

AN ADVISORY SERVICES PANEL REPORT

The Strand Seaport Galveston, Texas



**Urban Land
Institute**

The Strand Seaport Galveston, Texas

An Approach to Waterfront Linkages

March 19–21, 2007
An Advisory Services Program Report

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

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

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

Established in 1936, the Institute today has more than 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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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 panel assignment is intensive. It includes an in-depth briefing composed of a tour of the site and meetings with sponsor representatives; interviews of key people within the community; and a day of formulating recommendations. On the final day on site, the panel makes an oral presentation of its findings and conclusions to the sponsor. At the request of the sponsor, a written report is prepared and published.

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

provide recommendations in a compressed amount of time.

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

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Foreword: The Panel's Assignment

This Fellows panel addressed a limited-scope assignment, which was summarized in the sponsor's briefing book as follows: "What attractions and linkages are critical to the further success of the Strand Seaport?" The goal was to create a set of complementary uses providing a distinctive atmosphere and dynamic project that will attract appropriate financial interest.

The panel first studied and discussed the information provided by the sponsors in the briefing book. Following a live sponsor briefing, the panel toured

the project area the next morning. After two sets of interviews with stakeholders to discuss issues and concerns, the panelists met to debate the issues and frame recommendations. The panel reported verbally to the sponsors the next morning, followed by an extensive question-and-answer period.

Overarching Issues

Galveston is part of a metropolitan region that is experiencing long-term job and population growth, partially because of the area's reputation for affordability of housing and other real estate occupancy costs. The Houston region has been successfully seeking to diversify its occupational base over the last several decades; however, its worldwide position as an energy capital has contributed immensely to this economic and human increase. Projections are for continued growth, including an upswing in second homes, a national phenomenon partially attributable to the maturing of the baby boomers. These projections lead to the inevitable question of how Galveston positions itself to take advantage of this growth in a sustainable manner.

The panel noted that the 11-county region's official metropolitan planning organization is called the Houston-Galveston Area Council, a name that recognizes Galveston's historical importance to the area, not its current population ranking.

Houston Is Growing toward Galveston

Midway between downtown Houston and downtown Galveston is the Clear Lake area, home to the Lyndon Johnson Space Center of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, a massive number of recreational vessels touted as the third-largest such concentration in the United States, and a real estate development hotbed of continued residential and commercial growth. The unbroken outward expansion of Houston continues south and east along Interstate 45 into Galveston County, and little exists to inhibit the continuation of development in this direction.

Demographic Gap and Opportunities

The well-documented relatively small size of Galveston's middle class engenders a significant gap between rich and poor. Many middle-class

workers and professionals commute from mainland homes to island jobs, and the current housing boom in Galveston is not really addressing those issues. In fact, the vast majority, approximately 80 percent, of the 6,000 homes being built in the city at this time are second homes. Although this trend augurs well for the property tax base of Galveston, it does little to improve life for the citizens who live in substandard housing.

While infill housing is starting to take hold, a distinct lack of new housing exists for the workforce, students, and young families. The panel noted that the Strand Seaport could attract students, young professionals, and empty nesters to appropriate housing of the types the panel recommends.

Long-Term Port Configuration

To the immediate west of the Strand Seaport is the cruise ship terminal and to the west of that are a series of underused, poorly maintained wharves all the way up to the bridge to Pelican Island, which effectively forms the western terminus of the port. To the immediate east of the Strand Seaport are a pier for the shrimp fleet, docks for refrigerated fruit transport, a container area that until recently was leased to the Port of Houston, and the Galveston Yacht Club.

A critical issue for the panel is a railroad line traversing the Strand Seaport area that is now almost inactive; however, if new port facilities to the east are developed, the freight line would likely be upgraded and brought back into active service. Re-development of the port east of the Strand will also increase truck freight traffic along Harbor-side Drive through the heart of the Strand Seaport, another important issue the panel was made aware of.

Across the channel, Pelican Island is home to a variety of facilities for boat and rig repair and two large properties, owned by the ports of Galveston

and Houston, which have been targeted as the site for a large new container facility.

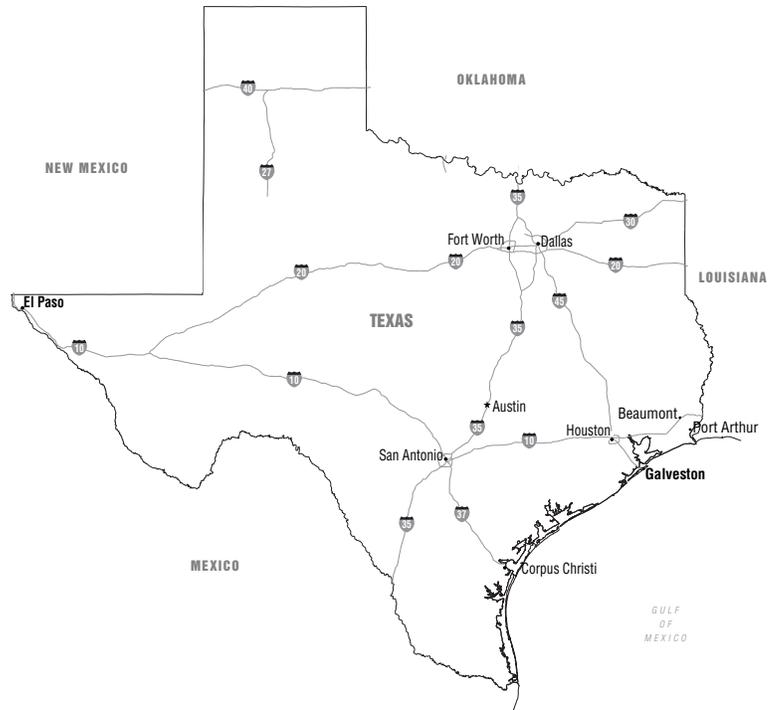
The panel believes strongly that the location—in fact, the very existence—of a freight railroad line bisecting the property as it does is a strong detriment to the fulfillment of a vision for the Strand Seaport, the University of Texas Medical Branch to the east, and downtown itself. Thus, any redevelopment of the docks east of the Strand Seaport for freight transport should be considered harmful to the continued and increasing success of Galveston's downtown. The redevelopment of the decaying docks to the west, however, would have no such effect on the Strand Seaport and should be promoted. Specifically, the Del Monte and all other commercial freight port operations should be relocated either to the west of the cruise terminal or to Pelican Island.

Ultimately, the railroad line itself should be removed entirely from the cruise terminal eastward through the subject area. These suggestions are totally in keeping with massive waterfront redevelopment projects taking place throughout the world. Many cities are reclaiming their decaying industrial harbors and giving them over to more human uses, such as housing, commerce, education, and recreation, and the panel strongly urges that Galveston make waterfront redevelopment a top priority as well.

Local vs. Tourist-Oriented Development

A common theme that the panel heard during its interviews was, "Make the area attractive to the locals and the tourists will be attracted as well." Currently, a dichotomy seems to exist between areas frequented by locals, such as Post Office Street, and areas geared toward seasonal visitors, such as the Strand Seaport. These two specific areas are close enough to be integrated physically over time, thus providing more year-round business stability and citizen "ownership" of the Strand, but more can be done to make the citizens of Galveston take pride in the Strand Seaport and frequent it more often.

Targeting the retail to everyday consumers rather than tourists would go a long way toward making the Strand a locally appreciated and used area,



Location map.

but the panel realizes that the sponsors have limited influence on the owners of properties they do not control. Store owner associations, business improvement districts, and management districts can play an important role here. Programming events of interest to locals and like-minded tourists, such as farmers markets, birding shows, or art fairs, would draw Galvestonians as well as off-islanders.

GPM's Ideas

The panel noted the following in the interviews with George P. Mitchell; members of the Mitchell family; the executives of GPM, Inc.; and their architect, Boone Powell of Ford, Powell & Carson.

Transient Marina and Restaurant

Immediately east of the Strand Seaport is Pier 19, which GPM, Inc., has been attempting to lease for redevelopment as a transient marina with a restaurant to complement the existing Ocean Star Offshore Oil Rig Museum. Pier 19 is home to an aging shrimp fleet that continues to decrease in numbers and utility, plus a few dinner-cruise boats, but any redevelopment should not displace those elements. GPM's redevelopment is not

moving forward at this time; however, the panel's other suggestions, if put into place, could catalyze renewed discussions about Pier 19's expanded role.

Expansion of Hotel

GPM's Harbor House has only 42 rooms, which is not large enough to be marketed and managed efficiently. Its occupancy is increasing to the point where a significant addition to the Harbor House begins to make sense financially.

New Cruise Ship Opportunities

The Mitchells believe that a significant long-term expansion opportunity exists for the passenger cruise industry in Galveston. Specifically, Carnival Cruises is a proponent of the island as a major base for its ships. Thus, George Mitchell believes the best future use for the current Del Monte pier is as a new cruise ship terminal, to complement the expansion underway at Pier 25. Should such a new terminal prove viable, it would place the Strand Seaport right in the middle of thousands of weekly passenger embarkations.

Connectivity

Harborside Drive is a strong disconnect between the Strand and the seaport, and the freight railroad line is a second disconnect. Improving the connections between the Strand and the seaport will help both areas, as will connecting these areas better to the surrounding neighborhoods.

View Corridors

Views of the waterfront from the Strand area were considered important, but the panel suggests that these views are not that dramatic; the channel itself is barely visible now, and infill development is inevitably going to block some existing views, though it should provide even better vistas from new buildings closer to the harbor.

Other Ideas and Opportunities

The roundtable discussions on Tuesday afternoon coupled with the GPM, Inc., briefing exposed a number of additional opportunities and ideas that can be beneficial to the waterfront. These ideas include the following:

Year-Round Activity. This activity is a must if stabilized businesses are to call the Strand Seaport home. The Mitchells have successfully programmed a number of events that local governments and other organizations have eventually taken over, but a continued need exists to bring forward new ideas.

Pedestrian Amenities. Several million dollars of federal funding has been expended on the Strand area already to bring to standard the streets, sidewalks, and street amenities, making the area more pedestrian-accessible and friendly.

More Than a One-Day Stay. To lengthen visitor stays, the area must continue to improve its retail mix, its breadth of attractions, and its connectivity to the rest of Galveston's many tourist draws, such as Moody Gardens and the beaches.

Cooperation among Players. For the Strand Seaport to ever reach its potential, both for GPM, Inc., and for the citizens of the region, the city of Galveston, the Galveston Wharves Board, and a host of smaller organizations must work together toward common goals.

Ownership Residential Preferred. If new housing is built in the Strand Seaport, some members of the Mitchell family professed a preference for ownership, rather than rental, residential. This last GPM idea is the basis for the panel's recommendations to follow.

Observations and Recommendations

The panel has a number of specific recommendations for the subject area. These recommendations were framed on the basis of the briefing materials, the panel's tour of the area, and its interviews.

Vision for the Seaport

The initial recommendation of virtually every ULI panel is to create an updated vision for the subject area, because, without this vision, no basis exists for rational planning. Creating a vision is an organic process, with input from government, private individuals, property owners, business owners, local associations, potential local users and out-of-town visitors, and, in this case, the owner and leaseholder of much of the property in the area, GPM, Inc.

Specifically, the needs and goals of the Galveston Wharves Board need to be brought into a process with the city government and citizens, so that all three are aligned to promote their mutual best interests. Some port areas should be given over to industrial development and job-creation purposes, and other areas devoted to human use and enjoyment.

Generally, the vision should bring forward new, complementary uses for the Strand Seaport area, such as entertainment and living options, so that the waterfront is enlivened, not only on summer weekends, but also in every season and every day of the week. A balance of national and local retail, including restaurants, can help achieve this stabilized scene.

Two specific areas that always need to be addressed are the perception of safety and the improvement of connectivity.

Connectivity

The area's connectivity to the mainland is being improved by the rebuilding of the causeway; Har-

borside Drive provides a high-speed link to the causeway for tourists who are aware of its existence. The same road, however, in its current configuration, causes a disconnect between the northern seaport portion of the study area and the southern Strand area.

The existing trolley system is so slow that it has limited utility for transportation purposes, although it does provide character to the area. Also, the panel found that the bus circulator system connecting the Strand Seaport to Galveston's other major attractions was inadequate in ridership and frequency. These transportation issues are, of course, part of a larger discussion concerning transit throughout the city and are not isolated problems of the Strand district alone.

Pedestrian Circulation

The panel considers a safe, attractive, interesting pedestrian connection from the seaport through the Strand all the way to Post Office Street a necessary boost for all parts of the study area. The panel was not in a position to make specific recommendations about how best to bridge Harborside, the chief impediment, but some thoughts are a sky bridge, a landscaped median replacing the turn lane at one or two specific corners, enhanced crosswalks defined with brick pavers, and better maintenance of the existing pedestrian signal lights, several of which were not working during the panel's stay.

The panel does not consider a sky bridge to be the best alternative, although it may prove more palatable to the traffic engineers than losing a turn lane to create medians. It also would function far better if it connected the upper floors of buildings rather than being constructed as a freestanding bridge. Obviously, a sky bridge would need to be connected to elevators and accessible ramps on both ends to have full functionality for the pedestrians who would need it most, those with limited mobility to cross Harborside unassisted on foot.

Open Space

The Strand Seaport area needs more open space, in particular, open green space such as pocket parks, water features, and street trees. Some participants suggested the historical foundation would not allow street trees to be planted because they are not authentic to the district. The panel believes this by-the-book adherence to the past will not allow the Strand to evolve into a successful downtown of the 21st century serving its citizenry. Street trees should be encouraged.

A similar issue was raised about not allowing the creation of sidewalk cafés in many places, because they would infringe upon the public sidewalk. This example is another where the bureaucracies need to work together to find a creative solution that gives the market what it wants so the district can be successful. Sidewalk cafés add color to a retail district, add eyes on the street for improved security and the perception of safety, and strongly attract business, because people-watching is one of the best forms of passive recreation.

Wayfinding

Wayfinding is the process that allows people to solve a variety of problems in architectural and urban spaces that involve both decision making (formulating an action plan) and decision executing (implementing the plan). Signage, including easy-to-read maps, is an important element, but other visual cues are important as well, such as gateways, view corridors, pedestrian paths and bridges, trail markers, and banners. Wayfinding works hand in glove with connectivity. Simply knowing where you are and where you want to go is not enough; safe and easy connections must actually bring visitors to their destination.

Branding and Marketing

Any vision for the Strand Seaport is going to have to address the creation and long-term marketing of a specific brand. A brand is a symbolic embodiment of all the information connected to a company, product, or service, or, in this case, an area of a city. The panel feels “the Strand Seaport” is a viable name, but it needs to be incorporated into a campaign with an explicit logo, fonts, color schemes, symbols, and sound to represent implicit values, ideas, and even personality. A marketing campaign

will create and reinforce in consumers’ minds associations and expectations, which should be pleasing and magnetic. All of this development takes a budget and might best be overseen by a management district, trade association, or property owners association, rather than individual property owners.

Place Making

A relatively new concept, place making is a modern approach to creating places such as those inherent in historic towns and cities, a place for people to congregate for commerce, political discourse, recreation, education, or a combination of these activities. Galveston now has no such place, but several sites within the Strand Seaport, and the entire area itself, could become the town square or city plaza where these activities occur and to which people just naturally gravitate. Creating such a place is a combination of many initiatives and programs, such as pedestrian connectivity and amenities, ground-floor retail and sidewalk cafés, sufficient parking and auto connectivity to the perimeter of the place, density of activities, and appropriate open space for gathering. The Strand Seaport has the potential to be such a place, to both its commercial and civic advantage.

Transition of Surface Parking to Infill

Assuming that all current surface lots are mere land banking for future, more-dense infill development, this initiative is medium to long term. As the market warrants, the construction of structured parking will allow more intense, attractive, and diverse development of current lots. In turn, this development will bring greater connectivity, because surface parking breaks up the continuity of retail facades and pedestrian interest. This transition is not intended to diminish the viability of on-street parking, which does aid local retail and convenience.

Future Development Sites

The panel has identified about ten potential development sites in the Strand Seaport area that are now surface parking lots. The transition to vertical development will occur over time and as additional structured parking is brought online. Parking experts indicate that, all else being equal, people will tend to park in surface lots rather than garages, so every effort must be made to make

future parking structures attractive, safe, inviting, and more cost-effective than the remaining surface lots, which will disappear over time as they are redeveloped.

Additional Attractions

These amenities must be developed in concert with the facilities on the rest of the island, so as not to compete with them, but to provide, in aggregate, additional draws for off-islanders as well as more reasons for locals to congregate in the Strand Seaport.

One strong attractor would be a movie theater—a six-plex, such as the Angelika located in downtown Houston, or the new style of dinner movie house, such as the Alamo Drafthouse. The existing multiplex on the island is more than five miles from the Strand Seaport, which is sufficient distance to allow a new theater to show first-run films.

A rubber-tired tourist train, such as the Conch Train in Key West, could be more appropriate during busy seasons than the existing, slow-moving rail trolley.

Performance artists in concert with live music, retail, kiosks, and food-and-beverage vendors could make for a lively waterfront scene, such as at Mallory Square, also in Key West, which the panel found to be a good analogue for the potential of the waterfront just north of the Harbor House.

A band shell, perhaps in the green space along the water just east of the existing Harbor House, would provide a gathering ground for larger celebrations, something that would increase the profile of the entire area.

A fitness center on a commercial scale, such as Bally Total Fitness or 24 Hour Fitness, would improve the livability and desirability of the area and could also be a strong, rent-paying anchor, serving the downtown as well as the nearby neighborhoods.

Fountains and parks are essential throughout the Strand Seaport, providing comfort, amusement, and breathing space.

Bicycle, boat, and electric cart rentals would all contribute to the activity level throughout the

Strand Seaport area and its connectivity to Galveston's other areas of beauty and interest.

Harbor cruises already exist, but better coordination with other facilities could only improve the area. As an example, seeing the *Elissa* at sail for more than one week a year would be a great asset to the Strand Seaport, although this suggestion might be impractical.

Fireworks after dark could draw large crowds to the waterfront, if regularly scheduled and promoted properly. Fireworks over water are particularly beautiful and could motivate visitors to linger in the Strand Seaport area longer into the night.

Specific Site Recommendations

Specifically in question are the three large surface parking lots north of Harborside Drive, which the panel has labeled Area 1 (westernmost tract—approximately 27,500 square feet of land), Area 2 (center tract—approximately 28,000 square feet of land), and Area 3 (easternmost tract—approximately 47,600 square feet of land). All the gross building areas quoted below are exclusive of the areas given to parking.

Option 1

This option reflects the status quo, allowing the land to the north of Harborside Drive to remain under a land lease from the port and city to GPM, Inc.

Under this scenario, the limited time left on the land lease, including any and all extensions, suggests a less-dense development pattern for these parcels. Because of the inherent difficulty in marketing for-sale residential product on leased land, this option implies rental residential for the subject sites, a less desirable and less sustainable outcome over the long term.

Option 2

In this option, the property to the north of Harborside Drive currently leased from the port and city would be sold to GPM, Inc., at a fair-market value. This scenario would likely result in higher density and higher-quality development than in the land-lease option, resulting in a much larger tax base for the city as well as a

range of homeownership opportunities for the citizens of Galveston.

Development Scenarios

- **Area 1:** Under the status quo, land-lease arrangement, this property would likely see the development of about 27,500 square feet of grade-level commercial, including arcades for access, with about 78 parking spaces on the floor above. This parking-above-retail arrangement is visible in Houston at the Village Arcade, Phase I, on University Boulevard at Kirby Drive. The rooftop parking works reasonably well. In Option 2 for this site, a third floor of rental apartments is viable, adding about 25 units of 1,100 square feet each, or another 27,500 square feet of gross building area. The second scenario effectively doubles the development capacity for this parcel.
- **Area 2:** Under Option 1, the panel envisions the capacity of this tract at 10,000 square feet of “liner” commercial at grade, including the arcades, plus 130 parking places at grade and on the floor above, surmounted by 25 apartment units. This scenario totals 37,500 square feet of gross building area on three floors. Under Option 2, a fourth floor of 14 condos is added to the third floor of 14 condos, all averaging 2,000 square feet gross. This scenario increases the building by 28,000 square feet gross and converts the smaller rental units of the land-lease scenario into larger condominiums in this land-sale scenario. The market value per square foot of condominiums is considered to be about double the market value per square foot of apartments, so the tax base is considerably enhanced.
- **Area 3:** Under Option 1, about 6,500 square feet of ground-floor “liner” commercial, including arcades, is complemented by 253 parking spaces on the ground and second floors, topped by 86 units of apartments. This scenario yields a total gross building area of 94,600 square feet of residential plus the 6,500 square feet of commercial, for a total of 101,100 square feet of gross building area. In Option 2, the two floors of apartments are replaced by two floors of condominiums, reducing the number of units from 86 to 48 at the same gross square footage, but increasing the tax value of the improvements significantly.

Both options project 411 parking spaces, an excess over the spaces required by the new improvements on the site, thus providing additional parking for the existing restaurants at the Strand Seaport, as required by their leases. The difference is that in the land-lease option, only 166,100 square feet of gross building area, primarily rental apartments, is built. In the land-sale option, the parking and retail remain the same, but the gross building area goes up to 223,500 square feet, with the majority of that being condominiums. Although this option yields only about a 35 percent increase in gross building area, exclusive of parking, the taxable value in Option 2 should be at least double that for Option 1 overall.

Phasing the Structured Parking

This approach involves designing parking structures that can be converted, as market conditions warrant, to other uses, such as commercial at grade and residential on upper floors. A primary constraint to keep in mind is the floor-to-floor height requirements of different uses.

Air Rights Area

One use already under discussion, and which the panel supports, is using the air rights area for parking for an intermodal transit hub. Other potential uses of this area include a cinema, restaurants, housing—most likely rental housing, a fitness center, and a green roof that can function as a meeting place or passive open space.

Hotel Expansion

Expanding the Harbor House by about 80 rooms will yield a more efficient hospitality operation, as well as bring more people to the Strand Seaport for longer stays, which is desirable. In concert with this expansion, GPM might consider also developing a conference center of the International Association of Conference Centers type, which is highly amenitized, with upscale audiovisual equipment and meeting rooms tailored to corporate conferences and training. This facility would be small to medium scale, serving the needs of groups much smaller than appropriate for the large convention facilities already on the island.

A larger-than-normal pool area would serve not only the Harbor House but also Tremont House and the transient marina if it is built; the pool area

could also be a magnet for food-and-beverage sales to nonhotel guests. A small fitness center would likely be a part of this complex.

Live at Five

This concept has the potential to grow into a legendary daily occurrence, such as is found at Mallory Square in Key West, every evening of the year leading up to sunset. It could be started off in the vacant retail spaces on the ground floor of the Harbor House, which GPM, Inc., already controls.

Various approaches to enlivening the area, similar to those used in Mallory, include performance artists, live music, nearby retail and movable carts, refreshments, and evening fireworks displays.

Long-Term Management

Because the Strand Seaport area is not an enclosed shopping center and is, in fact, open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, in good weather and bad, during high season and low, more-intensive management is required to maintain safety, the perception of safety, cleanliness, activity levels, and walkability.

One approach would be to create a management or business improvement district to handle maintenance, landscaping, security, event planning and promotion, and marketing. This body could work with the managements of the various businesses and property owners, and their associations, to address ongoing issues and problems.

This group could also be central in identifying and promoting the brand of the Strand Seaport, in creating a theme or themes for the area, and in overseeing the programming and marketing as well as the mundane though necessary functions of maintaining a safe and clean environment. What begins with a vision must end in good management.

Conclusion

A near-term goal is the creation of a long-term vision for the Strand Seaport, including a brand, themes, events, and the requisite organizations and division of responsibility to implement and manage various aspects of the vision.

Second, various stakeholders need to engage in planning to improve connectivity within the area and to other parts of the city, including the discussion of Harborside Drive, the existing rail trolley, buses, and the proposed tourist train.

An important consideration for GPM, Inc., which should be implemented before any new development, is settling the issue of land lease or land purchase. The political aspect of this issue may make it more of a medium-term goal than short term, but the process needs to be initiated soon.

Cooperation among all parties needs to be the hallmark of a revitalized Strand Seaport, benefiting all equally—the property and business owners

and the citizens of Galveston. The port and the city government need to be active, engaged participants in this long-term working arrangement or the vision cannot be accomplished. The port's leadership must be made to understand its role in a better Galveston for the future, and that role appears to be the relinquishment of the port facilities east of the Strand Seaport in favor of those to the west and across the channel on Pelican Island.

With cooperation and leadership, the Strand Seaport definitely has the potential to become a regional draw far beyond its current status, increasing civic pride and engagement, the local property and sales tax bases, and Galveston's role as a tourist destination and progressive city in which to live and raise a family.

About the Panel

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*Panel Chair
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Segal is a developer, marketing consultant, and real estate broker with Zane Segal Projects, Inc. Specializing in mixed-use, residential, retail, historic, hospitality, urban, and resort properties, Segal has 27 years of experience in real estate venture management, development, construction, brokerage, and marketing on a range of property types that include land, lofts, townhomes, custom homes, low- and midrise condominiums, hotels, retail centers, office buildings, subdivisions, and sports facilities as well as mixed-use projects incorporating several property types.

He received a BS from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and an MFA from the University of Southern California, and he has studied graduate-level architecture at the University of Houston.

Segal is vice chair for advisory services of the Urban Land Institute Houston District Council, has chaired one and served on eight additional ULI Advisory Services Panels across the country, and has chaired ULI Houston's first two Technical Assistance Program panels. He is a member of a City of Houston Planning Commission committee studying urbanization of the suburbs, is on an advisory committee overseeing a regional visioning project, and serves on the boards of the Citizens Environmental Coalition and Blueprint Houston.

Previous community activities include being the first president of the Houston Association for Film & Television, founding executive director of the Museum District Business Alliance, member of the Regional Planning Committee of the Greater Houston Partnership, presenter on urban design to Imagine Houston, and president of Sparacino Company Dancers. Segal has often

spoken, written for publication, and been quoted by the media concerning real estate, development, urban design, and the arts.

Thomas W. Eitler

Washington, D.C.

Eitler is the director of advisory services for the Urban Land Institute. He is an urban planner and public policy professional with 20 years of experience in comprehensive planning, revitalization, urban design, historical preservation, regional transportation systems, military installation master planning, and rural preservation strategies. He is an expert in local zoning laws, municipal codes, urban design, and government operations. Eitler has prepared and conducted dozens of community engagement plans, charters, advisory groups, and panels. He has directed projects in both the public and private sectors in a variety of locations throughout the United States and Europe.

Before joining ULI, Eitler was a principal with Community Planning Associates, a land planning consulting firm based in Northern Virginia. Before that he was director of operations for the Onyx Group, a planning, design, and architectural firm with offices in Alexandria Virginia; San Diego and Oakland, California; and Honolulu, Hawaii. Prior to these positions, he was a principal planner with local governments, including chief of long-range planning for Prince William County, Virginia.

Eitler has a master's degree in urban and environmental planning from the University of Virginia's School of Architecture and undergraduate degrees in political science, public administration, and urban studies. He is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners.

Gary Okerlund

Charlottesville, Virginia

An architect, landscape architect, and urban design consultant, Okerlund is principal of Okerlund Associates in Charlottesville, Virginia, and teaches courses in urban design in the School of Architecture at the University of Virginia. His research, projects, and publications include *Transit-Oriented Communities for Northern Virginia*, proposing strategies for transit and community development; *Washington, DC/Richmond Rail Corridor Study: Community Development Strategies*; *Brooke Station Community Plan* for Stafford, Virginia; and *New River Valley Rail Corridor Plan*—all for the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation; *Public Improvements on Main Street*, for the National Main Street Center; *Streetscape: A Search for Appropriateness*, for the National Endowment for the Arts; *Visual Values for the Highway User*, for the U.S. Department of Transportation; and *A Network of Livable Communities* and *A Better Way to Grow* for the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. Okerlund served on the Mayors' Institute for City Design. He has also

participated in the development of numerous other urban design plans and projects.

Recognition includes a Design for Transportation National Award from the National Endowment for the Arts and U.S. Department of Transportation; several Excellence in Architectural Awards from the Virginia Society of the American Institute of Architects; and a Meritorious Professional Planning Project Award from the Virginia Chapter of the American Planning Association.

Okerlund holds a Master of Landscape Architecture degree from the Harvard University Graduate School of Design and a Bachelor in Architecture degree from the University of Washington. He has taught at the Harvard GSD, Washington University in St. Louis, and Salford University in England as a visiting fellow. He served as president of the Virginia Downtown Development Association, chair of Charlottesville's Urban Design Committee, and vice-president of the Alliance for Community Choice in Transportation.