out of its commercial streets.

**Make Transit Work**

With Metrorail facing capacity constraints and few opportunities for increasing automobile capacity within the District, most of the city’s future growth must be accommodated through improvements to surface transit and an increase in walking trips. The latter will occur in part through the Great Streets program and through an increase in housing development within the city. The former will require a number of transit investments already being planned. These investments focus on identifying the city’s primary transit corridors—those streets that carry the bulk of riders—and making the primary lines fast, frequent, and reliable.

This transit investment is critical. All travelers make their travel decisions based primarily upon travel time. In order to compete with the car, mass transit must not be stuck in the same congestion as cars. Moreover, faster transit means more-frequent transit, because buses can be turned around more frequently at the end of the line. The panel recommends that DDOT implement the following changes to ensure that transit works well.

- Give buses signal priority, except to make way for another primary transit line on a cross street.
- Optimize transit stop locations and spacing.
- Put stops on pedestrian bulb-outs, so that buses are not delayed merging back into traffic.
- Support more prepaid fares, so that drivers are not delayed issuing passes at the bus door.
- Explore proof of payment, so that passengers can pay their fare before they get on the bus, allowing them to get on and off the bus from all doors.
- Switch to low-floor vehicles, so that passengers with limited mobility, strollers, or wheelchairs can board quickly and easily.

**Anacostia Streetcar**

The Anacostia Streetcar is being promoted primarily as an economic development tool, but designing the streetcar as a mobility tool is critical as well. Streetcars have one key disadvantage over buses—they cannot maneuver around obstacles. Thus, they can be stopped behind double-parked delivery trucks, cars backing into parallel parking spaces, or cars queued to turn left or right. In order to ensure that the streetcar will be fast and reliable, the parking along the route must be managed and enforced to eliminate the need for double-parking. Also, transit priority treatments at intersections should ensure that the streetcar need not stop at red lights, nor be delayed by cars waiting to turn.

**Adopt New Multimodal Transportation Standards**

Great Streets serve many different functions, so DDOT’s engineers must measure the success of these streets with more criteria than auto level of service (LOS). Auto LOS’s A–F scale examines the seconds of delay that cars experience at intersections or along roadway segments. This scale tells very little, however, about how many people the street can serve, or how successful retail will be along that street, or whether the people living and working on that street think it is a Great Street.

To be effective, performance measures for great streets must be quantitative, using simple data collection requirements. They must also cover three key areas:

- Functional;
- Economic; and
- Social.

**Functional Performance Indicators**

The city’s current street typology system—arterial, collector, local—measures streets in terms of how important they are for cars. This system is appropriate for suburban locations, but it does not tell engineers how important multimodal streets are for transit, pedestrians, bikes, and other modes.
The panel recommends that the District of Columbia identify how important each of its streets is for all modes, not just for cars. The panel also recommends that the city adopt performance indicators for these modes, using as a model ongoing work in cities such as Seattle, Washington; Denver, Colorado; Minneapolis, Minnesota; and Arlington, Virginia.

The panel recommends that the District of Columbia abandon LOS criteria that measure seconds of delay for cars, or overall capacity for cars, and switch to measures that consider delay and capacity for the movement of people.

**Economic Performance Indicators**

Studying the economic performance of a corridor is an adequate way to measure the effect of the infrastructure investments. The number of new businesses and housing units, and retail sales per square foot are important indicators of the strength of Great Streets.

**Social Capital and Community Performance Indicators**

Although these performance indicators are much harder to judge, measuring them is important to fully understand the health and strength of the community.

**Implement Innovative Parking Strategy**

Parking can be a major problem along Great Streets; it can make or break a retail area. To help create Great Streets, the panel recommends that the city charge performance-based prices for curb parking and return the revenue to the local area to pay for added public services. With these two policies, curb parking will help create Great Streets, improve transportation, and increase the economic vitality of cities.

**Performance-Based Parking Prices**

Performance-based prices will balance the varying demand for parking with the fixed supply of spaces. The balance between demand and supply can be called the “Goldilocks” principle of performance-based parking prices: the price is too high if many spaces are vacant and too low if no spaces are vacant. When a few vacant spaces are available everywhere, the prices are just right. If prices are adjusted to yield one or two vacant spaces in every block (about 85 percent occupancy), the public will see that curb parking is readily available.

Prices that produce an occupancy rate of about 85 percent can be called performance-based for three reasons. First, curb parking will perform efficiently. Most spaces will be occupied, but drivers will always be able to find a vacant space. Second, the transportation system will perform efficiently. Circling for curb parking congests traffic, wastes fuel, and pollutes the air. Third, the economy will perform efficiently. The price of parking will be higher when demand is higher, and this higher price will encourage rapid parking turnover. Drivers will park, buy something, and leave quickly so that other drivers can use the spaces. For parking, transportation, and economic efficiency, cities should set prices to yield about an 85 percent occupancy rate.

**Local Revenue Return**

Performance-based prices for curb parking can yield ample public revenue. If the city returns this revenue to the areas that generate it to pay for added public spending on the metered streets, residents and local merchants will support the performance-based prices. The added funds can pay for cleaning and maintaining the sidewalks, planting trees, improving lighting, burying overhead utility wires, removing graffiti, and providing other public improvements.

Often, local merchants and business owners are reluctant to give up free parking, but significant value is gained from the installation of meters that charge prices that produce a few vacancies. Business owners will see that everyone who wants to shop in the district can park quickly and the meter money is spent to clean the sidewalks and provide security. These added public services make the business district a place where people want to be, rather than merely a place where anyone who can find a space can park free. Returning the meter revenue generated by the business district to the district for the district can help convince merchants and property owners to support the idea of performance-based prices for curb parking.

Suppose also that curb parking remains underpriced in other business districts. Everyone complains about the shortage of parking in those districts, and cars searching for curb parking congest traffic. No meter revenue is available to clean the sidewalks and provide other amenities. Performance-based prices will improve curb parking by creating a few vacancies, the added meter revenue will pay to improve public services, and these added public services will create political support for performance-based prices.
The Great Streets program is an ambitious initiative that has the potential to transform some of the most important corridors in the District of Columbia. The Great Streets Framework Plan has identified existing and future projects in each of the six corridors that are in various stages of planning and development. The panel provides the following recommendations to enhance the Great Streets planning and design process.

**Undertake a Complete and Thorough Design Process**

The panel recommends that projects along the Great Streets have a complete and thorough design process. This process should include the input of the community, property owners, local developers, and city staff members. It is essential that this process is thorough to ensure that public investments will have an effect on the community. The design process should include public outreach and education and implementation and management strategies.

**Continue Workshops with Community Groups**

The current momentum behind the Great Streets program is owed in part to the rigorous public outreach during the planning process. DDOT provided the community a forum where residents can share their insights and provide input into the corridors on which they live. The panel commends this work and recommends that it is continued throughout the process. As the Great Streets program moves from plan to reality, DDOT should continue the public outreach and education process. Workshops on specific issues, such as parking, retail, and transportation, should be held to educate the public on the positive benefits that the upcoming changes will bring to their community. This process is essential to maintain the momentum that the program has built, and it will also help increase support for the redevelopment.

**Create an Implementation Strategy**

The panel recommends that a detailed design and implementation strategy be created for each corridor. The strategy should include phasing and should delegate responsibilities to city agencies and community organizations.

1. **Identify Basic Needs.** The first phase in the implementation strategy should be to identify basic needs—such as street repairs, lighting, signage, and cleanliness. Bringing the corridor up to a basic level of repair and maintenance is the essential first step in stabilizing the corridors.

2. **Identify Small Projects.** The next phase of the strategy is to identify small projects that have a lasting effect. They can include minor facade improvements, street furniture, or basic landscaping.

3. **Identify and Link with Existing Projects.** The next phase should be to identify existing projects along the corridors.

The Great Streets program should seek to collaborate with others to ensure that all entities have mutual goals and can capitalize on each other’s strengths. DDOT can offer additional technical support if it is needed.

**Identify a Project Management Structure**

A major challenge of the Great Streets program is that it is very ambitious and it requires that a number of both public and private agencies are involved in the redevelopment of the corridors. The panel recommends that DDOT identify a clear project management structure for the Great Streets program. This hierarchy is essential because responsibilities will need to be delegated among the community, city agencies, and private partnerships. A clear project management
structure will ensure that all parties are included in and aware of the planning, design, and development processes.

Amplify Unique and Recognizable Nodes

The physical and economic conditions on and surrounding the Great Streets vary within each corridor and among the different corridors. All of the corridors are experiencing various levels of development pressure that have the potential to bring change. The Great Streets program can bring the seed capital to initiate redevelopment. The panel believes that to get the most out of the public investments, redevelopment should initially focus on existing high-traffic-activity nodes. These nodes may be around key intersections, Metro stations, or retail corridors. These areas have the greatest potential for redevelopment because they already generate a significant amount of vehicular and pedestrian traffic. A number of improvements can be made to enhance these nodes, such as the following:

- Bringing the existing conditions up to a basic level of repair and maintenance;
- Initiating a “clean and safe” program;
- Enhancing the streetscape; and
- Marketing and branding the area.

By targeting public investment on established activity nodes, DDOT will be able to better leverage its money because these areas will be seen as a safe investment by the private sector. As these nodes mature and strengthen, the momentum will expand throughout the corridors.

Develop Standard Operation and Maintenance Programs

The panel recommends that DDOT institute a standard operation and maintenance program for the upkeep of the corridors. The infrastructure investments alone are not enough to stabilize the corridors. Entities are needed within the corridors that are in charge of their upkeep and programming. The panel recommends that those entities have ties to the local community to foster stewardship of the corridors. The operation and maintenance programs should ensure that all municipal responsibilities, such as garbage removal, street cleaning, and code and parking enforcement, are taken care of. The programs should provide maintenance above and beyond what is required of the city. In addition, the programs should coordinate with local community groups to provide assistance in their neighborhood efforts. Creating such programs is essential because they will help to stabilize the corridors.

Foster Stewardship

One of the key elements leading to the success of Great Streets is the stewardship of the corridors by their residents. The streets cannot maintain themselves, and the city does not have the resources to fully program and maintain all 22 miles of the Great Streets corridors. The local communities will have to take ownership of the streets if the program is to have a lasting effect.

The panel recommends that DDOT do everything it can to foster the stewardship of the corridors. DDOT has already made significant progress in this effort by its inclusive planning process, partnering with local community organizations, and recognizing that the success of the program depends on the local residents. One of the main ways to foster stewardship is to maintain the momentum of activity. Something should always be going on. This activity will keep people engaged and excited about their community.

Enforce Codes and Provide Guidelines for Private Property

The physical condition of the private property within all of the corridors varies greatly, primarily because of general disinvestment, poor property management, and a lack of code enforcement. The panel witnessed a number of instances where local businesses were in clear violation of existing zoning. In many cases, the existing streetscapes are in good condition, but the condition of the private property lowers the perception of the corridor. To address this problem, the panel recommends that the city improve its code enforcement by targeting problem properties along the corridors. The Great Streets could be designated as special and the penalties for code violations could be doubled, similar to traffic fines in construction zones.

The panel recommends that the city create a clear set of design guidelines for private property owners. Those guide-
lines should include regulation on the following areas for both occupied and vacant buildings:

- Trash storage;
- Landscaping;
- Roll-up riot gates;
- Lighting;
- Facade treatment;
- Signage;
- Storefront transparency.

Such regulations will set a standard for property maintenance, operation, and upkeep and will help stabilize the corridors.

### Develop a Retail Merchandising Plan

One of the main focuses of the Great Streets Initiative is to bring retail back to the city. The diverse physical conditions, demographics, and nearby retail establishments of the corridors do not provide a single solution to this difficult problem. Some corridors are on the cusp of a retail revival and need minimal assistance, whereas others need more strategic planning and preparation to position them to attract local and national retailers.

All of the corridors, no matter what their current status, need a plan to attract retail. The panel recommends that a retail merchandising plan be created for each of the corridors. This plan should look at the current demographics, and retailers and should identify deficiencies in the market. The plan should build on the corridors’ unique assets to create a niche in the regional market. The plan needs to be strategic to encourage both local entrepreneurs and national retailers to invest in the area. The plan should identify incentives that can be offered to potential businesses that are interested in locating in one the corridors.

### Encourage Small-Scale, Expressive, Individual Improvements

The Great Streets program should allow for small-scale, expressive, and individual improvements. These enhancements can include providing residents and business owners with large flower barrels, letting them landscape planting strips along the corridor; installing local public art or murals; or turning vacant lots into community gardens or open space. Residents and businesses will enjoy participating in these easy and inexpensive projects. These projects will also foster stewardship by encouraging residents’ feelings of ownership in the changes that are happening in their community.

### Use Design to Create Areas of Continuity

Each of the unique nodes in the corridors should have some common elements that help define the area. This identification builds a sense of place and gives the area an identity. Many design elements can be used to create the areas of continuity, including the following:

- Decorative lighting;
- Themed landscaping;
- Ornamental street furniture;
- Textured or patterned sidewalks or streets.

These elements can be understated. Their intent is to create continuity within the node and to foster the sense of place and identity.

### Create Integrated Streetscapes

Although the six Great Streets corridors have experienced heavy disinvestment, they provide an excellent framework from which to begin a physical and economic transformation. The challenge of the Great Streets program is to re-create historic character and to build streets that meet today’s needs, accommodating a variety of functions. The framework plan has multiple detailed street sections for all of the corridors that are sufficient for creating Great Streets. The panel recommends that the streetscapes include the following design features:

- Use of innovative solutions, such as bioretention for stormwater management;
- Integration of permeable paving materials to allow percolation of water to street plantings;
- Use of natural materials to reduce environmental damage and provide connection to the local landscape;
- Use of landscaping to create opportunities for buffering and noise mitigation.
The panel applauds the Great Streets program for its goal of investing in some of the city’s most important corridors with the intention of expanding the areas of resurgence to a larger community and in thinking of the community first and not only of transportation. DDOT is faced with the difficult task of strategically investing $100 million in the six Great Streets corridors to create a lasting and sustainable effect with its investment. To obtain that lasting effect, the investments need to go beyond the traditional streetscape improvements and also provide for local capacity building.

**Target and Support Investment in Retail Nodes**

Beyond bringing the streets up to a basic level of maintenance and repair, the panel believes that the best investment of the Great Streets money is in the various retail nodes along the corridors. However, the framework plan’s vision of continuous community retail streets over all corridors is ambitious and unnecessary. Retail nodes should be located strategically, on the basis of market studies, assessment of the physical conditions, and input from the community. Great Streets that are primarily residential or transit in nature will connect the retail nodes and maximize their success.

The streets have not been analyzed in enough detail to see which retail nodes may have the highest possibility of success, expansion, and sustainability. Market analysis, such as that done for Georgia Avenue, will help verify that the nodes selected are strategically located to be financially successful. These analyses need to be completed for all streets.

**Assess the Community’s Readiness**

Before DDOT invests its money in the Great Streets corridors, it needs to assess a community’s overall readiness to receive such funds. This step is essential to ensure that the investment’s effect will be maximized. Improvements beyond maintenance and repair should be concentrated in the retail nodes for maximum advantage and should be tiered in accordance with the node’s ability to accept, direct, and maintain the improvements. The panel recommends that an assessment strategy be created that includes a rating system and a process that outlines the characteristics necessary for retail node readiness—such as the presence of leadership, existing business and entrepreneurs, development pressures, and design standards. A rating will help determine whether the node is ready to receive investment. The retail areas would be classed in the following categories:

- Distressed: dirty, major disinvestment, no organizational capacity;
- Basic: clean, safe, little organizational capacity;
- Transitional: clean, safe, some investment, more organizational capacity;
- Emerging: clean and safe, significant investment and organizational capacity, ready for investment.

**Help Stakeholders Effectively Leverage the Great Streets Investment**

One of the essential functions of DDOT in the Great Streets program is to help the local communities leverage their investment by attracting private capital to the corridors to spur future economic development. This process will vary for each corridor. The panel recommends that DDOT identify the critical needs and potentials for each community and ascertain how this program can most effectively contribute to their satisfaction.

**Establish and Promote Local Entities**

One of the determining factors that will influence the decision to make investments in the corridors is the existing community support. The panel recommends that DDOT help establish and promote local entities that will accomplish the realization of the Great Streets program. Business Improvement Districts, Community Development Corporations, and Main Street programs should focus on community implementation and management. They should lead the following initiatives in their corridor:

- Design management;
- Maintenance management;
Parking management;
Retail management.

The creation of such entities alone is not enough to lead the management of these corridors; they will need support from the city. DDOT is in a position to provide support and access to the local entities. It should use its position to help the local entities access resources at the city and make connections with the business community. It can bring the business community together with the entities.

Develop a Fast, Predictable, and Flexible Implementation Process

A fast, predictable, and flexible implementation process is essential to entice investment in the Great Streets corridors. Clear design and development guidelines provide developers with a sense of certainty because they fully understand what is expected of them. The guidelines should be rigid on design standards to ensure that the urban fabric is maintained, yet flexible enough to allow for temporary uses or unproven market pressures. The panel recommends that any development application that is on a Great Streets corridor receive fast-track status. This designation will help ensure that the city’s infrastructure investments will be quickly met with private investment.

Create a Revenue Stream to Support Local Entities

The $100 million in Great Streets money is a small fraction of what is needed to fully revitalize the corridors. A stable revenue stream is needed to support the local entities that will carry out much of the work on the corridors. A number of financing programs and tools can be used to create these revenue streams and make the entities self-sustaining. These resources would be used to enable distressed, basic, transitional, and emerging streets to attain retail readiness as quickly as possible. They can include

- Tax increment financing (TIF);
- Localized parking and citation revenues;
- New Market tax credits.

Tax Increment Financing

Tax increment financing is a popular way of paying for public investment in older districts. Local redevelopment agencies or other entities use the projected increment in property tax revenue that will result as “collateral” on a loan or bond. The collected increment is used to pay off the loan. The money can then be used to pay for public improvements, such as clean and safe programs, streetscape improvements, and programming of the corridors.

Parking Increment Finance

Parking increment finance (PIF) closely resembles tax increment financing. Parking increment finance is where the city uses only the subsequent increment in meter revenue—the amount above the existing meter revenue—that arises after the city begins to charge performance-based prices. Business districts can receive the increment in parking meter revenue that results from performance-based parking prices. More meters, higher rates, and longer hours of operation will provide money to pay for added public services. These added public services will promote businesses activity in the district, and the increased demand for parking will further increase meter revenue. Many communities have had success with parking increment finance. Examples of such programs can be found in Pasadena, California; Austin, Texas; and Redwood City, California.

Citation Revenue Sharing

In addition to parking meter revenue sharing, the revenue from parking citations can be used to create dedicated funding. Similarly to TIF and PIF, citation revenue can, for example, pay to repair and maintain the sidewalks on metered streets. By extension, the city can share the revenue from red-light cameras with neighborhoods. Because the city wants to reduce vehicle accidents and increase pedestrian safety, it can offer to install red-light cameras at appropriate intersections and spend the citation revenue to repair and maintain the nearby sidewalks. The cameras will encourage motorists to drive more carefully, and the few who do run red lights will pay to improve pedestrian safety. Except for those who run red lights, everyone will win.
New Market Tax Credits

New market tax credits permit taxpayers to receive a credit against federal income taxes for making qualified equity investments in designated Community Development Entities (CDEs). All of the qualified equity investment must in turn be used by the CDE to provide investments in low-income communities. The credit provided to the investor totals 39 percent of the cost of the investment and is claimed over a seven-year credit allowance period. In each of the first three years, the investor receives a credit equal to 5 percent of the total amount paid for the stock or capital interest at the time of purchase. For the final four years, the value of the credit is 6 percent annually. Investors may not redeem their investments in CDEs before the conclusion of the seven-year period.
The panel was impressed with the planning that has already been done by DDOT and the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development. The Great Streets Initiative’s inclusive nature has garnered public support, and DDOT is to be commended for that. DDOT must maintain this support by moving beyond the framework plan and on to implementation.

The public investments need to be made strategically to maximize the overall public return on investment. Initial investments should bring the corridors up to a basic level of maintenance and repair. Subsequent investments should be concentrated in high-activity and retail nodes. Wise investments will help leverage the public’s money.

Public and private design and development standards should be aligned with neighborhood revitalization objectives. The Great Streets corridors are rich with culture and are fortunate to have vibrant cultural histories. Those assets should be used and built upon.

Public stewardship of the corridors is critical to the success of the program so the initiative becomes the community’s—not just a program that is happening in the community. The public outreach component should continue into the implementation process to solicit further input from the community.

The goal of the Great Streets program is to create sustainable corridors, but they will not maintain or program themselves. DDOT must develop governmental and community-based organizational capacity to take ownership of the corridors in order to make positive change.

The Great Streets planning process has created an excellent framework to begin the transformation of some of the most important corridors in the city. It is now time for implementation. With a revised framework plan, community support, and strong leadership, the goal of creating Great Streets will be well on its way to realization.

Conclusion
About the Blue Ribbon Team

**Michael Banner**
*Chair*
*Los Angeles, California*

Banner is the president and chief executive officer (CEO) of the Los Angeles LDC, Inc. (LDC), a nonprofit community development financial institution that provides innovative financial advisory services to achieve the target investment goals of its private and public sector clients. The LDC has an extensive track record of improving the flow of capital into community and economic activities in emerging markets and in underserved communities. Under Banner’s leadership, the Los Angeles LDC is committed to becoming Los Angeles’s premier community development financial institution by offering a wide range of financial products and advisory services that are designed to stimulate revitalization in targeted investment area(s) or to targeted population(s) or both.

For the past decade, he has been a leader in providing both debt and equity capital to build businesses and neighborhoods in underserved communities located throughout Los Angeles. As the president and CEO of the LDC, he manages multi-million-dollar relationships with a growing cadre of investors that includes municipalities, banks, pension funds, insurance companies, and community development capital providers.

Banner, a ULI Inner City Adviser, has an extensive background in commercial banking and real estate finance with a special emphasis in using federal funds for real estate and business development. He is active in many community reinvestment initiatives and is a charter member of the Los Angeles Community Reinvestment Committee, ULI-LA, District Council Inner City Sub-Committee, Community Technologies/Merrill Lynch Minority Business Research Advisory Committee, and Fannie Mae/LA Trade Tech College Mortgage Finance Advisory Committee. He serves on the board of commissioners Housing Authority of the city of Los Angeles and Business Tax Advisory Committee.

Banner is a graduate of the inaugural class of the Minority Program in Real Estate, Lusk Center for Real Estate at the University of Southern California, and holds a degree in business administration from Loyola Marymount University.

**Gregory Baldwin**
*Portland, Oregon*

Baldwin is a partner with Zimmer Gunsul Frasca Partnership with more than 30 years of experience as an architect, urban designer, and planner. As partner-in-charge of planning and urban design, he has worked with the city of Portland to rebuild its community over the past 20 years. The renewal efforts include new green spaces for recreation, a streetcar and light rail system for transportation, and important public buildings.

In the past decade, Baldwin has taken the experience in Portland and is applying the principles to different circumstances in communities such as Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Denver, Minneapolis, Chicago, and Houston. Many of these projects have received special local, state, and federal urban design recognition—including a Presidential Award for Design excellence for the Westside Light Rail Corridor in Portland—and have been recognized in national and international publications.

Baldwin received his BA, Master of Architecture, and a Master of Architecture in Urban Design from Harvard University. He was awarded a Marshall Prize, a Fulbright Fellowship, and a Rome Prize for postgraduate study. He is a fellow of the American Academy in Rome and the American Institute of Architects.

**Terry D. Foegler**
*Columbus, Ohio*

Foegler, who has background in city planning and economic development, has been president of Campus Partners for Community Urban Redevelopment, Inc., since September 1996. He came to Campus Partners from the city of Dublin, Ohio, where he was assistant city manager/director of development for six years.

As president of Campus Partners, Foegler directs the operations of the nonprofit agency as it moves from developing a

Washington, D.C., January 17–20, 2006
comprehensive revitalization plan to implementing the major recommendations of the plan. The Ohio State University created Campus Partners to promote improvements to the quality of life in the neighborhoods around its Columbus campus.

Before his position in Dublin, Foegler was a consultant in real estate development from 1988 to 1990; director of development for Communicare, a regional health care management and development company, from 1986 to 1988; engineering project manager for Thousand Trails, Inc., a developer of recreational camping resorts, from 1984 to 1986; director of planning and development for the city of Lebanon, Ohio, from 1979 to 1984; and a planner with the Northern Kentucky Area Planning Commission from 1977 to 1979.

He earned his BA in urban geography from the University of Cincinnati in 1974 and his Master of Urban Planning from the University of Illinois in 1976. He is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners.

Shelia Grove
Boston, Massachusetts

Grove has served as executive director of Washington Gateway Main Street, Inc., since its inception in 1997 and is a partner in Catalyst Company, a consulting firm that provides practical planning assistance for neighborhood improvement. Before joining Gateway, Grove was a partner in the law firm of Grove & Grove, where she specialized in real estate, zoning, and small business law.

At Gateway, Grove coordinates the community-driven revitalization of 1.4 miles of Washington Street in the South End and Lower Roxbury neighborhoods of Boston. A winner of the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s 2005 “Great American Main Street” award, the program has attracted $520 million of development to the street between 1997 and 2004, transforming Washington Street from a desolate and deteriorated neighborhood into a desirable place to live, work, and shop. Through the transition, the amount of low and moderate income housing was not just preserved but actually increased. The Gateway district is now a destination for visitors from around the world who are interested in new urbanism style “dense” development, transit-oriented development, and commercial district revitalization. The organization was recognized for its “best practices” in Revitalizing Commerce for American Cities, by Karl F. Seidman (Fannie Mae, 2004).

Grove steered the district’s turnaround by developing inclusive partnerships with neighborhood organizations, government officials and agencies, individuals, businesses, developers, and not-for-profit organizations. She has coordinated the work of a hundred volunteers who annually donate between 2,500 and 4,600 hours working with Gateway committees.

At Catalyst Company, Grove applies her practical experience to activate strong government leadership, grassroots planning, community involvement, and public/private partnerships to neighborhood development tasks. The firm also emphasizes the role of public relations in successful revitalization.


Philip Hart
Los Angeles, California

Hart, president/CEO of Hart Realty Advisors (a division of Tanya Hart Communications, Inc.), has more than 20 years of experience in developing and managing complex real estate development projects. He served as project manager for the 5,000-seat West Angeles Cathedral in South Los Angeles and as master developer for the 75-acre CrossTown Industrial Park in Boston’s Roxbury neighborhood. Hart has also directed major transportation studies in addition to providing master planning for urban industrial parks. Hart, in association with the Urban Land Institute, has done planning studies for communities such as Hollywood, California; Roxbury, Massachusetts; and San Antonio, Texas. He also served on the ULI Advisory Services team that developed a vision and master plan for the Bring New Orleans Back Commission.

Other facilities Hart has developed include a biotechnology center in Roxbury’s CrossTown Industrial Park with Boston University Medical Center as anchor tenant along with several commercial biotech firms. Hart also developed the mixed-use Morgan Memorial Goodwill Industries headquarters in Roxbury’s CrossTown Industrial Park. Hart serves as project director for the Boston Transportation Planning Review Southwest Corridor Mobility Study, which served to reconfigure the transit and highway options within Boston’s Route 128.

Hart was a faculty member at the University of Massachusetts in Boston for more than 20 years, retiring in June 2002 as a professor of sociology and director of the William Monroe Trotter Institute for the Study of Black Culture. February 5, 2002, was declared Philip S. Hart Day in the
Commonwealth of Massachusetts for his contributions to Massachusetts as “a public intellectual.” Hart earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Colorado in Boulder where he was a student-athlete. In 1995, he was inducted into the university’s Distinguished Alumni Gallery. His graduate degrees are from Michigan State University in sociology.

Hart is an award-winning author and filmmaker. One of his books has been optioned for a television movie. He is developing a feature film, The Hallelujah Flight, and has two documentary films in the PBS video catalogue.

Hart is on the board of managers of the Hollywood Wilshire YMCA and serves as vice-chair of AbilityFirst’s (formerly the Crippled Children’s Society of Southern California) Housing Governance Board, which has developed more than 300 residential units for persons with disabilities.

Allan Jacobs
Berkeley, California

Jacobs came to San Francisco in 1967 to head the city’s planning department. Charged with the task of revising the city’s master plan, Jacobs successfully expanded the plan beyond land use, traffic circulation, and community facilities to include elements such as housing and open space. The plan became a policy-oriented document and moved the department into the forefront of land use decision making.

While director of planning in San Francisco, one of his most noteworthy projects was the passage and implementation of the urban design element of the master plan. This 155-page document addressed and regulated such concerns as height guidelines, street facades, views, light, air, streets as sources of open space, neighborhood livability, and conservation.

This urban design plan modulated growth and development—it reinforced a sculpted skyline of the hills and valleys, protected bay views, and guided the design of the financial district towers in a hill-like fashion. His pioneering integration of urban design into local government planning has fostered the development of some of San Francisco’s best places.

His time as the director of planning in San Francisco provided him with plenty of insight and material for his first book, Making City Planning Work, which was a tell-all of the political pressures of being a city planning director. The book brings planning theory, principle, and practice together with actual case studies. Although out of print for many years, it is still seen by many readers as strikingly current.

Jacobs resigned from the San Francisco planning office in 1975 and became a professor of city and regional planning at the University of California, Berkeley. As a professor, he has stressed the importance of observation and understanding the city at an intimate level. He encourages his students to get out into the community to see how things work or don’t work, and to understand their context within the neighborhood and within the city as a whole.

Since retiring from active teaching, Jacobs has been engaged in a consulting practice that he runs out of his San Francisco home with his wife, Elizabeth Macdonald, an assistant professor at Berkeley. Their firm, Jacobs Macdonald: Cityworks is a small practice dedicated to street design. Current clients include the city of San Francisco, where the firm is consulting on the redevelopment of Octavia Boulevard adjacent to the vacated Central Freeway; Oakland, where the firm is advising on improvements to International Boulevard near the Fruitvale BART station; streetscape designs for the Market Octavia, Balboa Park, and Central Waterfront neighborhood plans, prepared as part of the San Francisco Planning Department’s Better Neighborhoods Projects; and Vancouver, British Columbia, where they are the lead designers in the renovation of Pacific Boulevard.

Kiku Obata
St. Louis, Missouri

Obata launched her retail design firm in 1977, applying innovative design to large, multidisciplinary projects to create memorable identities and places. Obata provides design solutions that distinguish retail clients in their marketplace and help redefine their industries. Obata has worked on projects nationally and internationally in both downtown and neighborhood settings. She advises clients and communities on the interface of the public street environment and interior retail environment to maximize the customer experience and retail success.

Margie Ruddick
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

From 1988 to 1995, Ruddick was a partner in Heintz/Ruddick Associates in New York City, designing urban landscape projects such as the recreation park at Battery Park City, the Riverside Park waterfront, and Stuyvesant Cove. Previously, she worked on the horticultural restoration of Central Park with the Central Park Conservancy; her work with the Natural Resources Group complemented her experience with built parklands, in preparing management strategies for New York’s unbuilt parklands.

In 1995, she began working on her own, developing a team-based approach that integrates site systems, particularly water, with a strong formal agenda. Since then, she has
Donald Shoup
Los Angeles, California

With a background in economics, engineering, and planning, Shoup has focused his research on public finance, transportation, and the land market. He has extensively studied the issue of parking as a key link between transportation and land use with important consequences for cities, the economy, and the environment. His research on employer-paid parking led to the passage of California’s parking cash-out law and to changes in the Internal Revenue Code to encourage parking cash out.

Shoup has also worked on ways to finance neighborhood public investments. In research conducted at the World Bank, he proposed a new way to finance these investments: allow property owners to defer paying special assessments, with interest, until they sell their properties. This proposal led to passage of California’s law that enables cities to use deferred special assessments to finance neighborhood public spending.

Jeff Tumlin
San Francisco, California

Tumlin is a principal with Nelson\Nygaard, a national transportation planning firm based in San Francisco. His expertise covers the key areas of regional smart growth, urban infill, and transit-oriented development. In transportation master plans and neighborhood plans for cities such as Seattle, San Francisco, Trenton, and Minneapolis, Tumlin has accommodated hundreds of thousands of new jobs and homes without an increase in traffic congestion, primarily through smart investments in transit, parking management, and demand management tools. Transportation performance measures in these plans focus on the movement of people and goods rather than vehicles, allowing for a careful balance among all modes in constrained urban streets.

As a lead planning consultant to the Bay Area Rapid Transit District, Tumlin coauthored the Transit Oriented Development Guidelines and Station Access Guidelines. He has also led the transportation component of Transit Oriented Development plans for more than 50 station areas around the country.

His recent awards include a 2005 Congress for the New Urbanism Award for the Coyote Valley plan in San Jose, California; a 2003 GSA Achievement Award for the NASA Research Park Plan; and the Palo Alto “Consultant of the Year” Award for the Palo Alto Transportation Master Plan.

Todd Wenskoski
Denver, Colorado

Wenskoski, an associate at Design Workshop, is an urban designer, landscape architect, and site designer with eight years of experience in urban redevelopment and the design of public spaces. Wenskoski is a graduate of the Harvard Graduate School of Design, where he received his Master of Landscape Architecture in Urban Design. He was a member of the Urban Land Institute Blue Ribbon Panel in Washington, D.C., and has lectured at universities throughout the country. His projects emphasize the role of public open space as a way to stimulate redevelopment and create socially active spaces that provide long-term benefits for cities and their residents. Through strategic initiatives, his projects concentrate on creating memorable districts and public social spaces by integrating infrastructure, architectural economics, and aesthetics.

As a project designer for Riverfront Park in Denver, he developed urban design solutions for the 16th Street Mall extension, which is recognized as the premier public space in the city. His recent work includes a 78-acre urban design plan for a former rail yard in Spokane, Washington. As project manager, Wenskoski has been responsible for leading a multidisciplinary team in establishing a vision for this high-density mixed-use development while setting a new precedent for the city.