AN ADVISORY SERVICES PANEL REPORT

Eastland Mall
Charlotte, North Carolina

Urban Land Institute

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Reinventing the Eastland Mall

March 5–8, 2007
An Advisory Services Panel Report

ULI–the Urban Land Institute
1025 Thomas Jefferson Street, N.W.
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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 35,000 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 the world's most respected and widely quoted sources of objective information on urban planning, growth, and development.

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Cover photo: City of Charlotte.

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 three-day 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, academicians, 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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Special thanks go to Tom Flynn and Giovanna Buyers from the Economic Development Office of the city of Charlotte. Without their support and assistance, this panel would not have been possible. The panel also thanks the city manager, Pamela A. Syfert; the director of planning, Debra Campbell; the director of neighborhood development, Stanley Watkins; and the chief of police, Darrel Stephens. District Council coordinator Theresa Salmen also provided invaluable help before and during the panel by identifying stakeholders and coordinating local logistical issues.

The panel appreciates the good work done by ULI Charlotte, particularly Todd Mansfield from Crosland and Peter Pappas from Pappas Properties, in making the panel feel welcome and providing local knowledge of the economic situation.

Finally, the panel wishes to thank the more than 40 other community, government, and business leaders who volunteered their time, thoughts, and experiences during the interview process. Their insights provided valuable information that was critical to the completion of the panel's recommendations.

Contents

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Foreword: The Panel's Assignment

A ULI Advisory Services Panel was asked to evaluate the redevelopment potential of the Eastland Mall located in Charlotte, North Carolina. Built in 1975, Eastland Mall is situated on 90 acres located approximately five miles east of downtown Charlotte. It is a typical center-oriented mall with large anchor stores surrounding a core of smaller, in-line retail spaces. Although the structure went through a major remodeling in 1990, it is one of the oldest malls in the Charlotte area. Total square footage including the anchors is 1,031,746 square feet. The site includes approximately 5,800 parking spaces.

From an ownership perspective, the 90 acres is fragmented, with each of the anchor stores owning its own property and parking. Glimcher Realty Trust owns the main portion of the mall, consisting of the in-line stores and portions of the parking area and outlying parcels. A unique feature of the mall is an indoor ice-skating rink that was a sensation when the mall first opened.

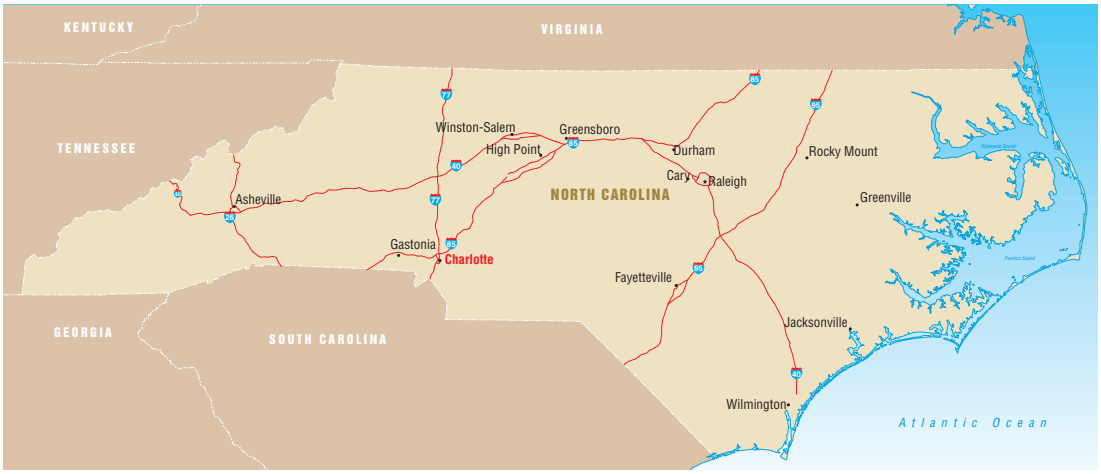
Over the past few years, many of the national retailers have left for locations at newer nearby malls and power centers. The JCPenney and Belk anchors have closed, and the Dillard's anchor has been operating in a discount format for the last year. Dillard's will likely close by the end of 2007. The Sears anchor continues to do well, according to the operator, but clearly has issues of revenue and visibility. The mall suffers from bad publicity and a perception of crime.

The Panel's Assignment

The panel's assignment was to explore alternative uses or reuses for the anchor stores, including other anchor retailers and nonretail uses, to consider the feasibility of creating a mixed-use center, and to suggest the civic and public uses that might be needed in the Eastland area and that might be accommodated at Eastland Mall. The panel also considered options and strategies for public investment and public/private partnerships in the project for infrastructure needs. Consistent with most Advisory Services Panels, this panel was to provide an implementation strategy for achieving its recommendations.

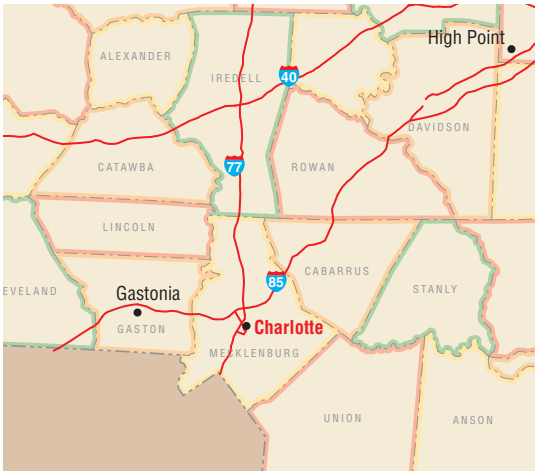
Summary of Recommendations

Although the panel considered a number of options, such as remodeling the existing stores and partial retention of existing structures, the panel



Location map.

Regional map.



preferred a development proposal for full site transformation from a retail to a true mixed-use center. The panel felt that only this approach would build long-term value, prove sustainable, and begin the important community process of revitalization in the Central Avenue corridor. Elements of the full site transformation include the following:

- Demolition of the existing mall;
- Hiring a master developer to negotiate and manage a cooperative agreement between the property owners and to formulate and execute a new zoning and urban design plan;
- Development of a true town center with a main street shopping area as its centerpiece;
- Development of high-quality residential, civic, and recreational space; and
- A commitment from the city to fund portions of the infrastructure associated with the transformation.

The ULI panelists, city representatives, and mall owners toured Eastland Mall.

The ultimate answer to the many questions surrounding the mall is how the city can use this opportunity to create a higher-value, more sustainable real estate development that helps build a more livable community.

Market Assessment

Eastland Mall was a thriving retail location for three decades. Throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s, Eastland was considered by many to be the finest mall in Charlotte. In recent years, however, the mall has seen a decline, spurred by changing demographics, retail shifts, and an increased perception of crime.

Panel Process

The panel reviewed and analyzed a variety of information to help it determine and set the context for viable retail and other uses at the Eastland Mall location. The panel reviewed the tenants' operating statements, the Littlejohn residential market study, and the retail market study by Rose & Associates Southeast, Inc., and correlated the market data with tenant sales data from *Dollars & Cents of Shopping Centers®/The SCORE® 2006*, published by ULI and the International Council of Shopping Centers. The panel then estimated the space demand for the types of stores that are underrepresented in the Eastland trade area and determined a preliminary tenant mix that would make sense for a new retail development in the form of a town center.

Market Conditions

The panel believes an oversupply of retail space exists in the immediate area of the Eastland Mall. Combined with nearby obsolete and deteriorating strip retail, major road divides, and a public realm (streetscapes, landscaping, and public facilities) that does not match the expectation of consumers, this oversupply has led the most desirable and successful retail formats to locate elsewhere within the trade area. The existing competition from newer malls and big-box format is extensive (see Figure 1).

The Mall's Current Challenges

The mall has significant challenges as it attempts to attract new regional and national tenants: the trade area is cut off and segmented between newer malls and big-box retail sites, and most new growth has passed over this portion of the Central Avenue corridor. Also, little attractive landscaping, street maintenance, street lighting, and public amenities exist in this area.

Another big challenge is the perception of crime. Although the actual number of crimes is not particularly high for the mall, the perception of crime remains. The city, the mall owners, and the citizens have done a laudable job in trying to correct this issue through a series of community policing and private security initiatives, but the perception is difficult to change.

The Mall's Current Strengths

The mall has a number of strengths that should be considered in reinventing the site. By its location and size, it presents an excellent redevelopment

Figure 1
Eastland Mall Competition

Retail Location	Distance from Eastland Mall
Proposed Wal-Mart: Independence Boulevard	2 miles
Wal-Mart: Eastway Drive	2.5 miles
Target: Albemarle Road	3 miles
Wal-Mart: Albemarle Road	4 miles
Target: Midtown	5 miles
SouthPark Mall	6 miles
Wal-Mart: Sardis Road North	7 miles
Concord Mills Mall	14 miles

The portions of Central Avenue nearest the Charlotte downtown have begun to redevelop with new retail and service uses.

opportunity. It can be considered the heart of the east side of Charlotte, and it has excellent access from both east-west and north-south corridors. The site has good visibility from Central Avenue, making any new development visible to a substantial number of vehicles. This feature becomes especially important when creating a new main street, as discussed later.

The basic demographics for the area are also positive: since 2000, the population has increased by 5,000 people, and the average household income continued to rise from $45,000 to $56,000 in the same time period. This growth is reflected in the reinvestment in commercial business in the Central Avenue corridor closer to the downtown. Finally, a strong sense of community appears to exist, as evidenced by active homeowner associations, neighborhood groups, and business associations.

Market Conclusions

The panel feels that the future of the east side of Charlotte depends in many ways on how this property redevelops. What happens on the mall site will determine the nature and timing of reinvestment and the effect on the neighborhood in coming years. The panel believes the correct land use and design of this site could provide the east side with a solution that creates a more sustainable real estate climate and a more livable community.

The site should not be a regional shopping center but rather an environmentally sustainable new town center with a focus on community retail, dining, and services. This redevelopment would be augmented by a mixed-income residential community of for-sale units with civic facilities and a high-quality, pedestrian-oriented environment. The panel has identified the following mix of uses as sustainable by the market:

- Restaurants: 90,000–100,000 square feet;
- General merchandise: 75,000–85,000 square feet;
- Books and music: 40,000–45,000 square feet;
- Electronics: 20,000–30,000 square feet;
- Home furnishings and accessories: 10,000–15,000 square feet;
- Specialty food and wine stores: 5,000–10,000 square feet;
- Specialty garden/hardware: 5,000 square feet;
- Neighborhood services: 5,000–10,000 square feet; and
- Range total: 250,000–300,000 square feet.

The mall site should become the heart and soul of the east-side communities. It should be developed as a set of integrated uses in a convenient town-center configuration, and it should accommodate connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods and commercial streets. Key in the success of this idea is to "brand" the site with a new identity, including the elimination of the name Eastland Mall.

Development, Planning, and Design Strategies

The purpose of the panel is to help the city of Charlotte define a new vision to transform Eastland Mall into an active and vibrant part of the city economy. The preceding market assessment indicates the need to reconsider the land uses on the site and has suggested a mix of uses that is sustainable. However, it is important to run through a series of scenarios to gauge their various strengths and weaknesses in light of the market information. For the purposes of analysis, the panel has considered three development scenarios:

- Status quo;
- Adaptive use; and
- Site transformation.

Of the three scenarios, site transformation would create the greatest value for the property owners and the city. Also, it will provide a catalyst for revitalization and redevelopment of the Central Avenue corridor.

Scenario 1: Status Quo

This scenario would use the existing structure and associated facilities. The primary focus would be to remodel and retenant the space. These actions would have to be accompanied by a well-funded and focused marketing campaign to gain the interest of new tenants while retaining the existing tenants to the extent possible. A new theme and perhaps even a new name would be in order.

Approaches might include the following options: establishing loss-leader tenants (theater, Starbucks) that would be given a discounted lease to draw in other tenants who want to be close to the loss-leader tenant; creating a new identity that targets the growing Hispanic and Asian market share; converting the ice rink into an indoor soccer stadium, iconic attractions such as amusement facilities, interactive and reactive displays, and attention-grabbing and interesting art and sculpture. Also, the owners should consider conversion of retail floor space into centers for seniors, health clubs, libraries, or health care centers. The panel feels that the existing vacant anchor space is far beyond the mall's ability to attract new tenants. These areas should be demolished or converted into new space.

In the panel's view, this scenario did not respond well to community development goals and would still leave substantial vacant or underleased space. The mall currently has three to four times the square footage necessary as determined by the market need. More important, this approach is unlikely to modify the appearance and impression of Eastland Mall in the public's mind. Accordingly, the panel does not see this approach as a viable scenario.

Scenario 2: Adaptive Use

This scenario would remodel and retenant only portions of the existing mall (keeping only one of the four anchor stores). Again, this approach would have to accompany a well-funded and focused marketing campaign to gain the interest of new tenants. This scenario would result in large-scale demolition of the empty anchor tenants; the space could be replaced by other retailers or perhaps recreational attractions, such as restaurants and bookstores.

This option should not only consider the broad range of uses mentioned in Scenario 1 but could also introduce a residential component. Like Scenario 1, this scenario would result in retail space far beyond the market's ability to bear.

The panel also feels this proposal does not respond well to the community goals of a transformed site.

The panel felt that 1970s' architecture combined with reduced market share and lack of regional or national retailers put the Eastland Mall beyond the reach of a simple rehabilitation and retenanting strategy.

In the short term, this scenario would be tenable, but the long-term chances of creating and maximizing land value are unlikely.

Scenario 3: Site Transformation

The panel suggests that the appropriate approach to reinventing the mall is site transformation. The panel discussed and considered two alternatives under this scenario.

Partial Transformation

Partial transformation is an alternative that leaves one of the anchor stores intact (Sears) while transforming the remainder of the site into an integrated medium- to high-density mixed-use development with ample open space, civic uses, and residential development that complement the new town-center street lined with retail and service uses. Although the panel discussed this partial transformation approach in some depth, the panel felt that retaining the anchor facility would cause the reinvention of the mall to remain unfulfilled because the view sheds would be compromised in terms of creating a new town center and the loss of available land for proposed residential would obstruct the interface between the exiting residential community and the new town center.

Full Transformation

The full transformation alternative calls for assembly of the parcels; removal of the existing structures; and replacement by an integrated mix of retail, commercial, residential, civic, and recreational uses as well as substantial open space. This approach will also make available 30 to 40 acres for cluster and attached residential units, and it will leave two larger tracts on Central Avenue available for redevelopment.

The centerpiece of the proposal calls for a 600-foot-long retail "main street" lined with 275,000 square feet of retail and service uses. This main street will be the focal point of a new neighborhood and the larger community that surrounds the existing mall site.

The residential components of the neighborhood should be integrated primarily into the blocks near the main street but would also allow for distinct residential districts, such as those facing the outer edge of the existing mall property. The units should be mixed income with a variety of rowhouse, patio single-family, and multifamily products that conform with and engage the existing residential communities along the north side of the existing mall. The panel's development program calls for 300 condominiums in a multifamily

format, 225 townhouses, and 60 single-family units in a patio-style arrangement (see Figure 2).

Planning and Design Considerations

In recent years, town centers have attempted to reposition American urban development by combining, not separating, uses. Specific uses within mixed-use buildings along with hardscapes and landscapes integrate commercial uses with residential uses to create vibrant and exciting living areas. Good town centers all have basic planning and design principles that allow them to function successfully. From this perspective, the panel offers the following guidelines that will help make the retail and service uses along the main street successful:

- At least 75 percent of the street frontage should be occupied by retail uses, including cafés and restaurants.
- Honor the pedestrian. Retail blocks are intended to have a high volume of pedestrian traffic and to support public activity throughout the day and evening.
- Major entrances should be located on public streets and on corners wherever possible. Entrances should relate to crosswalks and pathways that lead to bus stops and transit stations.
- Retail venues within the main street should be as transparent as possible to maximize visibility of street-level uses. Ground-floor facades should permit a clear view from the sidewalk to the interior space of the building.
- Blank walls should be avoided along public streets and pedestrian walkways.
- Build to the lot line or provide small setbacks from the right-of-way for café seating, benches, or small open spaces. Setbacks may be allowed to accommodate street furniture, street trees, or generous sidewalks.
- Awnings and canopies are encouraged to provide shelter and enliven the ground-floor facade.
- Driveway turnaround and vehicle drop-off facilities are discouraged along streets.

Figure 2
Illustrative Development Program: Total Land Area

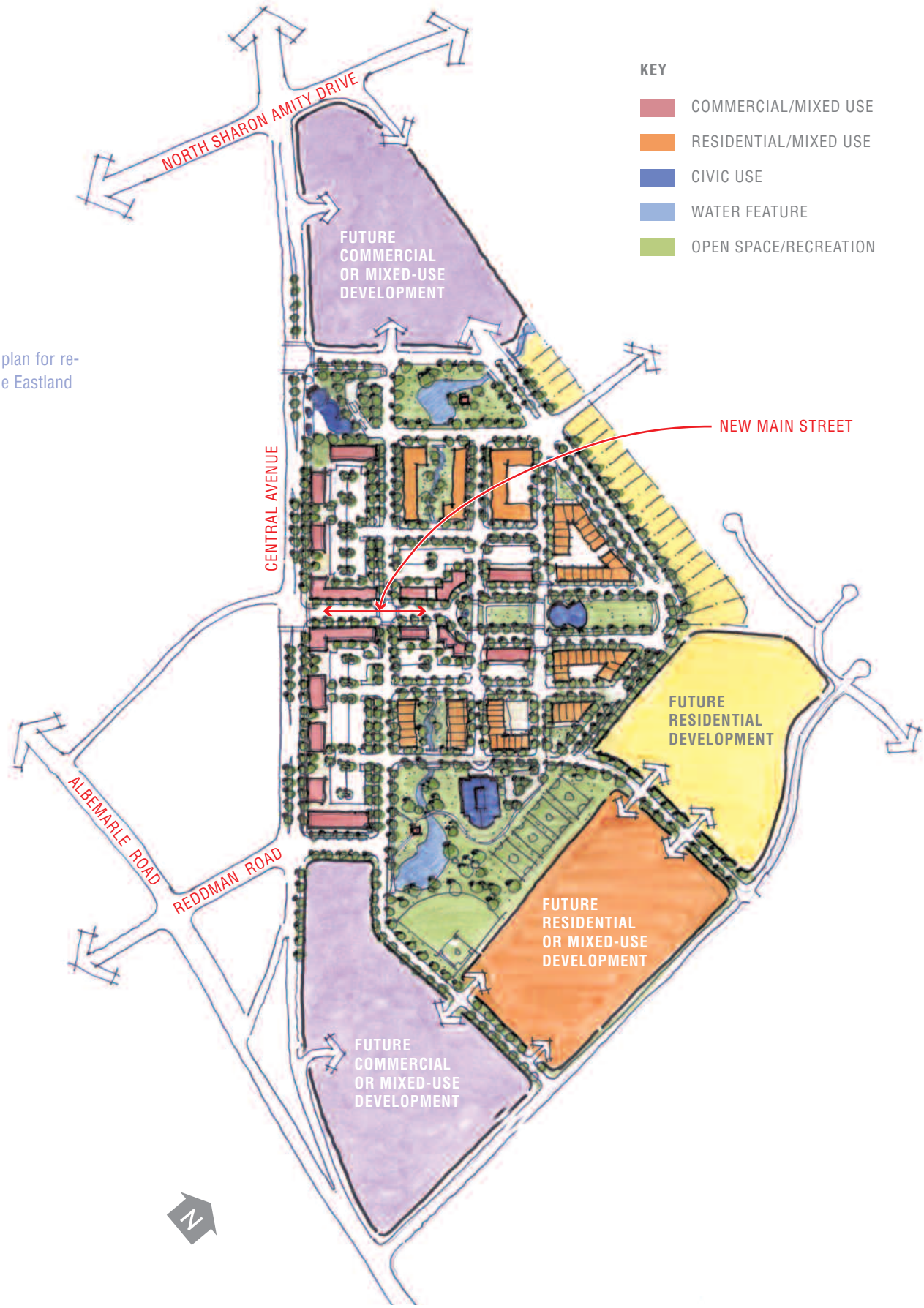
Category	Acres	Units/Acre	Units	Square Feet
Retail	15.0	—		275,000
Residential: Condominiums	7.5	40	300	
Residential: Townhomes	15.0	15	225	
Residential: Single-family detached	7.5	8	60	
Total residential units			585	
Civic	10.0			
Open space	15.0			
Streets, right-of-way	20.0			
Total	90.0			

- Locate loading docks on side streets or service alleys. Corner articulation of buildings is encouraged, whereas blank walls should be avoided.

In addition, the panel encourages the following actions:

- Energize the public realm by a high-quality, public environment focused on a central gathering place, a new grid of streets, a reopened stream, and an interactive fountain or other iconic structure.
- Program farmers markets, antique shows, local events, civic meetings, street festivals, and seasonal events.
- Enliven the public realm with a recreation center/YMCA combined with soccer fields, a baseball field, and a new ice rink if the community is willing to support it.
- Link the area to a regional bikeway/trail system.

Other guidelines are available from ULI's publication *Ten Principles for Rebuilding Neighborhood Retail*. Although this *Ten Principles* document focuses on revitalization of older retail areas, the general tenets are applicable to the redevelopment of Eastland Mall.



Conceptual plan for re-inventing the Eastland Mall site.

Implementation of Scenario 3 will require significant cooperation from the city, the developer, property owners, and neighborhoods. The creation of a public/private partnership to address infrastructure and civic use requirements will be required. The city will have to convince entities such as libraries and parks to rethink their long-term capital improvement plans and refocus funds toward the site. This scenario will require creative skills on the part of a master developer and support from the highest levels of the city government.

The panel feels Scenario 3 is the most viable development scenario. It not only will reinvent the mall, adding tremendous value to the property itself, but also will have the secondary and tertiary redevelopment effects that are desired for the Central Avenue corridor. The extension of the light-rail system may also benefit from this scenario by locating a vibrant node at its terminus along a corridor where many of the residents are heavily dependent on mass transit. Finally, this scenario is most consistent with the panel's understanding of community aspirations for the site.

Implementation

This section of the report outlines how the panel's recommendations can be implemented. The panel has suggested a development program to transform the Eastland Mall site into a valuable and strategic property for the city and the property owners. This program delineates the physical uses and urban design components that will make the plan successful.

As noted, successful implementation of this plan will require creative development skills on the part of a master developer and support from the highest levels of the city government. Successful implementation will also require an intricate predevelopment process that takes a dedicated effort from the property owners and the city, followed by series of phases that will transform the property from a mall to a mixed-use development.

General Observations

None of the current owners at the site are mixed-use developers. The development proposed by the panel requires one or more mixed-use developers who have experience and the "horsepower" to develop a mixed-use, multiphase project. Specifically, the following tasks will need to be completed:

- Determining requirements for city infrastructure support and civic uses;
- Organizing a group to complete the work;
- Developing a master plan;
- Revising the zoning plan; and
- Creating a tax increment financing (TIF) financial plan.

With a mixed-use development program of this scale, the panel recommends using a master-developer approach. This concept has been used successfully in many locations and consists of putting responsibility for guidance, planning, financing, and construction in the hands of a single private entity that can get the job done.

Public Investment Considerations

Charlotte has substantial experience with leveraging public investment into private and public benefits. For instance, the infrastructure investment and subsequent private investment on Wilkinson Boulevard helped revitalize the entire corridor. Funding for general public infrastructure will require modifications to roadways and drainage patterns. Roadway improvements will include modifications to Central Avenue as well as some of the adjacent streets, such as North Sharon Amity Road.

The proposed development program designates the site's grand entrance as the middle entrance off Central Avenue. Modifications to the three entrances off Central Avenue will have to be part of the first phase of development, and the city should take on the responsibility of the costs associated with these upgrades. Many examples exist of municipal participation in road design for new towns and redevelopment where the overarching goal is to improve the private sector value of property as a catalyst for revitalization of a corridor. In Addison, Texas, the city participated in installation of a new traffic circle, public gathering places, and iconic art that helped create the area.

Storm drainage and open space recreation as suggested in the central part of the site should be part of the public sector's contribution toward the reinvention of the site. Other components of the public funding should include:

- Common area and public art sites;
- Streetscapes;
- Parks and playing fields;
- Recreation center (that can include an ice-skating rink);

- Library; and
- Trails and paths.

This list requires a significant commitment from the city, especially the reorientation of the city's and the county's capital improvement programs that will be necessary for the library, recreation center, and playing fields. The panel notes, however, that this investment should be viewed as a means of addressing revitalization in the entire Central Avenue corridor and surrounding neighborhoods, not as a giveaway to this particular site.

Finally, given the demographics of the Central Avenue corridor, the city should consider funding for public trolley/transit extension into this corridor. The southeastern terminus of the trolley/transit connection should correspond with the existing Eastland Mall bus transit center. Existence of such a fixed-rail track will substantially improve both residential and commercial investment and reinvestment in the entire corridor. The ultimate densities for the large anchors' land bays on the eastern and western sides of the parcel will be influenced heavily by this decision.

Implementation Phases

This section outlines the phases necessary to achieve the buildout suggested by the panel. The solicitation process and predevelopment phases are particularly important for the success of the project.

Solicitation Process

The panel recommends that a Request for Qualifications process be used instead of the Request for Proposal process because the former will allow the city to enter into exclusive negotiations with a development entity that can be designated as the "deal maker" to bring about this process. The deal maker or master developer acts as the city's agent to carry out the redevelopment of the property. The deal maker can conduct the due diligence regarding the financial feasibility of the proposal and complete the TIF process that will be necessary to support the infrastructure. As part of the startup cost, the city should consider covering the expenses of the master developer through this phase, while the master developer retains the flexibility of structuring its own land deal in accordance with the goals of the plan.

Predevelopment Phase

When the city has retained a master developer, the master developer will negotiate and finalize a participatory agreement among the property owners. The participatory agreement could be structured in a variety of ways, but its primary purpose is to memorialize and promulgate the disposition of the property before and during the development process and to outline the goals, business relationships, and profit-sharing arrangement that would result from the development. The following key points should be addressed as part of the participatory agreement:

- Confirmation of the future increased value of the property under the modest mixed-use de-

Figure 3
Estimated Private Market Value in Mixed-Use Program

Category	Number of Units	Average Square Footage	Dollars per Square Foot	Total Market Value
Retail	—	300,000	$ 150	$ 45,000,000
Residential: Condominiums	300	1,200	200,000	60,000,000
Residential: Townhomes	225	1,800	250,000	56,250,000
Residential: Single-family detached	60	2,400	300,000	18,000,000
Total				$179,250,000

Figure 4
Development Timeline

Program	Square Feet	Units	Completion Dates
Pre-Phase I			
Landowner participation			July 2007–September 2007
Due diligence completion			October 2007–April 2008
Developer solicitation			May 2008–November 2008
Master planning/zoning			December 2008–November 2009
Phase I			December 2009–December 2011
Retail	100,000		
Residential: Condominiums		150	
Public realm			
Subtotal Phase I	100,000	150	
Phase II			December 2011–December 2013
Retail	75,000		
Residential: Condominiums		150	
Residential: Townhomes		50	
Residential: Single-family detached		60	
Subtotal Phase II	75,000	260	
Phase III			December 2013–December 2015
Residential: Townhomes		75	
Civic facilities			
Subtotal Phase III		75	
Phase IV			December 2015–December 2017
Retail	50,000		
Residential: Townhomes		50	
Subtotal Phase IV	50,000	50	
Phase V			December 2017–December 2019
Retail	50,000		
Residential: Townhomes		50	
Subtotal Phase V	50,000	50	
Grand Total All Phases	275,000	585	

velopment program suggested, which the panel feels can be very beneficial (see Figure 3);

- A financial commitment from the city to provide infrastructure; and
- A commitment from the city to initiate, review, and approve the mixed-use development concept.

The process of assembling the land and putting under contract each of the property owners (or, conversely, buying them out) will be challenging and demanding. The terms of the agreement will permit the master developer to continue to be the champion of the project until the subsequent development phases.

The second part of this phase is retaining a planning design, engineering, and finance team to develop a due diligence package that verifies physical facts, legal matters, and viable development alternatives. Close coordination with the city will be necessary, and the city needs to be prepared to participate and ultimately approve the rezoning.

The city has a number of mixed-use and urban-density zoning districts that seem appropriate for implementing this redevelopment plan. Moreover, the Pedestrian Overlay District seems proper, given the compact design of the main street and the reliance on walkable space between the urban residential and the commercial areas. Whatever combination of zoning districts and overlay zones is used to accomplish this development proposal, the project must be given special consideration by the city staff, Planning Commission, and City Council. If this redevelopment process is bogged down in a lengthy review process, it will likely fail. The city and master developer will set goals and a time frame to complete the planning and rezoning process.

Phase I: The Town Center

This phase will consist of demolition of the old buildings and construction of the main street. After demolition of the existing structures, the main street must be built as one unified and sequential event. The preleasing of new space must be part of a coordinated and comprehensive public relations and marketing campaign. This redevelopment must be supported at the highest levels within the community. As noted previously, the city's commitment is key for success. Also, design is extremely important in helping make the retail and service uses along the main street successful.

Phase I should include 100,000 square feet of retail and service uses located on both sides of two street blocks (see Figure 4). The buildings should have a unified architectural theme on street frontage that in later stages will be no more than about 600 linear feet. Components for good design for the main street are outlined in the previous section of this document.

Additional Phases

Phase II is intended to build out a substantial portion of the town center, particularly the residential that will supplement the commercial and civic uses. Although the panel has suggested a series of additional phases, the developer, owners, and city will likely work out a more appropriate approach as time progresses. The panel believed that outlining the first phases that lead up to the completion of the main street was the most important component of a successful redevelopment program. Later phases may very well be modified based on how the site develops over the next ten years.

The developer and the city can explore a variety of options for the various unprogrammed land bays at the east and west corners of the site and adjacent to the existing residential neighborhoods. Feeling that the future of these pieces relies largely on the success and direction of the Phase I development, the panel did not stipulate specific uses for these parcels.

Long-Term Management

Part of the problem with older strip developments is that soon after construction has been completed, management provides only the bare minimum of landscaping and maintenance. This neglect hastens a center's fall into decline. As is the case with most new towns and innovative mixed-use developments, the site must have a comprehensive strategy for management, maintenance, and safety. The panel suggests that the following items be addressed in that strategy:

The Eastland Mall currently includes a number of underused or vacant anchor stores. The Belk store closed in 2006.

- Recognize that the development is not a shopping center; being open 24/7 requires more-intensive management.
- Create a management assessment district to take care of maintenance, landscaping, security, and events.
- Consider the use of private streets because approval for town center–style streets is often not possible in a timely manner from city and state authorities. These streets should be built to the highest standard possible.
- Work with the retail management and homeowners associations to address ongoing issues and problems.
- Work with retail management to present a coordinated event and marketing effort with an international theme.

The overall supervision of the physical infrastructure and operational management is not a one-time fix to address existing perceptions. It should be looked at as a dynamic process, requiring ongoing attention and enthusiasm. The panel believes that one element of a sustainable development is constant consideration by those who live and work there. One approach is to establish a Business Improvement District (BID) or similar organizations to address these issues. All over the world, the BID techniques are being used to address this long-term management issue.

Conclusion

From the panel's perspective, Eastland Mall will never recapture the retail market share it once had. The panel feels that the mall structure and its surrounding anchor stores, as currently configured, cannot be considered a sustainable commercial venture. Although a nimble anchor may be able to continue to turn a profit and the in-line stores continue to pay rent that allows the owner to pay down the debt associated with the structure, long-term sustainability is not possible. This outcome is especially true given the new trends in demographics, urban lifestyles, and the substantial retail competition within the greater Charlotte area.

The Urban Land Institute's *Ten Principles for Rethinking the Mall* says: "When a mall falters, the question that needs to be asked is not 'How can we save the mall?' but 'How can we use this opportunity to create a higher-value, more sustainable real estate development that helps build a more livable community?'" The panel believes this mall has faltered, and therefore the panel recommends a development program that attempts to reinvent the mall as not only a new retail venture but also a cornerstone and building block to revitalize the entire Central Avenue corridor.

The site transformation option suggested in this panel report will bring real value to the property and provide the owners with a substantial return on their investment. The owners and the city must be committed to the transformation of the site. Although this process will take time and money, it can ultimately be successful for the community. The panel also knows that the real benefit for the community is the larger revitalization effects that will transpire after Eastland Mall fades away and a new town emerges. For this result, the city, the mall owners, the anchor store owners, and the surrounding community must be ready to embrace the idea of change.

About the Panel

David L. Leininger

Panel Chair
Irving, Texas

Leininger joined the city of Irving, Texas, in June of 2003, and he serves as its chief financial officer. In that capacity, he oversees the departments of Financial Services and Information Technology, the Irving Visitors and Convention Bureau, and the Las Colinas Tax Increment District.

He also serves as staff coordinator of the redevelopment planning for Texas Stadium, current home of the Dallas Cowboys. The stadium area, at the nexus of three limited expressway freeways, will be served by a new light-rail line connecting the Dallas/Fort Worth (DFW) International Airport and downtown Dallas. In addition, all three of the interchanges serving the 400,000 vehicles passing through daily will be reconstructed by 2012.

Before joining the city of Irving, Leininger was associated with Economics Research Associates (ERA) where he served as senior vice president and director of the firm's Golf and Recreation Real Estate strategic business unit. In this capacity, he coordinated the activities of ERA industry practitioners throughout the firm.

Over the course of his career, Leininger has been associated with a number of private sector firms. During his tenure at ClubCorp International from 1986 until 1996, he served in a variety of capacities, including chairman and chief executive officer for ClubCorp Realty and managing director, new business development, Europe. From 1983 to 1985, he was associated with Triland International, the Dallas developer of Valley Ranch in Irving. He held a number of positions, including executive vice president and chief operating officer. Before Triland, he was associated with the Las Colinas development, a 6,500-acre master-planned development located between Dallas and DFW airport, where he served as vice president and general manager of the Las Colinas Association.

He began his career in the public sector in 1971. From 1971 to 1978, he was employed by the city of Dallas in a variety of capacities, including budget director, assistant director of housing and urban rehabilitation, and director of economic development. From 1974 to 1976 he was the fiscal services administrator for the city of Garland and served as chairman of the Finance Committee of the Texas Municipal Power Pool.

Leininger is a contributing author of *Golf Course Development in Residential Communities*, published by the Urban Land Institute. He is a full member of ULI and serves as treasurer of the North Texas District Council. He has served on four Advisory Services panels previously.

Michael D. Beyard

Washington, D.C.

Beyard is an urban planner and economist with more than 20 years' experience in the related fields of real estate development, land use planning, and economic development. His experience is focused in both the United States and Europe on commercial and retail development, shopping centers, e-commerce, location-based entertainment, and downtown revitalization.

At the Urban Land Institute, Beyard is Senior Resident Fellow for Retail and Entertainment Development. He is the author/project director of numerous books, including *Developing Urban Entertainment Centers*, *Shopping Center Development Handbook*, *Dollars & Cents of Shopping Centers* series, *Value by Design*, *Developing Power Centers*, *Downtown Development Handbook*, *The Retailing Revolution*, *Ten Principles for Reinventing Suburban Strips*, and *Business and Industrial Park Development Handbook*.

He created and directs ULI's International Conference on Urban Entertainment Development and its technology and retail real estate forum. He also created *ULI on the Future*, ULI's annual publication devoted to emerging land use and development trends and issues, and the *Entertainment Zone*.

In his role as Senior Resident Fellow, Beyard is a featured speaker in the United States, Europe, and South America on retail, entertainment, and downtown development issues, and he is a widely quoted expert in national and international media, including the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Washington Post*, *Chicago Tribune*, CNN, and CBS News, as well as American and European planning and real estate journals.

Prior to his current position, Beyard was vice president of strategic development and responsible for the ULI's research, data collection, books, and conferences in the commercial development field as well as its new strategic initiatives. He created ULI's program in the retail entertainment field, including international conferences, books, *Urban Land* magazine supplements, and strategic partnerships with other organizations. In addition, he is the past director of ULI's advisory work in Central Europe under the auspices of the U.S. Agency for International Development and the coordinator of program activities for ULI-Europe.

Before coming to ULI, Beyard was a senior consultant in the fields of urban planning and real estate development. He spent ten years at Booz Allen & Hamilton, Planning Research Corporation, and Gladstone Associates advising both public and private clients on market analysis, feasibility, and development planning.

Beyard has been honored with membership in Lambda Alpha, the International Land Economics Honorary Society, and was an appointed member of the Mayor's Interactive Downtown Task Force in Washington, D.C. He holds a BA in international economics with honors from Rutgers College and a master's in urban planning and development from Cornell University, where he was elected to Phi Kappa Phi.

Tom Gardner

Denver, Colorado

Gardner is a registered landscape architect and urban designer with 14 years of experience. He has worked as lead designer/project manager, directing multidisciplinary teams through the design and construction process on a variety of project types, including urban parks, transit-oriented developments, retail destinations, urban streetscapes, and resort hotels. Gardner has a comprehensive understanding for regional context, environment and cultural surroundings, and their influences on design. He is currently working on his master's in urban design at the University of Colorado Denver where he is focusing on transit and mixed-use designs as well as urban infill type developments.

Located in the Denver office, Gardner is a senior associate with EDAW, an idea-driven planning, design, and environmental firm that has offices worldwide. His clients include a variety of public municipalities and private development firms.

J. Dennis Lord

Greenwood, South Carolina

Lord is Professor Emeritus at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, where he served as a professor in economic geography for 32 years. He received his PhD from the University of Georgia in 1970. Lord's academic specialties included retail geography and store location research.

He has published extensively in the academic journal literature with articles appearing in such journals as *The Professional Geographer*, *Urban Geography*, *Annals of Regional Science*, *Journal of Shopping Center Research*, and the *International Review of Retail, Distribution, and Consumer Research*. His research has covered topics such as changes in urban retail structure, store location assessment methods, trade area analysis, retail saturation, and consumer shopping behavior. He was a member of the editorial board of the *Journal of Retailing* for 17 years.

Lord has provided consulting services to a variety of clients, including the cities of Charlotte and

Greensboro, North Carolina; Developers Diversified of Cleveland, Ohio; the Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council in Manchester, UK; and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg, North Carolina, school system. He has served as an expert witness in Vermont in regard to the state's land use law (Act 250); in Manchester, UK, regarding the effects of retail decentralization on city centers; and in Charlotte on the implications for school desegregation of changes in racial housing patterns.

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