

Gallaudet University Washington, D.C.

September 12–17, 2011



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Repositioning the Institution,
Renewing the Community

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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 nearly 30,000 members worldwide, representing the entire spectrum of the land use and development disciplines. 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 five-day panel assignment is intensive. It includes an in-depth briefing day composed of a tour of the site and meetings with sponsor representatives; a day of hour-long interviews of typically 50 to 75 key community representatives; and two days of formulating recommendations. Long nights of discussion precede the panel's conclusions. On the final day on site, the panel makes an oral presentation of its findings and conclusions to 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 five-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, academics, representatives of financial institutions, and others. In fulfillment of the mission of the Urban Land Institute, this Advisory Services panel report is intended to provide objective advice that will promote the responsible use of land to enhance the environment.

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Finally, as is the case for every Advisory Services assignment, this undertaking would not have been possible without the involvement of many others, including government officials, business owners, students, staff, neighbors, and community members who participated through the panel interview process, individual meetings, receptions, and special meetings.

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Introduction and Background

GALLAUDET UNIVERSITY is an institution with a long history, and it is an entity whose roots reach deep and wide in the deaf community. But new social and technological forces require that the educational institution evolve, not only to fulfill its historic mission, but also so that the community may persist and grow. It is time for Gallaudet to focus on reconnecting the campus to its surrounding neighborhood. In the context of the city, it is past time for Gallaudet to reach out more boldly to meet its neighbors even as it strengthens the community at the heart of the deaf community.

The recommendations that follow are intended to help make that happen, to balance the effort to reach out to new friends, neighbors, and partners with the important work of strengthening the Gallaudet community by improving the experience of students. In concrete terms, this means



- Pulling the elements of a somewhat scattered campus closer to its heart;
- Building bridges from the campus to the surrounding neighborhoods and the city;
- Creating space for new educational and career development opportunities; and
- Establishing new amenities and services for student life on campus and off.

The Panel's Assignment

In 2011 the university initiated an update to the campus master plan. As part of that process the university engaged the ULI Advisory Services Program to provide some critical thinking about the place and role of Gallaudet in the city of Washington, D.C., and about its connections with the adjacent communities. Although initially the specific panel assignment focused on the Capital City Market side of the campus, it quickly became clear that the panel needed to look at the comprehensive role the university plays in this part of the city and what physical and organizational changes should be undertaken to enable it to fulfill that role. The panel assembled from September 12

ULI's Experience at Gallaudet

Participating in the Advisory Services panel at Gallaudet University was a revelatory experience for all the panelists. Most panel members were uninitiated into the nature of Gallaudet and deaf culture and, as such, were swept up in the commitment and optimism of a unique community in the act of reinventing itself. The fact that these new institutional goals coincide with real estate and community opportunities—ones that the university has not experienced for over 50 years—makes tangible the Campus Plan's motto, "From Isolation to Innovation."

to 17, 2011. This report documents the observations and recommendations of the panel.

The sponsor's dinner on the panel's first night immediately made clear the concept of deaf gain. The panelists were introduced to the Gallaudet community through conversations interpreted between American Sign Language (ASL) and English, which revealed the

uniquely expressive communication that occurs through ASL. Throughout the five days of the meeting, the panel was constantly reminded of the significant organizational, financial, and operational challenges that face Gallaudet. But at the same time, it became abundantly clear that the opportunities and dedication of the university community outweigh those obstacles.

Gallaudet is much more than a university. It is, as one stakeholder described it, "the capital of the deaf community." The bonds of community that stem from that position are driving the reinvention of Gallaudet, in response to cultural and technological changes that require innovation. This process of reinvention has been a painful one for Gallaudet, but the university's dedication to its community appears to have emerged the stronger for it. This devotion and enthusiasm was infectious and ultimately colored all of

the panelists' work, leading to an exceptionally rewarding and productive result.

The Gallaudet Campus and Its Context

Gallaudet University is the world's only university in which all programs and services are specifically designed to accommodate deaf and hard-of-hearing students. It was founded in 1864 by an Act of Congress, and its charter was signed by President Abraham Lincoln.

The 99-acre campus is located on the north side of Florida Avenue in the northeast quadrant of the city. In fall 2010, the 1,793 students enrolled in the university included 1,100 undergraduates, 433 graduates, 201 professional studies students, and 59 English Language Institute students. The university is bilingual, with American Sign Language (ASL) and English used for instruction and in all parts of campus life. Approximately 6 percent of the students come from other countries, so many other languages are used on campus as well. There is also a connection with the deaf and hard-of-hearing community throughout the United States and abroad. One interviewee told the panel, "It's not just an alma mater; it's the Mecca for the deaf world."

A great tradition runs through the campus in terms of design and layout. The historic core on the south side of campus was laid out by Frederick Law Olmsted. The buildings that were constructed through the mid-20th century exhibit the tradition and collegial feel that is repeated on

The Gallaudet University campus includes a variety of buildings from the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries.





great campuses throughout the country. But other facilities are in dire need of replacement: some were produced during an era of mediocrity beginning in the late 1960s (the learning center), and others are no longer appropriate for their purposes (dorms, dining hall, the Model Secondary School for the Deaf [MSSD], and many of the support and athletic facilities).

In the second half of the 20th century, security issues related to surrounding residential communities coupled with the communication issues of the deaf, the riots of 1968, and the overall decline in neighborhood vitality made Gallaudet turn inward. On campus, the overall experience is one of isolation and separation from the rest of the city. The campus has a distinctly different fabric from the surrounding neighborhoods, and walls and fences totally encircle the campus, with few entrances. Many of these entrances are not always open, giving students, teachers, and employees a feeling of being trapped. In fact one interviewee said, “Students are not living in D.C.; they’re attending Gallaudet.” In addition, these narrow and sometimes closed entrances make visitors feel unwelcome or disoriented.

Adjacency Issues

Existing uses on Gallaudet property and adjacent properties pose challenges to the reinvention of the campus.

- The Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center (Clerc Center), encompassing the Kendall Demonstration Elementary School (KDES) for elementary-level deaf students and the MSSD for high school-age students, which are part of the Gallaudet organization but operate somewhat independently and have different needs;
- The Hamilton School, a D.C. public school now hosting a “Second Chance” program for students with behavioral problems;

- A full-sized baseball field on Sixth Street used by teams from Gonzaga High School; and
- National Parks Service maintenance facilities across Brentwood Parkway and a city reservoir just to the north of the Hamilton School.

Each of these uses is integral to the success of the Gallaudet campus and requires special consideration as the university undertakes its master planning initiative. Other important adjacent uses include Capital City Market, NoMa, and surrounding neighborhoods.

Capital City Market

The Capital City Market, also known as the Florida Avenue Market, alias Union Market, is one of a few “industrial” areas remaining in the District. It is a concentration of mostly wholesale trade uses, mostly in food, that serves an important function in the life of the city and represents a unique urban environment in the D.C. context. The market includes low-rise warehouse buildings and wide streets devoted to truck traffic and goods movement. Some buildings in the Market are of historic caliber, but their fragmented ownership makes it difficult to plan their transition to other uses. Vacant or underused parcels along Sixth Street also present opportunities and challenges, as does the fragmented strip development along Florida Avenue, which is a result of lost retail market share and neglect. However, given the overall development market in the District, the panel believes that all these areas have tremendous upside potential, for both new uses and improvement in current functions.

North of Massachusetts Avenue (NoMa)

The nearby NoMa district is an area of intensive office, hotel, residential, and retail uses adjacent to the New York Avenue Metro station (soon to be NoMa/Gallaudet U station) at Second and N Streets. Unfortunately, the Metro

The Capital City Market, also known as the Florida Avenue Market, is an active industrial area focused on food and supplies for the city’s ethnic restaurants. The area presents tremendous potential for both new and improved development that can be a positive factor for Gallaudet and the Near Northeast neighborhood.

The neighborhoods surrounding Gallaudet have a mix of residential, commercial, and industrial uses. The adjacent Trinidad neighborhood (left) is a challenged community, but has recently experienced an influx of new residents and investment.



station currently has entrances only on its west side, lessening its impact on the neighborhoods to the east. NoMa is one of the rising stars in the District's land use fabric. The amount of recent new development in this district suggests that its influence will spill over the railroad underpass on Florida Avenue into the Gallaudet study area.

The NoMa Business Improvement District (BID) provides maintenance, development, and marketing and promotion of the district and activity in the NoMa area, driven by demand from tenants such as the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives and the General Services Administration and by other functions that support them. This demand is likely to drive east across Florida Avenue and M Street.

Surrounding Neighborhoods

Surrounding neighborhoods include the Near Northeast to the south and west; Trinidad to the east and southeast; and Ivy City to the north. Each of these neighborhoods has experienced some degree of redevelopment and revitalization activity. The Near Northeast, in particular, has benefited from the activity arising from the revitalization of the H Street Corridor, Stanton Park, and—by extension—Capitol Hill.

Summary of Recommendations

To achieve the strategic goals of the university and meet the broad aspirations of the Gallaudet community, the panel recommends a five-part strategy encompassing both physical development and programmatic initiatives to strengthen the campus community, connect the university more strongly to neighbors and the city at large, leverage development opportunities to help meet student needs, forge new partnerships to strengthen the university and the student experience, and build new capacity to get all these recommendations done. In brief:

- *Pull the campus closer to its heart.* The panel recommends a series of moves to strengthen the sense of community and enhance the vitality of the student experience by

reorienting activities around the historic centers of campus, Olmsted Green and the mall. These moves will include replacement of the existing library with a centrally located Learning Commons, restoration of Olmsted Green, abandonment of the dining hall, demolition and redevelopment of the MSSD, and a number of other initiatives.

- *Build bridges to neighborhood and city.* Gallaudet wants to break through the sense of isolation that has enveloped it for much of its history. To do so it needs to open its entrances to visitors, calm the dangerous busy streets on its periphery, and improve pedestrian and transit connections to the Metro and to H Street. Some of these “bridges” will be programmatic, such as community events or sharing of playfields. Others will be both symbolic and physical, such as a new Olmsted Gate opening a pedestrian way onto campus from Sixth Street and Florida Avenue. The Gallaudet campus can continue to be a green and beautiful refuge from the city while it welcomes new friends and breaks out of its historic isolation.

- *Create a great new place on Sixth Street and beyond.* Working with strong private sector partners, Gallaudet can and should contribute to the creation of a great new urban place on several blocks of Sixth Street just north of Florida Avenue. Demand for retail, restaurant, and residential space, from campus residents—as well as from the broader D.C. market—makes it possible to imagine the development of a place that would function as a new “college town” for Gallaudet even as it serves a broader city market. Development concepts building on activity at the Capital City Market and extending the theme of food and dining to new retail offerings along Sixth Street can serve both campus and city. Sixth Street, meanwhile, can be transformed as a safe and exciting urban place to be.

- *Forge new partnerships to advance the university.* With the abundance of public and private sector partners, a variety of programs and initiatives can be helpful to the

university in its efforts to reduce isolation and integrate with the adjacent neighborhoods. Building improved physical links to the city will be enhanced by strong partnerships that can help improve student enrollment, expand economic growth, and improve visual access to the campus. New partnerships will include both on-campus coordination of facilities with the Clerc Center and off-campus joint ventures with D.C. Public Schools and potentially nonprofits such as an innovation lab.

- *Create the capacity to get it all done.* The panel believes the time is ripe for Gallaudet to solidify a partnership with private interests to advance the redevelopment of Sixth Street. Additional delay means the university may miss the approaching development window. Toward that end, the panel also recommends that Gallaudet move quickly to establish the organizational capacity to enter into this type of transaction—in the form of a real estate foundation or similar entity—both to take advantage of the immediate opportunity and to maximize such opportunities on a continuing basis.

Market Context—Opportunities and Constraints

UNDERSTANDING SOCIOECONOMIC TRENDS that affect a study area helps identify opportunities and constraints for future land uses, so an important part of any ULI Advisory Services panel is ensuring that recommendations are consistent with the current and projected real estate market. As the country struggles to emerge from the recent recession, the Washington, D.C., market leads the nation economically. Federal government employment, as well as growth in private sector industries such as technology and in the arts, is also creating jobs and driving demand for new office, retail, multifamily, and other real estate products.

The Gallaudet market area, a small subarea in the larger D.C. market, is located in the Near Northeast neighborhood of Washington. As defined for this analysis, it includes the area within a radius of a half to three-quarter mile from the intersection of Sixth Street and Florida

Avenue. (The statistics given here are estimates and guidelines and are not a substitute for more extensive market studies that may be conducted for specific proposed development projects.)

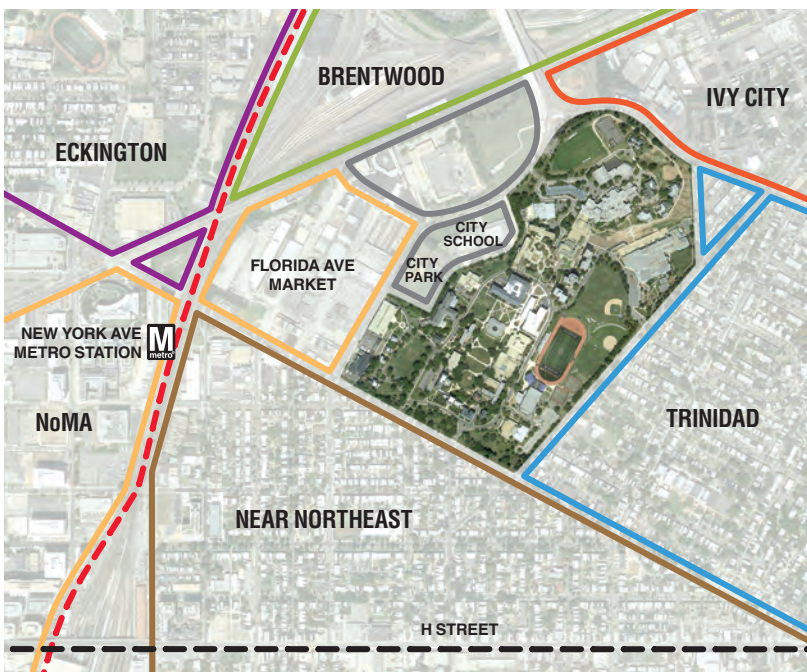
The Near Northeast submarket was somewhat passed over in the last real estate investment cycle but is now emerging quickly as a major focal point for new real estate development in the District. This is evident in the new mixed-use developments in the neighborhood to the southwest as well as in the retail transformation that is taking place in the H Street corridor to the south. The Capital City Market and its surrounding property, located just west of the university, are clearly in the path of new development and poised to become a part of the transformation that is occurring all around them.

The panel's market analysis found that the development potential is greatest for neighborhood-serving retail and for multifamily, primarily rental, apartment housing. The high walkability of the area is a plus for both uses. Office and light industrial uses are secondary uses, as are special uses such as hotels, because of the residential character of much of the Gallaudet market area and the heavy concentration of office uses in nearby NoMa.

Retail Market Demand

There is an immediate need for new retail facilities in the market area, because it is currently underserved in high-quality offerings relative to the needs of the population. This population includes neighborhood residents in Trinidad and Ivy City as well as students, faculty, and staff at Gallaudet. The transition has begun on H Street and Capitol Hill North to the south, as older, often underutilized space has been either refurbished and converted into new uses or replaced with new construction. Land within and

Gallaudet University and its surrounding neighborhoods.



on the perimeter of the Capital City Market offers ideal locations for new retail development to serve the area.

Based on information provided in the Retail Action Roadmap report published by the D.C. Office of Planning in May 2010, the panel estimates that the Gallaudet market area could support roughly 800,000 square feet of retail space by 2017. The panel further estimates that only about 300,000 square feet could be satisfied by development on H Street, leaving 500,000 square feet of unmet demand, some of which will undoubtedly be satisfied by retailers located outside the market area.

Given the residential character of the surrounding area, demand is strongest for neighborhood-serving retail as well as some restaurants and specialty retailers that have regional destination appeal. Types of retail for which there is strong demand include fast casual dining and coffee bars; convenience services such as a small-scale (15,000 square feet) supermarket, dry cleaners, and laundromats; electronics; bookstores; entertainment facilities such as a captioned movie theater, an arcade, and a bowling alley; and a full-service gym. Retailers that reflect and support the university setting as well as the international flavor of the Capital City Market would be highly desirable and recommended.

It is the panel's opinion that development in the Capital City Market and surrounding properties could reasonably capture a 20 to 25 percent share of the gross demand for 800,000 square feet of space by 2017, representing 160,000 to 200,000 square feet of new space.

Multifamily Housing Demand

Multifamily rental housing also has strong potential in the Gallaudet market area over the next five years. Roughly one-half of housing demand in the area is for rental housing, targeting university market segments (students, faculty, and staff), those who work in NoMa, and residents of older, single-family, rental properties who would prefer new, more urban-style, amenitized housing. Several factors support strong near-term development of multifamily rental housing:

- High rents and low occupancy in D.C. multifamily properties are attracting the attention of housing developers and capital providers.
- Multifamily residential development is in an up cycle in the District right now, making it an ideal time to get projects in the pipeline for construction over the next three to four years.
- For-sale housing is in a protracted down cycle, creating even stronger demand for rental housing.

Based on expected household growth of roughly 5,900 in the Gallaudet market area over the next five years, demand for an additional 2,800 rental units is projected. Given the prime location of the Capital City Market and surrounding properties, the panel believes that the Gallaudet market area could reasonably capture a 35 to 40 percent market share, or 980 to 1,120 units.

Office Space Demand

The Gallaudet market area is secondary to Downtown D.C. and NoMa as an office market because of the largely residential character of the area and its distance from D.C.'s central core. Demand for office development in this area is weak but will improve once new retail and housing is well established, in five to ten years. Demand will most likely come from large-scale federal or private sector users who are interested in build-to-suit facilities on larger tracts. Several large properties adjacent to the campus or the Capital City Market could be ideal locations for such uses, providing good access to transportation as well as the new retail and housing developments. Attracting such users to the area will require early recruiting because these types of organizations have long planning cycles and complex decision-making processes. The Gallaudet market area will have to compete for such users with other large-scale, mixed-use developments like those in NoMa.

Industrial Space Demand

Minimal new supply of industrial space is proposed within the boundaries of the District; most large-scale users have

moved out to suburban areas in Northern Virginia. Therefore, the panel does not see any demand for additional industrial space within the Gallaudet market area for the foreseeable future.

The newer industrial warehouse facilities located on the western side of the Capital City Market are expected to continue to be viable for many years. The historic core of the warehouse district in the Market, which contains buildings that date to the late 1920s and early 1930s, is likely to continue to house small businesses, both food-related and non-food-related, for the foreseeable future. Creative production and additional culinary arts activities could gradually be added to the mix of uses. Over time, this historic core will organically morph into uses that have symbiotic relationships with adjacent new development along Sixth Street.

Summary of Market Conditions Near Gallaudet

Steady employment in the federal government and industries such as technology and the arts is creating jobs and driving demand for new office, retail, multifamily, and other real estate products in downtown D.C. The Gallaudet subarea is experiencing the positive influence of revitalization in the NoMa, H Street corridor, and Near Northeast neighborhoods. The outlook for rental housing is particularly good, at least for the next few years. The paucity of retail and services catering to university students in the immediate area around Gallaudet indicates that development to respond to the pent-up demand for these uses could be focused on Sixth Street and Florida Avenue.

Pulling the Campus Closer to Its Heart

MEMBERS OF THE GALLAUDET COMMUNITY

perceive that the current functions of the campus are too spread out, defeating the sense of activity and vitality that they seek on campus. By reducing the geographic extent of the campus, pulling the core elements closer to the heart of the campus, and replacing buildings that are obsolete, over-designed, or inappropriate, the university can create a campus that is livelier and reinforces the sense of community that is at the core of the Gallaudet experience. This effort will entail reinforcing the arrangement of key academic and student life facilities around the historic central spaces on campus—Olmsted Green and the mall—by creating a new Gallaudet Commons building that encompasses the library, a computing center, a café, and an activity center at the intersection of the north–south and east–west axes of the campus. Most of the academic and student life functions on campus should be organized around the mall, with a strong east–west pathway connecting the heart of campus to new activity centers on Sixth Street.

To implement this strategy, Gallaudet should undertake the following activities:

- *Create a new Gallaudet Commons*, demolishing the existing library and replacing it with a multipurpose campus center, most likely on the site of the existing

admissions building. The Commons would combine the functions of library, dining hall, computing center, and social gathering place in a single building at a central location on the mall and oriented to the activity center of Sixth Street.

- *Reinforce the mall* in part through the demolition of the existing library but also through the development of discrete spaces for casual gathering, social interaction, rest and contemplation, and “prospect and refuge” around the perimeter of the mall. The mall, and especially the Gallaudet Commons near its center, should be the hub of campus life.
- *Restore Olmsted Green*, eliminating the parking adjacent to College Hall, removing the central drive, and reestablishing the oval as the path into and out of the campus at the Seventh Street entrance. This will provide a beautiful and memorable pathway from a new Olmsted Gate at Sixth Street and Florida Avenue, as well as from the existing Neal Place entrance, eastward toward the heart of campus. There is an opportunity in this area to add one or two new houses in keeping with Ballard, Fay, and Denison Houses for residentially based academic programming and to take further advantage of the Green.



The mall must be redesigned to help coordinate the university's core. The careful arrangement of key academic and student activities in the form of a new Gallaudet Commons can make it the central organizing feature to connect the heart of the campus with new activity on Sixth Street.

This illustration provides a future view of the campus. Key elements include a redesigned central mall, a new campus entrance, a new high school, new student housing along Sixth Street, a new Innovation Lab area, and the reorientation of a key axis between the academic and social functions of the university and the commercial and residential uses of the nearby neighborhoods.



- **Develop a new bilingual magnet school** as a partnership between the Clerc Center and the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) on the site of Hamilton School on Brentwood Parkway. This school would replace the MSSD, which is too large for the anticipated student population, configured in a manner inappropriate for the current program, and structurally compromised by unstable underlying soils. The MSSD would be demolished to make way for new athletic fields, orchards, urban farming, and open space on the hilltop promontory.
- **Replace two existing dormitories** to the west of Hanson Plaza with new high school residence halls that have new orientations to the bilingual magnet school. Over time, Hanson Plaza would be reconfigured, demolishing parking, relocating the health center, and allowing the center of gravity of university activities to shift farther to the south. At the same time, new housing and the new high school can be designed to create beautiful, sociable, safe, enclosed spaces, possibly in the form of linked quadrangles.
- **Retain KDES** in its current location with new entrance and boundary conditions to reinforce its identity and ensure the safety of students. It should be retained because it is more appropriate in size, condition, and configuration for its current mission than the MSSD.
- **Restructure parking.** Even as alternatives for commuting are developed, the Metro station is made closer and more convenient, new options like the D.C. streetcar emerge, and more faculty and staff find housing near the campus, it will be important to find new ways to meet the demand for parking at Gallaudet. Doing so will be further complicated by the need to remove parking capacity in order to meet other design and development objectives on campus. The parking lot near the main administration building should be removed to allow the full restoration of the Olmsted Green. Ultimately, the Sixth Street parking garage must be removed to allow the fulfillment of Gallaudet's "college town" aspirations. Parking structures beneath Hanson Plaza also need to be reconsidered as planning for that area of campus proceeds. Most of this capacity needs to be replaced somewhere on campus. The panel recommends that the current baseball field should be considered as a site both for mixed-use development fronting on Sixth Street and as a reservoir of parking.

Building Bridges to the City

THE EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN THE CORE of the campus community are balanced by initiatives to build new bridges to the neighborhood, community, city, and the wider world. These initiatives include moves to make the campus more permeable, insofar as possible in keeping with the need for security on campus; making the streets around campus safer and more comfortable for pedestrians; and making connections to new opportunities in the Capital City Market area, the New York Avenue/Gallaudet Metro station, and new activities on H Street and elsewhere. They include programmatic initiatives as well as physical changes.

In general, Gallaudet should keep the fences but open the gates. Although some of the impulse for enclosure is pegged to memories of the riots of 1968, it appears that the walls and fences that encircle the campus existed long before those events. In any case, the campus can be made far more welcoming, as well as less confining for students, simply by opening the existing gates more regularly and by adding a few strategically selected new portals for pedestrian or vehicular traffic as appropriate.

Improve Wayfinding, Signage, and Information

Gallaudet should immediately establish new signage and information to help visitors gain access to campus, find parking, and locate their destination buildings. This can and should be a temporary program with elements that are flexible and adaptable and can be adjusted as needed, as more is learned about how visitors come and go.

Create a New Olmsted Gate

Gallaudet should establish a new pedestrian entrance to the campus leading immediately from the intersection of

Florida Avenue and Sixth Street onto the campus, around Olmsted Green, and toward the heart of the campus. This would create a gateway and shallow stairway to both physically and symbolically mark the public entrance to the Gallaudet campus. It would also provide a dramatic visual marker for those traveling east on Florida Avenue, announcing that Gallaudet is here. This should be a delicately proportioned passageway, inviting and intriguing, threading its way between the president's house and the other houses on Olmsted Green into the center of campus.

Make Sixth Street Safe for "College Town"

The new outward face of the Gallaudet campus will meet the city along Sixth Street between Florida Avenue and Neal Place. New activities and facilities will take place there, as discussed in the following subsections, but the life of this new "college town" will depend on the transformation of Sixth Street from a mean, busy cut-through to a safe, pleasant sauntering street. Reduced travel lanes, wider sidewalks, new street trees, and a signal at Neal Place and Sixth Street will help make this a place where street life can survive.

Domesticate Florida Avenue

To reconnect the campus to the city, the barrier of Florida Avenue must be addressed. Florida Avenue is the primary presentation of Gallaudet from the city, and for many years



The corner of Florida Avenue and Sixth Street will be the location of the new main entrance to the campus.

Current wayfinding, signage, and directional information need significant improvement.



it acted as the northeast edge of the original grid laid out by Pierre L'Enfant. It was in these Elysian Fields, beyond the bustle of the city, that Gallaudet was established, in keeping with the idea of a refuge for the deaf students. Over time, the area around Florida Avenue has developed like most other places in the city; however, Gallaudet has remained as an institutional use in a parklike setting.

Florida Avenue has significant traffic. The panel believes that the six-lane undivided road is very hostile to pedestrians, cyclists, and adjacent ground-related residential on the south side. It is effectively a crocodile-filled moat across the front of the Gallaudet campus. Traffic is fast and heavy, sidewalks are narrow, and crossings perilous and few. Cycling along Florida Avenue is a near-suicidal undertaking. Moreover, the six-lane configuration seems neither necessary nor consistent from east to west. Planning with the city should begin now to consider reducing travel lanes to two in each direction, adding bike lanes, widening sidewalks, installing new plantings where possible, and improving crossings—all with future streetcar development in mind. Also, the underpass on Florida Avenue must be redesigned to accommodate this new street design.

Redevelopment on the northwest side of campus, fronting the Market, should be pedestrian-oriented with new uses built to street and density gradient transitions as one moves away from the New York Avenue Metro station. Campus development at the southwest and southeast corners should announce and invite interaction with Gallaudet, engaging the neighborhood and wider community with cultural and convenience uses that have ready

pedestrian access to the campus. Some uses to consider on the southeast corner are a new theater or museum at street level with neighborhood retail and perhaps “art lofts”—live-work residential—with parking behind them. The southwest corner should be the primary entrance to the campus, using the new Olmsted gate as its focal point. Finally, the residential fabric on the south side of Florida Avenue could be reinforced and diversified with Gallaudet-related housing. This effort will require the university to consider selective acquisition of properties.

Improve Sixth Street

Sixth Street will need to be transformed from an industrial truck route to a boulevard more in keeping with the campus edge. Sixth Street currently acts as the “back side” of campus and responds to excessive right-of-way that

Florida Avenue is the primary presentation of Gallaudet from the city. Enhancing the connections between NoMa, the Metro station, and the university will improve the chances of property revitalization along this thoroughfare.



A redesign of Florida Avenue should consider a reduction of travel lanes to two in each direction, added bike lanes, widened sidewalks, installation of new plantings where possible, and improved crossings. A redesign of the railroad underpass will also be required.





Sixth Street currently acts as the “back side” of campus and responds to excessive right-of-way that serves the Market. Humanizing this road will improve the connections and synergies between the Market and the university.

serves the Market. There is nothing at the corner of Florida Avenue and Sixth Street announcing that a historic campus is located just behind it. Like Florida Avenue, Sixth Street is hostile to pedestrians and there are no safe crossings into the campus. If any street deserves to be put on a road diet, it is Sixth Street.

The panel recommends the following changes to transform Sixth Street into an appropriate interface with the campus:

- Provide land uses, streetscapes, and parking that allow the street to be a pedestrian-oriented facility focused on active, ground-level uses. Easy access to and from the university and the Market should be the goal. Land uses should include food/culinary and other retail destinations and neighborhood-serving convenience retail and services on the Market (west) side and campus convenience retail and institutional uses on the east side.
- Construct turn lanes and bike lanes extending north across Florida Avenue.
- Provide a new crossing with a signalized intersection at Neal Place extending into Gallaudet campus. The crossing should use not only flashing crosswalks (in-pavement lighting) but also signage and traffic calming devices such as speed tables to ensure pedestrian safety.

Strengthen Connections to Metro

The New York Avenue/Gallaudet University Metro station is close by but not nearly as convenient to campus as it should be. The walk from campus to the station can be improved as part of the reconfiguration of Florida Avenue by widening sidewalks and improving lighting under the

railway overpass. Even better, a direct entrance to the Metro station can be created at the corner of Third and N streets, making the connection both close and visible. New developments on the east side of the tracks can help pay for the new entrance.

Use New Housing as a Link to the Neighborhood

The panel believes that there is significant pent-up demand for rental housing in the Gallaudet subarea and that there should be a focused consideration of new apartment development. The two most likely areas where that can be accomplished are along Sixth Street and at the southeast corner of campus (Florida and West Virginia avenues). Rental units could provide options for faculty, staff, alumni, and graduate students who want a closer connection to the Gallaudet community. They would also provide a portal to the neighborhood and a venue for cultural activities, in part, tied to the renovated theater.

Join the NoMa BID

High-quality services to maintain, promote, police, and advocate for the public realm are routinely provided in U.S. cities by BID's funded by special charges to property owners. Gallaudet should propose the extension of the NoMa BID boundaries to include campus and new near-campus developments near Capital City Market. As a tax-exempt entity, Gallaudet should contemplate payments in lieu of charges to the BID. In the immediate term, Gallaudet should contract with NoMa to provide “clean and safe” services along Florida Avenue and to cement the new relationship.

Reach Out to H Street

Although future development on Sixth Street will draw patronage from campus residents, in the shorter term student demand for food, beverage, shopping, entertainment, and even employment will be met along H Street to the south. Regular shuttle service from campus to H Street and improvements in lighting and paving along well-traveled pedestrian routes there will strengthen that connection.

Take Short-Term Actions on Retail and Services

The dearth of student retail and service amenities on and near campus is particularly poignant. At many universities in urban settings, students have access to a wider variety of amenities; that gap, left unaddressed, could significantly hinder recruitment. This issue is particularly dispiriting given the abundance of resources and amenities throughout the D.C. community. A number of short-term actions can be helpful in stimulating the types of retail and service uses that are currently lacking in the Gallaudet area:

- Survey students about unmet retail needs, and use the results to develop partnerships with local retailers to better meet those needs. To encourage the development of services, identify the purchasing power and amount of retail leakage that is occurring outside the Near Northeast neighborhood.
- Channel that purchasing power toward selected retailers to encourage the continued development of goods and services to meet needs on the campus can be achieved by implementing a concept of “official Gallaudet” retailers.
- Encourage the delivery of food and services onto the campus and market this opportunity to vendors along H Street.
- Develop partnerships with retailers and service providers, most notably coffee shops that serve a 24-hour clientele and fitness facilities that provide discounted rates for students.

- Develop cultural partnerships with cultural anchors for collaboration, shared rehearsal, and production; for example:
 - Atlas Performing Arts Center
 - Joy of Motion Dance Center
 - H Street Playhouse
 - Theater Arts Department and Art Department
- Use bars and restaurants as showcases for arts projects.
- Consider leasing or temporarily occupying vacant space through a “temporary urbanism” program for more site-intensive projects (e.g., sculpture or other programs), to have wider visibility. This approach could begin the process of partnering with vendors to sell products and give students experience in running a temporary business.

Enhance Transportation and Safety

Good transportation is a key to positive perceptions of safety for urban universities. The panel recommends that the university explore the following transport modes and issues.

Gallaudet Shuttle

The Gallaudet shuttle can be an important component in reaching out to the community. It provides not only services to interject student in the community but an opportunity to advertise who and what the university offers to the near northeast neighborhoods. Actions that should be considered include the following:

- Add an H Street route to the campus shuttle, especially after dark and on weekends. Include designated dropoff/pickup spots on the east and west ends of H Street.
- Consider signage at those spots to double as marketing.
- Consider making a shuttle available to non-students for pick-up for events and other activities at designated times.
- Install off-campus wayfinding along the most common pedestrian routes.



The New York Avenue/Florida Avenue/Gallaudet University Metro station is an important component in connecting the university with the rest of the city. It also can be an important factor for businesses looking to locate adjacent to the university. The current access to the Metro along Florida Avenue needs to be improved.

- Work with residents of the Near Northeast neighborhood and the city to consider adding lighting and other streetscape improvements that will benefit students and residents.
- Provide safer paths from campus to H Street (down Eighth Street and Florida Avenue to 13th Street to H Street). Provide safer paths to the New York Avenue Metro station.

Metro

The Metro station at New York Avenue will soon be renamed NoMa–Gallaudet U. Actions that should be considered include the following:

- Work with the NoMa BID and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) to add signage at the station pointing toward Gallaudet and a designated Gallaudet Shuttle dropoff/pickup spot.
- Work with the WMATA to permit signage that would also serve as a marketing tool for the university and the neighborhoods.
- Install a bike sharing station on campus that is also available for community use.
- Install a bike sharing station at the New York Avenue Metro station.
- Commission student artists for the “other side of the tracks” billboard at N Street and the Metro station (add a

multimedia/projection video on the west-facing back side).

- Host a “Mobile Chowdown” on the triangle block of Third Street, Florida Avenue, and N Street (closing Third and N streets).
- Host a “deaf gain” temporary art installation/gallery in the underpass (perhaps with temporary closure of the curb lane eastbound as far as Sixth Street).
- Host an urban farm demonstration site on the vacant site(s) at Fourth Street and Florida Avenue in collaboration with Local In-City Farmers and Edens & Avant’s director of culinary strategy.

A new entrance on the west side of the Metro station would have a great impact, and the university should work with the WMATA to explore the feasibility of a new entrance.

Streetcar Line

The streetcar line, like the Gallaudet Shuttle, provides an excellent opportunity for advertising. The university should focus on two tasks:

- Anticipate the introduction of the streetcar and the major development that will occur. Find ways to plug into that planning and energy to see how they can benefit university.
- Work with the District Department of Transportation to install advertising for Gallaudet on the H Street streetcar.



The university should leverage its historical, cultural, architectural, and recreational assets to draw visitors and activity to the campus.

Introduce Initiatives to Develop Multilingual Services

As a bilingual school, Gallaudet must take the lead in introducing ASL to the adjacent neighborhoods. In this regard the panel recommends that the university explore the following issues:

- Create an “Interpreters to Go” service that links volunteers with students who want to attend activities throughout the D.C. region.
- Develop a mobile application and/or website for basic communication between the deaf and hearing communities, perhaps using food as the focus.
- Develop friendships and organically develop mentoring relationships. Consider requiring each staff member or student to create and accomplish a piece of a larger “ASL/neighborhood integration” concept. Run a pilot project to determine whether such an approach would move the Gallaudet, Near Northeast, Ivy City, NoMa, and Trinidad neighborhoods toward bilingualism.
- This concept could also be expanded to serve other languages throughout the region and encourage cross-cultural exchange (e.g., an application for Spanish interpreters for English speakers, especially given the large international population)—one example of creating a bilingual economy.

Conduct Signage and Marketing Campaign to Raise Public Awareness

A public awareness campaign should include the following functional and programmatic elements:

- Produce a brochure or calendar of events that is regularly updated to distribute in local bars.

- Install visible signage on Florida Avenue listing university events that are open to the public. Take advantage of traffic to publicize events and accomplishments, as well as important information.
- Consider digital and bilingual signage in conjunction the media/VL2 program.

Bring Folks to Campus

The university should establish programming to engage the community with the campus and students. Such programming could include the following:

- Publishing schedules for athletic, theater, arts, and other events that already occur and are open to the public;
- Working with the Capitol Hill Chamber of Commerce and other chambers of commerce to develop programming or become involved in neighborhood and citywide events;
- Coordinating with the NoMa BID;
- Sharing cultural buildings by encouraging faculty and students to develop relationships with the arts community and cultural organizations; for example:
 - Using the theater for performances and rehearsals and as part of dance festivals with the Joy of Motion dance company.
 - In addition to “defined” cultural buildings like the theater, making more visible and interactive spaces on campus available.
 - Listing times that spaces are available in the District’s “Space Finder” initiative.
 - Hosting a FotoWeek DC event.

- Encouraging use of the campus by local photographers and others. The beauty of the campus could be an interesting subject for many forms of photographic and visual arts. Let photographers know that they are welcome. Have students take and post interesting photographs, and indicate that there is more to be seen on campus.
- Opening athletic fields and other campus resources to other users;
- Installing wayfinding elements within the gates, including an updated campus map that is electronically interactive, and using the gatehouse as a focal point for visitors and students alike;
- Working with Cultural Tourism DC to become a stop on the H Street walking tour that is being developed, extending the tour inside the gates of campus, and to consider installing markers near important buildings (the Cultural Tourism DC design may need to be modified to be more compatible with the campus but still recognizable);
- Establishing a rapport with the D.C. Office of Motion Picture and Television Development and other media programs;
- Establishing Gallaudet and D.C. as the center of new media with the university's VL2 program; and
- Collaborating with the university's public relations and residence life offices to find ways to partner on and publicize events of interest to students and to desired vendors.
- Previewing the pre-architecture curriculum with deaf-space design prototyping for infill urban housing on Florida Avenue sites across from the Seventh Street gatehouse entry; and
- Establishing relationships between the real estate foundation and the city's "Live Near Your Work" resources.

Encourage Kellogg Center Visitors and Students to Interact

A well-programmed visitors center is essential to building bridges to the city. The center needs to be visually inviting and obvious. Elements can include the following:

- Creating a brochure and walking tour about campus history and events for visitors, focusing especially on the museum of deaf history and the archives; and
- Working with the management company to determine whether guests can be asked at check-in if they want to engage with students or faculty to develop relationships and participate in programming (e.g., DCPS teachers were getting professional development training during the panel's visit, and some may have been interested in ways to interact with the Clerc Center or other aspects of campus).

Housing Program—Real Estate Foundation or Similar Entity

A good start to neighborhood integration could be a housing initiative consisting of the following elements:

- Acquiring bank-controlled residential at Florida Avenue and M Street, and optioning or acquiring empty lots across from the Seventh Street gatehouse entry;

Creating a Great New Place on Sixth Street and Beyond

AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE GALLAUDET STRATEGIC PLAN involves expanding academic programming into fields that will provide a broader range of career opportunities for deaf students. Historically, the focus of Gallaudet education has been deaf education. In the future, it will embrace preparation for careers in medicine, law, business, architecture, and other major professions. Likewise, it will continue to emphasize and enhance existing programs such as careers in media, film, and the arts. It is important to create new spaces in which these new opportunities will take form.

A key location for such development will be along Sixth Street where “gown” meets “town.” This multifaceted development should leverage existing activities in commerce in food, new possibilities in residential and retail, and university-based programming in business development, the arts, and deaf history. These activities would include the following:

- *Gallaudet Innovation Lab.* Patterned on the Affinity business development incubator, the Innovation Lab would create a place of welcome for the development of entrepreneurial ideas by faculty, students, and off-campus partners. The lab might be located just north of the Olmsted Gate along Sixth Street or elsewhere. It would bring together students, mentors, potential partners, and others to help turn research and student projects into commercial opportunities. It would be supported by retail, restaurant, and residential amenities within the facilities or immediately adjacent to them.
- *Deaf History Museum.* Gallaudet possesses a truly unique collection of materials—some of which date back to the 15th century—that document deaf history and culture. One interviewee said, “There are centuries of deaf history in that basement, but right now it is all

locked away.” These historical archives represent a research asset of worldwide interest to scholars and a story of general interest to tourists from all places. A museum might be well located near the Olmsted Gate. Research resources might be better located with the rest of the library. But all of this material deserves more visible access and use at Gallaudet.

Create New Amenities, On Campus and Off

The ability of colleges and universities to compete for the best students and faculty depends in large part on the quality of life those institutions can offer—on campus and off. For most of its 150 years, Gallaudet has competed in a category of one. With advances in mainstream education for deaf students, Gallaudet now faces competition from a wider range of schools. No others offer the community experience available at Gallaudet. But it is increasingly important for the university to offer prospective students and faculty a quality and choice of amenities that are competitive with other institutions.

Many of these amenities—housing, shopping, food and dining, entertainment—will be provided as part of a larger development along Sixth Street and in the Capital City Market to the west. Together they will form the kind of “college town” that Gallaudet has lacked, an urban place where the university and the community meet, yet a venue where deaf students can feel welcome and at home while enjoying many of the pleasures of city life. It is a dense and vibrant urban environment and a magnet for students and non-students alike.

It will be important for new development along Sixth Street to differentiate the institutional uses on one side of the street from the more commercial activities on the

Expectations for the Capital City Market

Functions: What does it do?—The wholesale market continues to thrive. Retail businesses expand with a focus on food. New retailers and restaurants open. New office and residential buildings are built to meet market demand.

Character: What does it look like?—The market's historic origins are preserved. New buildings on the east end of the site enhance the Market and Gallaudet.

Sense of Place: What does it feel like?—It is not quiet or sterile. Activities begin early in the morning. It is a hub of activity and commerce.

Allure: Why do people go there?—Wholesalers come to take advantage of the only such place left in the District. Retail customers come for an experience like no other in D.C. Offices relocate to take advantage of the Metro station. New residents move here because of the unique experience provided by the area.

other side while bringing the two sides together to form a coherent urban place. Buildings on the campus side should reflect the scale and aesthetics consistent with the whole campus. Buildings on the other side can be taller and more in keeping with the prevailing character of contemporary development throughout the city.

Make the Appeal to Move Forward

Now is the time to move this project forward from a number of perspectives. First and foremost, it appears that there is market demand to support a project. Second, there is active developer interest, which provides the energy to wring the return from the market. One option is to pursue a transaction with the adjacent land owner who is invested alongside Gallaudet. Another option is to seek additional developer proposals, but this could slow the project and potentially miss the market opening. Third, a significant amount of institutional energy has been invested in the analysis of the project. Gallaudet has spent thousands of person-hours to get to this point. There will never be enough information to truly know all the answers, but the university today has enough to make a decision. This decision should be an economic one, not burdened with too many strings and conditions. Finally, the governmental entities represented in the panel's interviews were encouraging and proactive. This is a strategic opportunity that needs to be pursued. A development on this tract will have an enormous positive impact on the surrounding community, the rest of the market, and Gallaudet University.

Consider the Capital City Market Plan

The future of Capital City Market is beyond the control of the university, but Gallaudet has a clear interest in its positive evolution. The market plays an important role in the economic life of the city and provides a unique place of activity and interest in the District. It has further potential to improve in quality and character as a wholesale and retail venue and as a training ground and incubator for innovative restaurateurs.

The Capital City Market Plan, approved in June 2009, provides an excellent framework for redevelopment. Many interviewees spoke about the environment in which the plan was developed and the importance of the Market to the D.C. community.

The Market is in a strategic location. One interviewee told the panel that the Market made the area one of the top five possible locations for the Washington Nationals ballpark. This speaks to the property's proximity to multiple modes of transportation.

The Market's history is unique in the D.C. marketplace. It is integral to the history of food in the area. At its opening in 1931, it served as a center for wholesale food distribution in the region. According to the recent D.C. Office of Planning Capital City Market Plan, "These market buildings present an important, cohesive collection of uniformly designed and executed market structures—a rare survivor of this essential building type." The Market is often described

as “authentic,” which is a characteristic that has been so quickly lost in many cities.

More unique even than its structures are the uses within the Market. Virtually every interviewee spoke about its special character. According to one, “The ethnic markets are irreplaceable.” Many local restaurants depend on the wholesale operations here.

The Capital City Market Plan was based on months of analysis, numerous community meetings, and the input of the entire community. It is not the panel’s intent to re-evaluate the plan but to use it as a basis for moving forward. The plan established a number of guiding principles, and the following is the panel’s interpretation of some of those principles.

The Capital City Market Plan also contains a lengthy discussion of transportation options for a number of streets. The panel would take issue with the option for truck access. Truck access should be minimized on Sixth Street. The scale of potential operation on that street could be severely limited if it is used as the primary truck access route for the Market. Delivery trucks should be directed toward Brentwood Place. The Sixth Street section of the plan needs to be reworked as the panel has recommended, making it a slower, calmer street with a much greater pedestrian feel.

As it relates to the Sixth Street block, the plan has some specific suggestions. The relationship with Gallaudet is extremely important and this block provides a great way for the university and the community to integrate.

The zoning and intensity plan suggest medium to high density. Under a planned unit development/transfer of development rights zoning classification (PUD/TDR), the height limits are 70 to 130 feet with a floor/area ratio of 5:8. The concept plan calls for ground-floor retail with a mix of office and housing above. The ground-floor retail is encouraged to bring life to the neighborhood and enhance the connection with Gallaudet.

Gallaudet’s Edens & Avant Block

The panel has a range of comments on this site, with several qualifications. First, the panel does not have enough direct information to comment on building scale and therefore has not discussed building massing or height. The panel is also not prepared to speak to the economics of an investment at this location, although it does strongly encourage a project to move forward here.

The panel would like to reiterate, however, that now is the time to decide. Gallaudet has spent an incredible amount of institutional energy evaluating its options. The university has expressed an interest in openness and engagement with the community. A new project here would be a physical demonstration of reaching outside the campus. The market timing compels a decision to move forward, assuming a financially viable transaction can be structured.

A new development at this site would have a positive impact on the community. Many interviewees expressed an interest in new food and shopping venues. While the students, faculty, and staff will benefit from these new retail opportunities, the support for them must come from the entire community. The project on Sixth Street will build upon itself, with the residents increasing this demand.

The historic Market will also benefit from a new development here. Everyone knows what is happening in NoMa and on H Street. A successful project here will validate market rents in the historic Market. It will encourage owners to invest in their properties. With the current uncertainty about opportunities for redevelopment, owners have been reluctant to invest. With new investment that would be led by this project, individual owners would have incentives to improve their properties.

Improved retail activities will provide additional financial support to the existing tenants in the buildings. New residents will need a place to shop. If developed appropriately, the unique nature of the Market can pull customers from the entire D.C. marketplace. All of these activities will provide additional revenue to the existing tenants.



The existing Market building will be replaced with a mixed-use development of high-quality retail, commercial, residential, and industrial uses.

The potential impact for Gallaudet could be transformative. The project anchors the Florida Avenue and Sixth Street intersection. A development of this magnitude would serve as an amenity for all of the university's constituents. New development adjacent to campus would validate the improvement in the neighborhood, which would spur additional investment. Finally, if carefully constructed, this investment could provide a long-term financial return.

Forging New Partnerships

TO ACCOMPLISH GALLAUDET'S GOALS of expanding opportunities for students and faculty, building physical bridges to the community is important—but it is not enough. Just as important, the university must forge new academic and professional partnerships in the community, to take advantage of D.C.'s unique position at the center of a full world of opportunity. Such partnerships can lead to three kinds of growth:

- Growth in enrollment by students attracted to the environment of opportunities that cannot be replicated elsewhere;
- Economic growth in the District from the business opportunities, products, jobs, research, and education that arise from increased cross-collaboration; and
- Expanded visual access and independence for deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals (not just Gallaudet students and faculty) throughout the region.

Develop a New Bilingual Secondary Charter School in Conjunction with DCPS

In addition to relocating the MSSD off the hill and onto the physical site of the Hamilton School, Gallaudet should take advantage of the profound opportunity to develop a strong partnership with DCPS, which is seeking to expand its multilingual and charter school education programs. This partnership would provide a unique and dynamic learning experience for hearing students. It is a natural evolution of the Clerc Center's mandate to "raise the achievement of deaf and hard of hearing students ages birth–21 nationwide by supporting the families and professionals who work with these students"—especially in an age in which more than 80 percent of deaf and hard-of-hearing students are educated in mainstream educational environments instead of schools for the deaf.

This partnership would enable cross-collaboration between Gallaudet researchers in the ASL and education programs with DCPS instructional services, as well as provide opportunities for collaboration with graduate schools of education in the broader Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area. This is one opportunity for the concept of deaf gain to potentially permeate into the mainstream; for example, visual learning techniques that were developed for deaf students may prove to be superior for teaching certain curricula to hearing students. This dynamic learning environment will also create a living community of learners among deaf and hearing students. It will develop bonds and networks, from an early age, that both communities can leverage throughout their academic and professional development.

Education Programs Outreach Efforts

The university should expand outreach events into the regional deaf community in conjunction with expansion of Continuing Education Programs. For example, the university could work with the U.S. Office of Personnel Management and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Graduate School to develop one-time events as well as educational programming for the approximately 5,000 federal government employees who are deaf. These events and programming could be held on campus or through Gallaudet's virtual continuing education programs. These federal employees have a strong desire for continued education and professional development, especially given the many career opportunities that may become available to them with the large population of retiring baby boomers in the federal government. These activities could be held at the Kellogg Conference Center or on other parts of campus to expose this population to the unique experience of visual access and safe space that exists at Gallaudet for deaf individuals. This is one initial way

to strengthen ties between Gallaudet and deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals, and could also expand the potential donor base.

Expand Mentorship and Internship Opportunities

While developing the continuing education programs for the benefit of deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals who are not currently Gallaudet students, natural linkages should be strengthened between the university's continuing education unit and the Career Center and graduate departments to benefit current undergraduate and graduate students. For example, one relatively easy way to expand and maintain the growing pipeline of opportunities available to students would be to ask all individuals who take part in continuing education programs whether they would like to participate as a mentor or would like to provide internship opportunities for students that could be listed in the university's Bison CareerLink database.

Gallaudet is establishing four pre-professional programs in law, medicine, architecture, and business to further its students' career ambitions. In conjunction with developing academic curricula, partnerships should be established with local deaf and hearing practitioners both to strengthen the academic offerings as well as to provide practical mentorship and internship opportunities.

Pre-Law

A new pre-law program should do the following:

- Partner with the American Bar Association to identify deaf and hard-of-hearing lawyers and legal professionals throughout the country who are interested in working with Gallaudet.
- Work with local law firms to identify paralegal, internship, or other opportunities with local firms.
- Develop lasting relationships and network within the Washington, D.C., legal community.

Pre-Architecture

A new pre-architecture program should do the following:

- Partner with the D.C. chapter of the American Institute of Architecture (AIA) and its new Storefront for Architecture, currently under construction in Penn Quarter.
- Partner with AIA to identify deaf and hard-of-hearing architects and design professionals throughout the country who are interested in working with Gallaudet.
- Work with local architecture and design firms to identify drafting, internship, or other opportunities with local firms.
- Develop lasting relationships and network with the Washington, D.C., architectural community.
- Further develop and disseminate the concept of deaf space and how it may influence and improve building and space design—much the way that other ADA features have made buildings more functional for mainstream users—in a way that will also contribute to deaf gain findings.

Pre-Med and Health Care

A new pre-med/health care program should do the following:

- Partner with the American Medical Association and other medical professional associations such as the Association for Research in Otolaryngology to identify deaf and hard-of-hearing physicians, medical professionals, and researchers throughout the country who are interested in working with Gallaudet.
- Partner with local practitioners who are already serving students to offer career development and shadowing.
- Partner with the National Institute on Deafness and other Communication Disorders in Bethesda for research and internship opportunities, as well as for product development in conjunction with Gallaudet's pre-business program.

■ Partner Gallaudet’s researchers, audiology lab, and others with medical device companies that focus on the deaf and hard-of-hearing population, to create and support entrepreneurial activities and further research. Some notable companies (and potential donors) include the following:

- Advanced Bionics Corp.
- Boston Scientific Corp.
- Cochlear Ltd.
- Envoy Medical Inc.
- Louisiana State University
- Medtronic Inc.
- Otologics LLC
- Sonova Holding AG
- InSound Medical Inc.
- St. Jude Medical Inc.
- Vibrant Med-El Hearing Technology GMBH

Incubator Space

Gallaudet should partner with the operator of a business incubator to expand entrepreneurship opportunities in the Near Northeast for the community and for students interested in business. The unmet need for flexible, shared business space throughout the District appears to be particularly acute in the Near Northeast. Additionally, many students have expressed interest in business and entrepreneurial opportunities but do not have a ready community of peers from whom to learn about establishing and operating a business.

In conjunction with developing Gallaudet’s new pre-business program, the university should partner with the operator of a business incubator, such as Affinity Lab, to provide physical space, financial support, and other resources to encourage an entrepreneurial environment that can be leveraged by students and faculty as well as the broader D.C. community. The location of the physical space, which should be identified by

the incubator operator, could be in an existing building in the Capital City Market, on H Street, or in a facility on campus.

With the Washington, DC Economic Partnership, Gallaudet’s pre-business program could hold business plan competitions to encourage entrepreneurial thinking, with the winner(s) gaining free membership or access to the business incubator and its network of entrepreneurs. This is another profound opportunity to leverage deaf gain ideas into product and business development for the deaf and hearing communities and could be a contributor to D.C.’s growing innovation economy.

Gallaudet and the District have the potential to grow these partnerships into a research and business development center for communication media, leveraging the university’s current focus on developing means to enable communication among the deaf and hard of hearing. The university’s heralded VL2 program could also be further strengthened by expanding its reach to include the hearing impaired in addition to the deaf and hard of hearing. It is estimated that more than 34 million Americans currently experience some hearing difficulty and that this population is growing as the baby boomers age. There is a strong possibility that Gallaudet and the District could organically become an innovation center both to support teaching these individuals how to adapt to hearing loss and to develop new techniques and products to help them with communication overall—another opportunity for deaf gain to be realized in mainstream society.

Programming and Demand for a Physical Space for an Innovation Lab

Gallaudet has been exploring building a space for an innovation lab to bring together students and individuals from multiple disciplines and the arts for cross-collaboration. The ULI panel believes that energy should be focused toward building and strengthening the many relationships that are necessary for such a lab to be a success and that the lab is not yet at a stage where it is a physical real estate challenge.

Gallaudet should establish an Innovation Team, consisting of key faculty sponsors and administration members, to be

responsible for nourishing these relationships and building the necessary programming and financial foundation to support a physical space. The Innovation Team should conduct a feasibility study to identify the potential for the lab and the target academic and cultural fields. The team should leverage the university's nascent relationship with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) to learn from the creators of the MIT Media Lab about the conditions that were necessary for success and how to best go forward. Panel members have learned that the success of any space like this requires significant financial support and multiple overlapping partnerships with faculty, students, and off-campus collaborators. Comparable labs that have succeeded have required robust, multiyear commitments from multiple partners totaling several million dollars.

Until the focus, scope, and scale of the lab is known, it would be premature to conduct real estate planning. After the program and relationships have been better defined, Gallaudet can properly assess the real estate challenge and identify ways to meet needs. In the event that a new building needs to be constructed, the Innovation Team will have identified multiple locations for future growth. It is equally likely that an existing space on campus or off campus may be more desirable and can be retrofitted.

Creating the Capacity to Implement the Recommendations

THE PANEL HAS A RANGE OF RECOMMENDATIONS, addressing the large-scale issues of immediate development on Sixth Street and other major real estate development initiatives that may arise later, as well as a large number of more limited—yet still important—programmatic moves that can help Gallaudet achieve its overall goals. In particular, the panel recommends two efforts: early action—preferably positive action—on pending agreements about project development on the university’s Sixth Street holdings and early creation of new institutional capacity to operate in the development world in the form of a Gallaudet real estate foundation or similar entity.

Create New Capacity in Real Estate Development

Gallaudet has the power to influence the future of its neighborhood; however, doing so will require the application of significant resources. Not actively engaging this influence will leave the university as the tail on a very active dog—not able to lead, always following. As currently configured, no single resource is dedicated to thinking about off-campus real estate issues. Gallaudet should establish and fund an entity that is dedicated to these matters. The creation of a real estate foundation or similar entity to focus on how Gallaudet intersects with off-campus real estate would serve the university well. Starting small, this foundation could be run by either the redirected efforts of a university employee or a selected real estate expert. A board of real estate experts and university leaders would guide the foundation.

Mission

The foundation would have as its only customer Gallaudet University. It would not exist to serve itself but would be an instrument of change that would assist in enabling the

mission of the university by serving the university’s real estate needs.

Focus

The foundation would have three primary areas of focus, though others may be added over time:

- Protect Gallaudet’s boundaries. This effort might include purchasing and renovating homes on Florida Avenue using historic tax credits, partnering with the D.C. parks division to secure long-term interests in its adjacent ball-field, and assisting with the creation of design guidelines for Sixth Street.
- Provide for short-term programmatic needs. This effort might include partnering with a local developer to create a coffee shop for faculty, staff, and students; finding a location on H Street for Gallaudet outreach and public relations; and creating enhanced wayfinding off campus.
- Provide for long-term programmatic needs. At some point in the future, Gallaudet will have expanded beyond its current footprint. Part of the foundation’s work would be to think through mechanisms for “land banking” and ensuring that the university has the land needed to achieve its strategic plan. Although it may be hard to envision now, these efforts are necessary to ensure the future viability of the institution. This work may be difficult for many reasons; however, it may be the most valuable contribution a foundation could make to the university.

Board of Directors

A board of seven to 13 directors can direct the activities of the foundation. For tax purposes and to remove liability from the university, private sector members would always make up a majority of the board. As such, in legal terms, the foundation would not be controlled by the university.

Washington, D.C., has a number of senior real estate experts from whom directors could be recruited. As Gallaudet interacts with major developers on projects such as the Capital City Market, the university would be well served by having easy access to a group of volunteer professionals whose only interest is supporting the university. Public sector directors on the board would be university leaders, thus ensuring that the foundation acts in the best interests of Gallaudet. For example, these directors might be the chair of the university's board—who could also serve as the chair of the foundation board—as well as the president, chief financial officer, and university architect. It is paramount that members of the board and foundation staff adhere to strict standards related to confidentiality and conflicts of interest.

Director

The director needs to have an entrepreneurial spirit, understand real estate, and, most important, have superior communication skills. It is imperative that the director be able to move seamlessly among the real estate, deaf, university, and local neighborhood communities and be respected by those communities.

Funding

Initial funding for the foundation can be established through the creation of a non-interest-bearing loan program with the university. The university could dedicate a percentage of its endowment (1 to 10 percent) as a line of credit upon which the foundation could draw. That would provide the capital needed for startup and staffing needs, as well as provide significant traction to begin addressing the real estate needs of the university. The loans would be callable at any time by Gallaudet. The foundation's goal should be to pay back the loans as it is able or to make annual financial gifts to the university, or both. Eventually, foundation projects would be financed through third-party debt, equity investments, or partnerships with the private sector.

Initial Work

Once established, the foundation would create a visual plan for where it needs to focus. In general terms, this plan should be shared with local government leaders. It will be important to engage the community to some extent, to build goodwill and make better decisions. Specific strategies do not need to be reviewed, but the foundation should share a sense of where the university is headed. This might lead to having to pay a premium for properties, but savvy local real estate people will already know what would be of interest to Gallaudet. It is better to over-communicate and pay some small premium in the short term than to work in isolation and secrecy and damage the long-term credibility of the university.

Short-Term Initiatives

The panel recommends a number of other initiatives that can be launched immediately or in the very near term—projects, programs, and events that attract attention, generate good will, or demonstrate the longer-term potential of the whole package of recommendations. For on-campus and off-campus constituencies alike, it is important to generate momentum and show the potential for change at an early date. Some of these initiatives include the redesigned Florida Avenue and Sixth Street, new campus access, including the new Olmsted Gate, acquisition of nearby units and parcels on the south side of Florida Avenue, coordination and agreement regarding the new bilingual secondary charter school, and bringing together the city, DCPS, and other government agencies regarding the new uses along Sixth Street.

Conclusion

THE PANEL BELIEVES that urban economic competitiveness and the rise and fall of neighborhoods are decided not only on issues of adequate safety and good schools, but also on what authentic urban activities are available to residents. Universities are at the forefront of changes that provide those urban activities, and Gallaudet is no exception. At the beginning of the week, the panel was challenged by Gallaudet President T. Alan Hurwitz. Quoting Ohio State President Gordon Gee, Hurwitz said: “Our duty is to wholly reinvent ourselves. We are America’s future—intellectually, socially, and culturally.”

The next few years at Gallaudet University will be challenging and rewarding, and the panel hopes that this report will provide input into making the university and the surrounding communities a thriving, integrated model for urban development. The panel believes that there is incredible op-

portunity on the campus and the nearby Sixth Street and Florida Avenue corridors, and that the university is truly an anchor institution that needs to open up to the community and take advantage of the market forces at play in the D.C. area. The upcoming campus master plan initiative should be an exercise in exploring not only a whole new vision for the campus but also a sublime model for “town and gown” cooperation. It can also act as a model for an integrated public/private approach to near-campus development.

In 1862, Abraham Lincoln signed into law the land-grant college act, making higher education available to a much wider segment of the American populace. In 1864, he signed the charter founding Gallaudet University, thus establishing one of the great universities in this country. Lincoln is famously reputed to have said, “If I had eight hours to chop down a tree, I would use six hours sharpening my axe.” It is in this same spirit that the panel encourages the type of focused and relentless planning and preparation, with help from the greater Gallaudet community that will make the master planning process and the reinvention of the campus possible.



About the Panel

Gary A. Hack

Panel Chair

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Gary Hack is professor emeritus of city and regional planning at the University of Pennsylvania School of Design. He teaches, practices, and studies large-scale physical planning and urban design. The former dean of the School of Design, he stepped down in 2008 after 12 years. Before coming to Penn, he was a professor of urban design at MIT and a partner in the professional firm of Carr Lynch Hack and Sandell in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Earlier in his career, Hack was head of planning for Gruen Associates in New York and directed the Canadian government's housing and urban development research and demonstration programs. He oversaw several large neighborhood demonstration projects and the redevelopment of urban waterfronts in a number of Canadian cities. He has also served as an urban design consultant for projects in Japan, Thailand, Taiwan, China, and Saudi Arabia.

Hack has served on the board of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning and the Planning Accreditation Board. He is a former chair of the Philadelphia City Planning Commission, is a member of the board of the William Penn Foundation, and is active in civic affairs in Philadelphia.

Hack has prepared plans for more than 30 cities in the United States and abroad, including the redevelopment plan for the Prudential Center in Boston, the West Side Waterfront plan in New York City, and a Metropolitan Plan for Bangkok, Thailand. He has also worked with smaller communities on urban design issues by preparing downtown plans for Louisville, Kentucky, and Knoxville, Tennessee; downtown development guidelines for the center of Portland, Maine; design review manuals for Hendersonville and Germantown, Tennessee; and guidelines for the development of the entrance corridors and downtown of Charlottesville, Virginia. He was a member of the team that

won the competition for the redevelopment of the World Trade Center in New York, and drafted the urban design guidelines for the project.

Hack's research includes studies of urban design successes in the United States, published as *Lessons from Local Experiences*, and an international comparative study of urban development patterns, published as *Global Regional Cities*. He is coauthor of the third edition of *Site Planning and Urban Design in the Global Perspective*. With Eugenie L. Birch and others, he edited the most recent edition of the ICMA Green Book, *Local Planning*, the standard introduction to the field. Hack has also written numerous articles and chapters on the spatial environment.

Stephen M. Antupit

Seattle, Washington

Drawing on 20 years of experience in urban design and neighborhood redevelopment, Stephen Antupit supports and creates vibrant, walkable communities that are resource-smart, climate-intelligent, and transit-focused. As a public servant and professional consultant, he frames policy, program, and physical design responses that promote ecological, social, and economic resilience. As a citizen and collaborator, he carries these aspirations beyond traditional boundaries to stimulate invention and to leverage durable relationships among the resources and motivations of stakeholder groups, community organizations, and residents in diverse communities.

Since 2006, Antupit has served as an urban strategies designer at Mithun. Earlier, he acted as master developer for Seattle Housing Authority's 1,500-unit market-rate homes for-sale program and provided urban design leadership to the City of Seattle's Station Area Planning team under contract with Sound Transit.

In 2009, Antupit joined six collaborators to launch the Citylab7 consultancy. This team explores and addresses

the confluent challenges of convivial urbanity, drawing together expertise in public health, natural systems, renewable energy flows, regional food, and other green infrastructure networks. He is an active member of the ULI Private/Public Partnership Council and ULI Seattle's Thriving Communities Task Force, and past cochair of ULI Seattle's Housing Affordability Taskforce.

Bradshaw Hovey

Buffalo, New York

Bradshaw Hovey is a city planner, writer, analyst, and teacher with extensive experience in urban politics, community planning processes, citizen participation, and public information. He is codirector of the Urban Design Project at the School of Architecture and Planning of the University at Buffalo, State University of New York. His expertise encompasses plan-writing, large-scale public visioning processes, strategic planning for organizations, and small-group facilitation for planning and problem solving.

Hovey was a primary author or editor of six major plans, including Buffalo's waterfront, downtown, and citywide comprehensive plans; Building UB: the Comprehensive Physical Plan, the campus master plan for the University at Buffalo; Achieving Niagara Falls' Future; and the Buffalo-Niagara Cultural Tourism Initiative.

Hovey helped design and manage the award-winning Buffalo Neighborhood Summits and was coeditor of "The Buffalo Summit Series: Experiments in Democratic Action 1994–1998." He was also coeditor of *A Canal Conversation: A Community Forum on Buffalo's Inner Harbor Development and the Erie Canal* (2001) and *Rethinking the Niagara Frontier: A Report on the Continuing Bi-national Forum* (2001).

Before his career in planning, Hovey worked for a decade as a journalist at newspapers in Buffalo; Albuquerque, New Mexico; and northern New Jersey, covering a wide range of planning and political topics. He holds a BA in politics and journalism from Empire State College (SUNY) and a master's degree in urban planning from the University of Buffalo.

Hovey earned a doctorate in urban design and planning from the University of Washington, where his research

focused on the political culture of planning in Portland, Oregon. At Washington, Hovey was involved in creating the ground-breaking undergraduate major in community and environmental planning.

Hovey was assistant professor in the Department of Urban Planning and Environmental Policy at the Barbara Jordan–Mickey Leland School of Public Affairs at Texas Southern University in Houston from 2004 to 2007. He taught urban history, planning theory, citizen participation methods, real estate development, and a planning studio.

Lionel Lynch

Washington, D.C.

Lionel Lynch is a principal at HR&A Advisors and head of its Washington, D.C., office. He has experience in public/private real estate development, housing finance, economic development, transportation infrastructure, energy efficiency, and capital markets.

At HR&A, Lynch is on the team developing a comprehensive plan for redevelopment of the Walter Reed Army Medical Center. He has been involved in the planning and financing of the District of Columbia's Southwest Waterfront and Nationals baseball stadium; the revitalization of downtown Columbus, Ohio's RiverSouth neighborhood, including housing, public space, and entertainment land-use development and financing strategies; and master planning for more than 80 acres in the South End neighborhood of Stamford, Connecticut. He led a comprehensive analysis of New York City's economic development incentive programs, including recommendations to improve their effectiveness and make the city a more attractive location for new and existing businesses. Lynch provided financial analysis and strategic planning for the Friends of the High Line that contributed to the successful opening of the park's first phase. He also prepared an action plan to improve intercity passenger rail service along the Northeast Corridor.

Lynch recently served as senior adviser for housing finance and policy at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, where he helped to transform the management and operations of the Federal Housing Administration's more than \$1 trillion portfolio of insured

mortgages on single-family homes, multifamily properties, and health care facilities. He also played a key role in the Administration's development of policy for reforming Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac and stabilizing the housing and mortgage finance markets. While at HUD, Lynch also successfully launched the FHA PowerSaver loan product to enable lower-cost financing of residential energy efficiency improvements.

Lynch was previously a project manager for Kushner Companies, where he managed three mixed-use urban development projects consisting of over 3,000 residential units, 150,000 square feet of retail/commercial space, marine transportation infrastructure, and several acres of public open space and amenities. He also worked for Morgan Stanley in alternative energy principal investing and for Easton Associates as a consultant in the life sciences and pharmaceutical industries.

Lynch has an MBA from Harvard Business School and a bachelor's degree in social studies from Harvard College. He is a member of the Urban Land Institute.

Robert Mathews

Nashville, Tennessee

Bert Mathews is one of Nashville's most astute real estate investors, with an encyclopedic knowledge of the deals that have shaped Nashville's growth over the past 70 years. Mathews combines consummate people skills with a keen and decisive business mind. His 20-plus years of experience in commercial real estate services have seen him represent clients as a developer, a broker, and a property manager.

Mathews joined The Mathews Company as vice president in 1984 and became president of the firm in 1992. He oversees development, acquisitions, financing, institutional and investor relations, and all real estate marketing activities for both portfolio and third-party properties, which total more than 2.5 million square feet.

Mathews holds leadership roles in many Nashville-area organizations. He is chairman of the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce, a member of Cumberland Region Tomorrow, vice chairman and secretary/treasurer of Nash-

ville's Central Business Improvement District, a member of the Nashville Downtown Partnership, and former vice chairman of the Metropolitan Nashville Airport Authority and the Metro Transit Authority. He is past chairman of ULI Nashville. He also serves on the board of directors of the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee. Lynch was named executive of the year in the Nashville Business Journal's inaugural list of Commercial Real Estate VIPs.

Mathews is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Harvard Business School. He is the former president and a current member of the Board of Trustees for the University School of Nashville.

Pam Minich

Houston, Texas

Minich Strategic Services is a Texas HUB Certified consulting firm engaged in providing strategic marketing, market, and economic research services to a broad spectrum of real estate and related organizations. Pamela Minich, the firm's principal, has been engaged in both commercial and residential real estate projects in more than 20 states. Minich Strategic Services has clients in commercial real estate, homebuilding, and not-for-profit and public sector organizations that require a high level of market intelligence and value its strategic application to their most challenging real estate planning and strategic business problems. The company's areas of special expertise include consumer and economic research; market segmentation; highest and best use and market feasibility studies; urban development trends; sustainability; and housing development across a broad spectrum of types—master-planned communities, active adult, affordable, workforce, seniors, student, resort/second home, luxury high rise, etc.

Minich collaborates with brokers, land/urban planners, architects, real estate attorneys, financial analysts, civil engineers, developers, government agencies and homebuilders on a variety of projects from urban redevelopment projects on brownfield and infill sites to large, suburban, master-planned communities. The firm's market research expertise includes all quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, including surveys (telephone, internet, mail), focus groups, and one-on-one in-depth interviewing. She

has served as an expert witness on numerous occasions on real estate development and marketing, particularly branding. She has been an active member of the Urban Land Institute, the National Association of Homebuilders, the Texas Economic and Demographic Association, the American Marketing Association, the Commercial Real Estate Research Forum, and the U.S Green Building Council.

Before forming Minich Strategic Services, she headed several other market research and consulting practices focused primarily on serving the real estate industry. She was employed by Centex Homes as a director of strategic marketing and research from 2001 to 2006, following more than 15 years as a vice president of Houston-based CDS Market Research. The firm's primary philosophy is that injecting a consumer/customer-focused, fact-based approach into the real estate planning process provides a defensible basis for decision making that provides executives with more confidence and reduces risks and uncertainty.

Tim Rose

Charlottesville, Virginia

Tim Rose is chief executive officer of the University of Virginia Foundation, steward for approximately 5,200 acres, including the Boar's Head Inn and Birdwood Golf Course, Morven Farms, and the Historic Renovation Corporation. The Foundation provides financial management assistance to the University's Capital Campaign and develops and manages the Fontaine Research Park and the University of Virginia Research Park.

Rose formerly served as an assistant vice president for Administration at the University of Virginia and has held positions in student affairs at Miami University and James Madison University.

Rose received his undergraduate and master's degrees from Miami University and his doctorate from the University of Virginia. He has served in various leadership positions with the Urban Land Institute, Albemarle County Police Foundation, Charlottesville Regional Chamber of Commerce, County of Albemarle Airport Planning Commit-

tee, Rivanna Water & Sewer Authority, North Charlottesville Business Council, Charleston's School of the Building Arts, Leadership Charlottesville, Thomas Jefferson Planning District Sustainability Council, and Charlottesville Community Land Trust.

Michael A. Stern

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Michael Stern, a principal at Strada, has been involved in aspects of urbanism, city building, and public landscapes throughout his professional career. The focus of his work has always been the search for successful ways to improve the quality of urban environments through the practical application of sound design principles rooted in enduring values of urbanism. He has worked on a broad range and scale of urban projects from urban garden design to planning new edge cities.

His professional experience in the New York firms of Cooper, Robertson & Partners and Quennell Rothschild Associates gave him broad training in the multiple aspects of planning, design, and construction of private and public urban precincts and landscapes. His subsequent teaching and research while a full-time faculty member at the University of Virginia School of Architecture focused on understanding the changing nature of urban form and organization in the face of new technologies and economies.

Through his private practice, before becoming a founding principal of Strada, Stern was involved in many of Pittsburgh's major urban design and planning efforts. He led the Pittsburgh Downtown Plan—the first comprehensive master plan for the greater downtown area in 35 years—and the Pittsburgh Regional Parks Master Plan, documents that are still touchstones a decade after their completion. Recent Strada projects he has led include the Rivers Casino, Dick's Sporting Goods Corporate Headquarters, the Hermitage Town Center Plan, and the Larimer Neighborhood Vision Plan. Stern has lectured widely and published and edited numerous articles and journals on planning, urban design, and landscape design theory.

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