

Largo Town Center Maryland

December 6–11, 2015



Largo Town Center Maryland

Guidance for the Development of Largo Town Center
December 6–11, 2015

About the Urban Land Institute

THE MISSION OF THE URBAN LAND INSTITUTE is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. ULI is committed to

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

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

Established in 1936, the Institute today has more than 38,000 members worldwide, representing the entire spectrum of the land use and development disciplines. Professionals represented include developers, builders, property owners, investors, architects, public officials, planners, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, academics, students, and librarians.

ULI relies heavily on the experience of its members. It is through member involvement and information resources that ULI has been able to set standards of excellence in development practice. The Institute has long been recognized as one of the world's most respected and widely quoted sources of objective information on urban planning, growth, and development.

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About ULI Advisory Services

THE GOAL OF THE ULI 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 600 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, brownfield 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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In addition, the panel would like to thank all those who participated in the interview process. Many people contributed their time to help the panel better understand future hopes of the community. The panel believes in the energy, both at the county and grassroots levels, for Largo Town Center and is excited to see the future changes to the area.

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Background and the Panel's Assignment

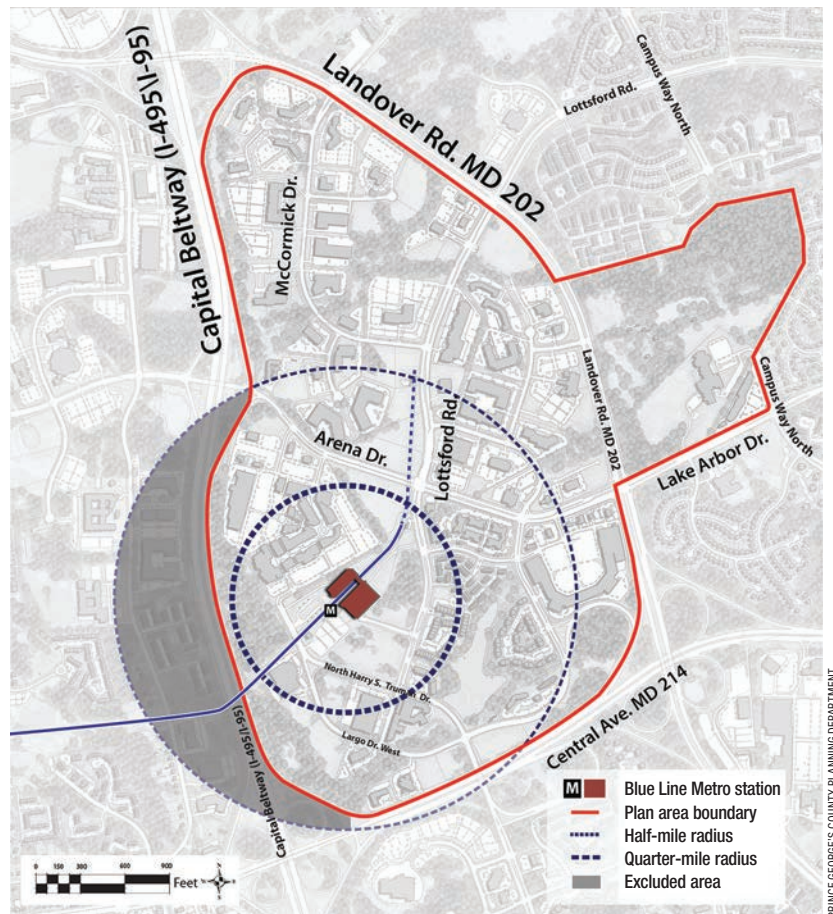
FIVE MILES EAST OF WASHINGTON, D.C., Largo Town Center is a mixed-use hub located at the intersection of several regionally important highways and roadways in Prince George's County. Anchored by the Largo Town Center Metro station, the center contains about 800 acres of land, of which more than 200 acres are vacant or undeveloped. The Metro station is the terminal station for the Blue and Silver lines in Prince George's County and offers direct rapid transit access to the rest of the Washington metropolitan region.

Beyond its transit advantages, the core area features a mixed-use retail district along an extended Harry S Truman Drive. In addition, Largo Town Center serves as one of Prince George's County's two primary local government centers, offering a variety of services for county residents and businesses.

Because of the area's underused strengths, several county plans have made efforts to reevaluate the area's potential. At the countywide level, both the *Strategic Plan for Economic Development* and *Plan Prince George's 2035 Approved General Plan* (Plan 2035) call for targeting a small number of emerging economic hubs that exhibit the highest potential for sustained job generation. In particular, the *2013 Approved Largo Town Center Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment* envisions the transformation of the Largo Town Center Metro station area into one of Prince George's County's premier mixed-use "downtowns" and centers of 24-hour activity by 2035. These plans outline a vision for a range of large and small businesses to serve the needs of both citizens who reside within walking distance of the Metro station and visitors from the greater Washington metropolitan region.

The Panel's Assignment

Prince George's County leaders have shown an interest in the expedited development of Largo Town Center. The



area is experiencing momentum as an employment center with the county's purchase of property and the approval by the Planning Board of the detailed site plan (DSP-14028) for the Prince George's County Regional Hospital on June 23, 2015. The county is interested in taking advantage of the recent activities by continuing this momentum for the expedited development of the center.

The Largo Town Center study area.

The panel was asked to provide unbiased input and offer recommendations to help Prince George's County stimulate private sector investments at Largo Town Center.

Following are questions the panel was asked to address:

- Examining the core area, what is the market potential for office and retail? Is the market at the density envisioned by the sector plan and Plan 2035?
- Given the current and projected short-range market conditions and the regional medical center's construction timeline, which land use elements should be the highest priority for immediate redevelopment?

Outside the urban core, other questions around the greater Largo Town Center area are raised:

- What actions or strategies does the county need to implement to provide the best opportunity for the employment and commercial markets to succeed in the various time frames (zero to five years and six to ten years)?
- Which elements of the sector plan can serve as short-term catalysts to influence future development?
- What is the feasibility of thematically clustering predominant uses, such as health care tenants and government services?
- What infrastructure investments will be needed for the area, and should it be funded by the public sector, private developers, or both?
- What tools, programs, and financing options does the county currently have or need to create to effectively stimulate the growth envisioned by the sector plan and Plan 2035? How and where should these funding sources and programs be applied?
- What kind of impacts should be anticipated in the commercial and office markets if the county administration (county executive's office and county council offices) or other government agencies relocate from Upper Marlboro to Largo Town Center?
- How should the county ensure the successful implementation of the sector plan and Plan 2035 and how should this relate to the Largo Town Center Development Board?

- The approved sector plan makes recommendations to encourage developers to rebrand the area and develop a marketing strategy for complementary uses. Should this be an action undertaken by the county?

Summary of Recommendations

Based on the briefing material, the study area tour, and stakeholder interviews, the panel has made the following recommendations for the Largo Town Center area:

- *Relocate the county government.* For this move, the panel ultimately suggests the development of a purpose-built county office complex located in or near the Metro station. This building should also include a one-stop services center. The consolidation of employees can be both cost-effective and more efficient in operation.
- *Address the opportunities and challenges of achieving highest and best use in Inglewood Business Park.* To achieve this goal, the panel recommends a comprehensive asset management procedure for the study area.
- *Direct attention to placemaking.* This can come in the form of rebranding the central business district or other community enhancement elements such as an event center and an active urban park.
- *Improve access of different modes of transportation and road connections.* Ranging from implementing a road diet to improving parking facilities, Largo Town Center has great potential of becoming a key transportation hub in the county. The panel recommends capitalizing on this strength and expanding on it through various projects.
- *Implement effective housing principles and policies for current stock and future development.*
- *Use available management tools.* Work through the implications and choices associated with catalytic versus organic development strategy adoption.

The remainder of this report elaborates on these recommendations.

Largo Town Center: Context and Market Analysis

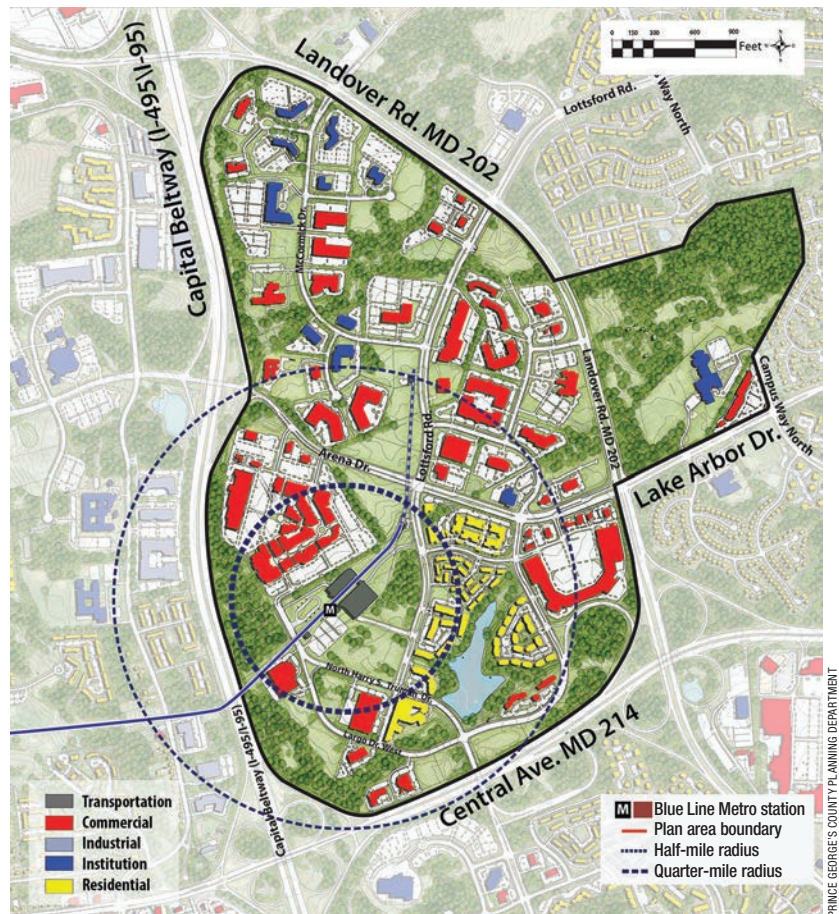
TO ANALYZE THE MARKET OPPORTUNITY for development around the study area, the panel undertook a comprehensive review of market conditions in Upper Marlboro and Prince George's County relative to the broader metropolitan area, as well as state and national averages. This analysis identifies structural factors as well as strengths and weaknesses that may affect the market's competitive opportunities and liabilities.

Population, employment, and income provide insight into the capacity of a market to attract quality and growth. The size and role of a marketplace, its civic leadership, proximity to other metropolitan areas, transportation concentrations, and the location of competing or complementary attractions directly influence the scale and quality of facilities that can be supported within a particular market.

Site Context

Largo Town Center lies in the geographic center of Prince George's County, Maryland. Prince George's County is strategically located 18 miles from downtown Washington, D.C.; 37 miles from Baltimore, Maryland; 107 miles from Richmond, Virginia; 133 miles from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and 222 miles from New York, New York.

Because of the large size of Prince George's County, it has been divided into seven geographic areas. These distinct regions allow the county administrators and Planning Department to develop and provide more relevant public services targeted to the specific needs of the business and residents in these different areas. Each planning area is typically bounded by a major highway, political boundary, or natural border. These area master plans are used as the basis for comprehensive rezoning, resulting in a new zoning map for the subject area, which is called a sectional map amendment. The figure provides a pictorial view of



Land use map of the study area.

the area analyzed in this report, along with the area surrounding it and division of land uses.

The area surrounding the Largo Metrorail station (sub-region 4) is characterized by a mature neighborhood development pattern combined with numerous large sites that are intermittent or community-centric uses. Within approximately a one-mile radius, the following large sites are found in the Largo area:

- FedEx Field (while outside the town center, this venue greatly affects the Largo area);

- Inglewood Business Park; and
- The Boulevard at the Capital Centre.

The pattern of development and network of roads result in a confusing and typical suburban development pattern. Except for the Largo Town Center Metro stop, the area has no center of gravity or general sense of community. The area has a limited amount of park space and lacks major cultural and quality-of-life investments.

The market advantages are the low-cost, good transportation and ample retail. However, because of the age of product in the marketplace and the mature suburban nature of the greater Largo area, one can characterize it as generally less attractive when compared with some newer areas in northern Virginia or Maryland's Montgomery County.

Although the panel's findings for residential, retail, commercial office, and hospitality real estate sectors indicate limited, near-term demand for Largo Town Center, a

number of significant, catalytic opportunities could change the game in terms of the area's market potential.

What competitive advantages that Largo has need to be woven into its economic development strategy. Most important, the area's centrality is a positive. The road network, combined with proximity to the District of Columbia and Baltimore, by definition makes the location appealing. The presence of the Metrorail stop also should give the area advantages over areas without transit.

In addition, numerous large parcels of land in excess of 50 acres surround the broader Largo area. To date, these parcels have not been exploited because of alternatives throughout the region and what the panel believes to be the county's image and reputation. Similar to National Harbor, which took significant public investment, the county's new image will need to be more effectively organized to reposition this area.

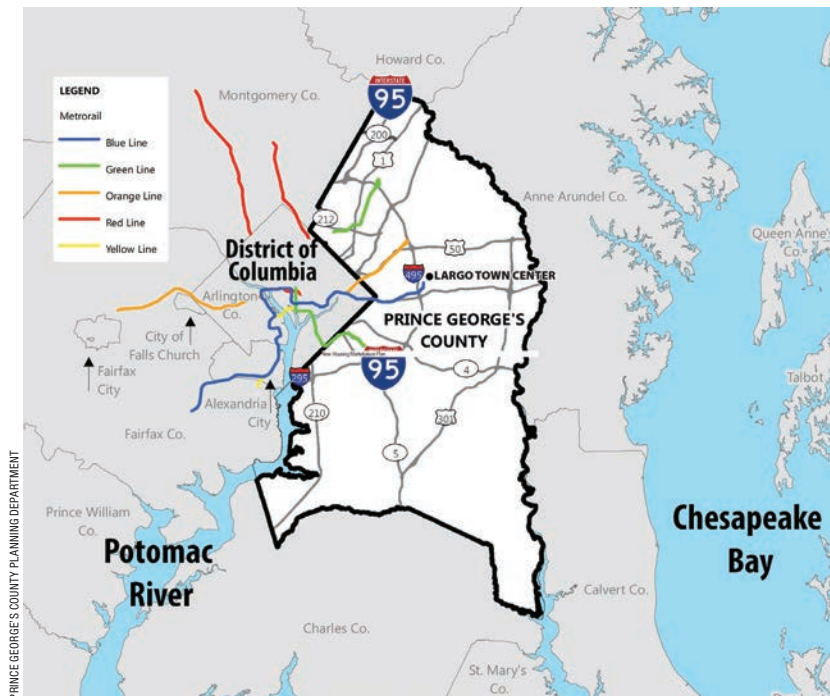
Community Profile

The demographic profile of Largo Town Center covers the area within a half-mile radius of the Largo Town Center Metro station. The current population of Largo Town Center and vicinity is 2,350 in 1,248 households. According to the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, the population is projected to increase by 9.8 percent to 2,580 in 1,335 households by 2020. The projection means the population will grow at a significantly faster rate than the 2.1 percent projected for the whole county.

Overall, the population in the Largo Town Center Metro area is slightly older, more educated, and relatively more diverse than in the rest of the county. The median age in the area, which is currently 38.1 years, is two years higher than the median age of the whole county. Seventy-seven percent of the residents are 18 years and older, slightly higher than the whole county's 76.1 percent.

A substantial percentage (60.4 percent) of households in the area is nonfamily compared with the whole county (33.9 percent). Consequently, the average household is 1.9 persons compared with 2.9 people in the whole

The major transportation arteries in Prince George's County.



county. The average household size in the area is smallest among the neighboring jurisdictions being compared.

Although the percentage of black or African American population in the area (40.4 percent) is significantly lower than that of the whole county (65.8 percent), those who are some other race are 24.6 percent compared with 8 percent for the county. Asians, who make up 4.8 percent in the county, are completely absent in the area, and the percentage of population that is white alone (22.8 percent) is similar to that of the whole county.

More than 43 percent of the population 25 years and older has a bachelor's degree or higher educational achievement, compared with 29 percent for the county. In addition, a lower percentage (5.8 percent) has some high school with no diploma or less, compared with 14 percent for the whole county.

The largest percentage of workers from the Largo Town Center area (48.7 percent) is employed in for-profit private companies. That percentage is lower, however, than that for employees countywide who have jobs with for-profit private companies, which is 56.9 percent. At the same time, a high 47.9 percent of employees from the Largo Town Center area is employed with nonprofit private companies and local, state, and federal governments. This is 10.6 percentage points higher than those in that category countywide. The current rate of unemployment for residents in the Largo Town Center area (8.3 percent) is lower than the countywide rate, which is 9.9 percent.

Market Overview

Housing occupancy in the Largo Town Center area is unique in the sense that, in contrast to the whole county, a substantial proportion of the existing units (68.6 percent) is renter occupied. This percentage is higher than in the rest of the county, where 39.6 percent of units is renter occupied, as well as all the jurisdictions being compared. Even Washington, D.C., has a lower percentage of renter-occupied units (59.4 percent) than the Largo Town Center area.

The preponderance of renters in the Largo Town Center area is no surprise, considering that the area is dominated by multifamily housing, with 34 percent of existing projects having 50 or more units, 41 percent having 20 units or more, and 44 percent having five to 19 units. In contrast, more than 66 percent of the housing units in the county as a whole are single-unit attached or detached. Prominent multifamily housing complexes include Camden Largo Town Center, Mosaic at Largo Station, Largo Center Apartments, and the recently constructed Tapestry Largo Station.

The housing stock in the Largo Town Center area is relatively new overall with a median age of 19 years, compared with 42 years for the county. Arlington County, Virginia, is the only jurisdiction among those being compared with a lower median age of housing stock.

The commercial real estate market in the Largo Town Center area is fairly active with 43 existing buildings totaling more than 2 million square feet of space. A majority of the existing buildings (27) are retail, eight are office, and four each are flex and industrial buildings. The current overall vacancy rate for the area is 7.1 percent, and the asking rent is \$20.62. The vacancy rate is highest for flex space (10.6 percent) and lowest for retail and office (6.3 percent). The highest asking rent (\$21.08) is for office space, and the lowest (\$18.00) is for industrial space. The area within a half-mile radius of Largo Town Center has 1.74 percent of the total commercial real estate square footage in Prince George's County.

The statistics for vacancies, rents, and days on the market show that the commercial real estate market in the Largo Town Center area is more robust overall than in the county as a whole. The current vacancy rate in Largo is 6.9 percent, lower than the countywide rate of 10.3 percent. The vacancy rate is also almost 4 percentage points lower than in the Washington metropolitan area. The current rent per square foot in the Largo Town Center area is \$5.51 higher than that of the whole county, which is currently \$13.62. When compared with the metropolitan area, the rent per square foot for the Largo Town Center area is rather low,

at \$19.93 compared with \$26.36 for the Washington metropolitan area. Listings for sale in the Largo Town Center area currently stay on the market for a slightly shorter period than for the whole county but 3.1 months longer than for the metropolitan area. In addition, the sales price per square foot in Largo Town Center is \$146, which is \$4 higher than countywide but lower by a vast margin than the metropolitan area's \$329.

Existing Anchor Institutions

With new tenants moving to Largo Town Center, the county is looking to capitalize on these new anchor tenants as well as to enhance the tenants in the area. Brief summaries of the available tenants follow.

Dimensions Healthcare System Regional Medical Center

Dimensions Healthcare System, with the University of Maryland Medical System (UMMS), the state of Maryland, and Prince George's County, has worked diligently to develop a new regional medical center in Prince George's County. The new 231-bed, \$650 million regional medical center is a focal point to transform the county's health care system and support the improvement of the health of the residents of Prince George's County and the southern Maryland region.

The regional medical center will be located at Largo Town Center, at the intersection of Lottsford Road and Arena Drive. It will be directly accessible from the Capital Beltway's (I-495) Arena Drive Exit 15. The site was chosen be-

cause of the low development costs and walkable access to a Metro station at Largo Town Center.

Affiliation with UMMS will provide an effective way to bring talent and resources into Prince George's County. The new hospital will be a major training site for doctors and other health professionals and a draw for associated medical office space. The best hospitals see office and retail evolve around them. Preventive, specialized, and routine care are being more broadly distributed to outpatient facilities and away from monolithic hospitals. With improved medical technologies, an increasing number of treatments, tests, and procedures can be conducted on an outpatient basis.

Increasingly employed by hospitals, physicians and other practitioners are bringing medical care into a distributed network of satellite-type facilities scattered throughout communities. Such products include everything from medical office buildings to walk-in clinics located within retail stores such as CVS, Walgreens, or Target. The next level of opportunity could be an "outpatient pavilion" where specialists and subspecialists can share technology and resources in an accelerator-type project. The ability to partner with other institutions, such as Prince George's Community College (PGCC), is also possible to increase educational opportunities.

Prince George's Community College

Founded in 1958, Prince George's Community College came into existence because of a perceived need for educational opportunities for county residents, particularly those who were still in kindergarten through 12th grade in the public schools in the late 1950s. Classes commenced at Suitland High School with the first student body of 185. The college was the first educational institution to integrate in the county and today serves more African American students than any other postsecondary institution in the state of Maryland. In 1967, the college moved to its permanent location in Largo, where it now has an enrollment of more than 44,000 (35,000 of whom are at the Largo campus). During the past decades, a handful of buildings on the campus has grown to 22 facilities.



Rendering of the Prince George's County Regional Medical Center.



Prince George's Community College.



University of Maryland University College.

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The college provides higher education to the local population, offering more than 100 fields of study through its academic, workforce development, continuing education, and personal enrichment programs. More specifically, PGCC has 68 academic degree programs and 34 professional certificate programs, many of which feature distance-learning options. The college awards associate of arts, associate of science, and associate of arts in teaching degrees. In addition, PGCC allows students to transfer to a four-year college or university.

University of Maryland University College

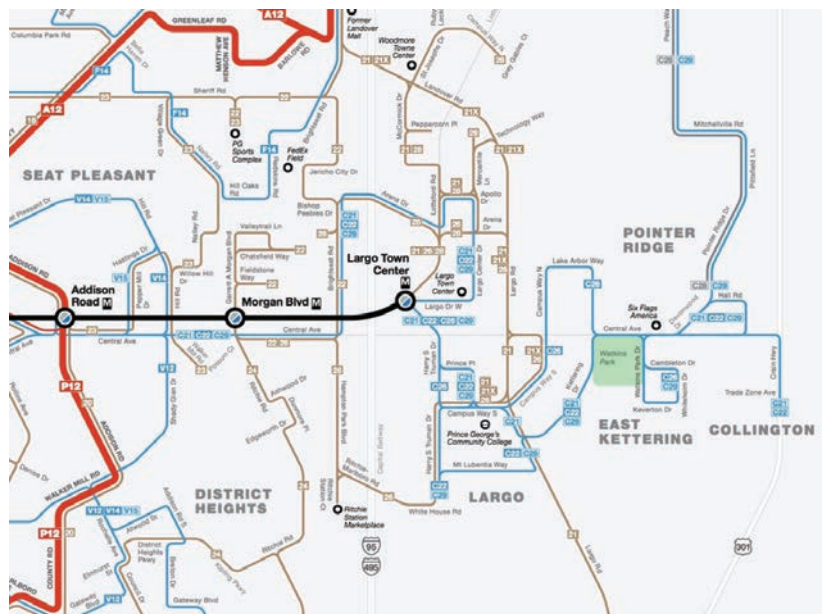
A member of the University System of Maryland (which includes 11 separate public universities in Maryland), the University of Maryland University College (UMUC) is an American public university offering classes and programs in its Academic Center on the Largo campus and at satellite campuses across the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area, throughout Maryland, and in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia.

UMUC serves more than 90,000 students worldwide and is one of the largest distance-learning institutions in the world. UMUC is open to all applicants with a 100 percent acceptance rate for undergraduate programs. The university offers 120 academic programs in instructor-led and online classes, including bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees as well as undergraduate and graduate certificates.

Transit Context

The study area is served by two primary transit options, both bus (TheBus and Metrobus) and rail, in a manner that makes it a unique transit-served location, though it may not be as influenced or defined by transit as other locations in the region. Prince George's County operates relatively infrequent TheBus service on several of its routes that pass through or along the edges of the area. While providing an essential service in the county, the limited frequencies and operating hours of the TheBus make it a relatively unattractive option for most travelers. Metrobus service is also provided on several routes in the area, all

Major bus routes and transportation systems around Largo Town Center and in Prince George's County.



WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY

focusing on the Largo Town Center Metrorail station as a transfer hub. The coverage area of Metrobus is limited to higher-density areas in Prince George's County and does not serve the broader marketshed around the site.

The Metrorail station is served by very frequent service on the Blue and Silver lines, which extend across the District of Columbia into two distinct parts of the northern Virginia suburbs. Within a 25-minute Metrorail trip, users embarking at the Largo Town Center station can travel directly to the L'Enfant Plaza station, central city, employment, and tourist stations within the District of Columbia, or transfer and return in an easterly direction to other lines servicing Washington, D.C., and northern Virginia.

Although Metrorail service at the station is similar to that of other stations in the system, the design of the Largo Town Center station reflects its regional role as an end-of-line station. Whereas many stations are designed to accommodate park-and-ride, kiss-and-ride, and bus transfers, end-of-line stations have the distinct role of serving a much larger and more automobile-oriented catchment area. They are generally designed to accommodate significantly more automobile access than typical stations. This is certainly reflected in the large parking facilities at the Largo Town Center station. End-of-line stations often have considerable space dedicated to bus-transfer facilities and kiss-and-ride facilities that accommodate additional forms of access from the same large catchment area. These facilities occupy several acres at Largo Town Center.

Overall, the resulting character of Largo Town Center station, and most end-of-line stations, is extremely oriented to the automobile and scaled for regional rather than local demand. This detracts from the walkability and livability of the area around the station relative to other stations in the system.

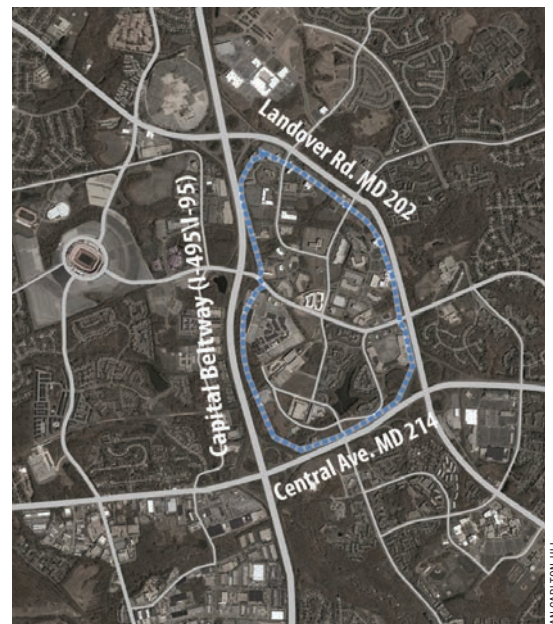
Panel Observations

The Largo Town Center area is physically defined by several factors, including highways, large land users, massive nearby redevelopment sites, large block and parcel sizes, generous street sizes, and a regional transit facility.

The study area is clearly bound by Interstate 495 on the west, Maryland Route 202 on the east, and Route 214 on the south. Seven major intersections and access points from these roadways offer considerable automobile access in this location. These highways have been attractive assets for large, regional land users such as FedEx Field and PGCC. Adjacent to the core area, these land users have transformed Largo Town Center into a major destination for thousands of regional residents.

Many of the large parcels in the study area and its surroundings are presently vacant or underused with potential for major redevelopment. Outside the study area, the former Landover Mall is currently a potential site for the relocation of the FBI's headquarters. The Boulevard at the Capital Centre, which lies within the study area's boundaries, is another large site that presents opportunities for redevelopment. Rather than focus on land within the arbitrary one-quarter and one-half-mile circles around Largo Town Center station, the panel contends that the broad Largo Town Center Sector Plan community boundaries are a more realistic and appropriate area in which to focus the efforts of Prince George's County.

The panel's expanded study area.



From a real estate development standpoint, the panel does not see Largo Town Center as a transit-oriented development (TOD) opportunity defined by one-quarter and one-half-mile radii and considers the larger region in its study.

Much as the Largo Town Center Sector Plan enumerates in many regards, the panel believes the development opportunity in Largo Town Center is much greater than mere TOD. Transit is but one asset to consider in this area. The opportunities are more about community development that leverages several real estate development options across the Largo Town Center Sector Plan area. Furthermore, the panel foresees better opportunities to stimulate development at locations outside the sector plan boundary to benefit the area within the boundaries.

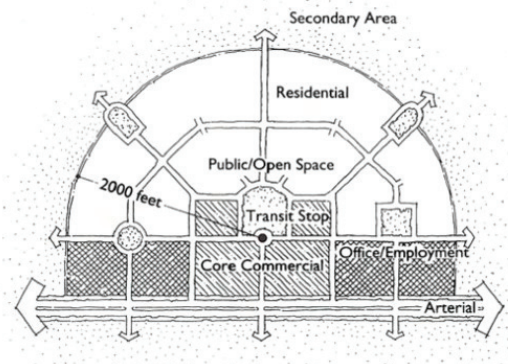
The panel also noticed that the Largo and Largo Town Center names are not readily associated with any particular boundaries or central node. However, considerable opportunity exists to define a place in this location.

Panel Analysis

AS STATED EARLIER, THE PANEL concluded that with the study area's large block and parcel sizes, generous roadways, and highway access, the Metrorail facility is not the Largo area's primary feature. Although that facility cuts across the center of the area and adds definition, the panel did not agree with the premise that the station be the central focal point for development. Instead, the panel chose to analyze the short- and long-term growth opportunities of the study area. Big-picture ideas—such as whether or not the center would be a TOD or community area plan, as well as whether the county would have a more active or reactive role in this growth—were essential in framing the panel's recommendations. Discussion and evaluation of the two questions follow.

TOD versus Community Area Plan

The TOD concept rests on the notion that people highly value transit access and the ability to walk to a transit station where they are able to travel on a relatively reliable transportation option that provides access to a vast array



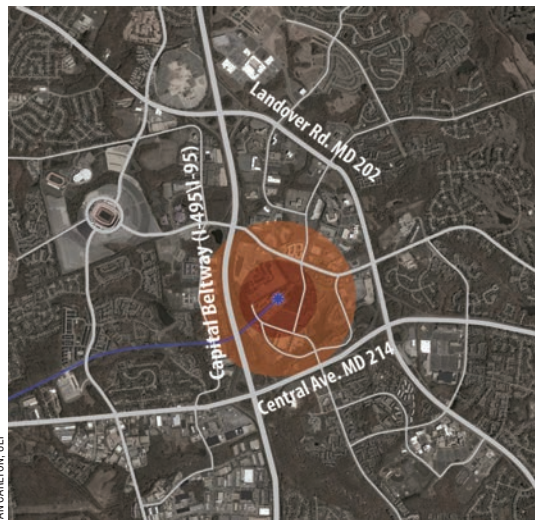
PETER CALTHORPE, THE NEXT AMERICAN METROPOLIS (PRINCETON ARCHITECTURAL PRESS, 1993)

Peter Calthorpe's vision for transit-oriented development has shaped how urban thinkers perceive growth "should" extend around transit stations.

of jobs, housing, services, and other destinations. Urban thinkers have often considered a quarter-mile and half-mile walk to be distances that the average person would be willing to walk to access transit. This theory yields the bull's-eye TOD diagram with concentric circles centered on a transit station.

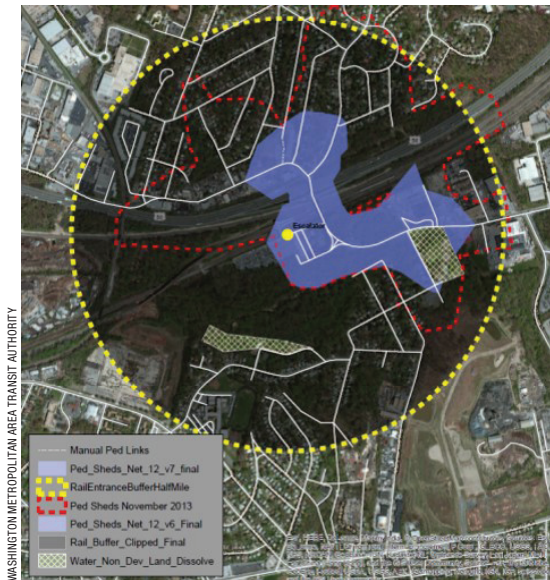
Over the years, urban thinkers have offered prescriptions for how growth "should" occur around transit stations. Their visionary work has leveraged the quarter-mile and half-mile rubric as a design element that defines the type of real estate development that "should" happen around transit. Peter Calthorpe's seminal work in this area from the early 1990s has perhaps been the most influential definition and has shaped the TOD discourse.

However, strict adherence to TOD design rules ignores the realities of our complex and varied urban places and is inappropriate. The utopian TOD diagrams depicting highly organized development around transit stations are general and decontextualized concepts that are intended to inform contextually sensitive designs.



IAN CARLTON, ULI

Following the bull's-eye transit-oriented development model, Largo Town Center would be examined within the constraints of a quarter-mile and a half-mile radius.



This diagram of the Cheverly Metro station area northeast of Washington, D.C., shows a lack of pedestrian walksheds in the station area.

In reality, station areas are complex places that do not conform to a diagram. In fact, the station area planning team for the Washington Area Metropolitan Transit Authority (WMATA) recognizes this fact when it contemplates the areas surrounding stations. The WMATA team has developed walkshed analyses that describe the physical realities of accessing Metrorail stations through a reasonable walk.

In thinking about the Largo Town Center area's urban development and its relationship to the Largo Town Center Metrorail station, one must consider the area's unique attributes, many of which define the market and physical realities to a greater extent than the transit station and services in the area. As the panel explored the study area, it noted that the arbitrary nature of quarter-mile and half-mile radii was particularly pronounced. Access to the station is not defined by these concentric circles, and nothing in the existing landscape reflects these arbitrary boundaries.

Based on the panel's interpretation of the Largo Town Center study area, physical and social realities exist that do more to define the site's character than the transit



The panel expanded the method of examining transit-oriented development to include sites such as Inglewood Business Park.

station and its access sheds. Because of the physical realities of the site, superimposing transit-oriented urban design guidelines onto the area would be inappropriate. In fact, valuable defining features in the study area directly contradict many TOD prescriptions.

The Largo Town Center Sector Plan recommends buildings in Largo's TOD core should be at least six stories in height. Based on the panel's experience, however, minimum building heights work best when demonstrated demand exists for the submarket. Largo Town Center is a subregional market that warrants the most intense development activity, but a minimum building height requirement will raise the cost of development and potentially push required rents above what the market can support in the foreseeable future. Therefore, the panel offers these cautionary thoughts about minimum heights. Although consideration of desirable building height standards is appropriate, adopting these stringent guidelines may push developers away from the development opportunity. The panel believes that transit-oriented design philosophy can be

strategically applied to development in the study area in a contextually sensitive and specific manner that respects the locale's strengths and character.

Choosing a Methodology for Development

The community has two distinct options on how it can proceed in stimulating private sector investment at Largo Town Center, which in turn will direct or manage the redevelopment of the area:

- *A catalytic approach:* an active and programmed effort that prescribes and guides development, dictating (where appropriate and determined) location, zoning, uses, form, and more for all public and private sector activities; and
- *An organic approach:* a more nuanced approach that lets the market and current ownership manage the development process based upon a light laissez-faire policy of permitting future development to take its own course based on the current prescriptions and guidelines now in place.

The distinction between these approaches resides in the contrast between the proactive use of the government authority and power versus a distinctly low-profile level of engagement. However, each approach has its benefits and drawbacks. Each one of these approaches can be outlined as an alternative scenario to achieve the sector plan goals and objectives.

The catalytic approach takes the view that a firm set of guidelines is needed to implement the sector plans, including the following:

- Mandating infrastructure improvements such as new streets and public rights-of-way throughout Largo Town Center;
- Establishing urban-scaled blocks and building parcels that reinforce favored development;
- Designating locations for product and building types along with specific sites for such uses as civic open

spaces, community gathering places, government services, and more;

- Changing zoning to allow flexibility of product type, product form, and product configuration;
- Setting priorities for specific land use and property types that should be the highest priority for immediate redevelopment;
- Establishing set goals and locations for government acquisition of properties and parcels to facilitate above guidelines; and
- Setting a prescribed timeline for implementing the goals and objectives (irrespective of market conditions).

The organic approach acknowledges the current development and ownership conditions in Largo Town Center, including the following:

- No designation of locations for product and building types, allowing the market and property owners to manage property and product type change on an individual and parcel-by-parcel basis;
- No change in current super-block configuration and land parcels that favor existing development patterns;
- No targeted development of civic gathering places, relying on the market to create its own opportunities for focal points and public spaces;
- Retaining the existing street and public rights-of-way locations with incremental infrastructure improvements throughout Largo Town Center; and
- No change in zoning regulations, keeping current parcel and site designations.

Although these approaches differ, the end result sought should be essentially the same. The organic approach is marked by a willingness to move forward at a more gradual pace, taking measured steps as funding opportunities present themselves and closely linking activity to market conditions. The catalytic approach achieves much more activity within a five- to seven-year period, but will

require elected officials to assume more financial risk in terms of new bond issues and general fund operating costs. If the activity fails to generate the companion private sector investment the county seeks, the catalytic initiative could impose significant burdens on the county. The organic approach can absolutely accomplish the long-term objective, but over a decade or two, so the positive economic and fiscal effects will not be felt as quickly and may not be as stimulating in terms of generating private sector investment.

Site-Specific and County Recommendations

THE PANEL RECOMMENDS THE FOLLOWING for the county to both achieve its sector plans and develop the Largo Town Center study area:

- *Relocate the county government.* For this move, the panel suggests the development of a purpose built county office complex located in or near the Metro station will eventually be needed. This building should also include a one-stop service center. The consolidation of employees can be both cost-effective and more efficient in operation.
- *Address the opportunities and challenges of achieving highest and best use in the Inglewood Business Park.* To achieve this goal, the panel recommends a comprehensive asset management procedure for the study area.
- *Direct attention to placemaking.* This can come in the form of rebranding the central business district or other community enhancement elements such as an event center and an active urban park.
- *Improve access via different modes of transportation and road connections.* Largo Town Center has great potential for becoming a key transportation hub in the county. The panel recommends capitalizing on this strength and expanding on it through various projects ranging from implementing a road diet to improving parking facilities.
- *Implement effective housing principles and policies for current stock and future development.*
- *Use available management tools.* Work through the implications and choices associated with adopting a catalytic versus organic development strategy.

Relocation of the County Government

Although the current county center is in Upper Marlboro, the county already houses a surprisingly larger number of its employees in seven buildings in Inglewood Business Park. Functions already located there include Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Economic Development Corporation, Licenses and Permitting services, Department of Environment, the Health Department, the Department of Public Works and Transportation, and the Fire and Emergency Services Department.

Beginning in 1991, the Prince George's County administration has operated in a sensible, opportunistic manner to acquire available suburban office buildings located in Inglewood Business Park. At this point, the county must decide about the practical, logistical considerations of locating government offices near communities and citizens served, proximity to other county offices, and the future development goals established by Plan 2035 and the Largo Town Center Sector Plan.

The panel identified the current properties owned by the county within the study area and, more specifically, Inglewood Business Park. The logic of relocating the remaining administrative offices, Planning Board, and Planning Department offices to the business park is compelling merely on the face of these facts.

Identifying the departments and associated staff that would be candidates for relocation from the Upper Marlboro building complex is clearly important. The County Administrative Building (CAB) at 14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive houses a workforce that is an important economic contributor to the local community. However, the

Prince George's County Assets in the Inglewood Business Park

Map ID	Name/address	Building square footage	Year built	Acres	Assessed value
61	1400 McCormick Drive	64,585	1990	5.21	\$9,596,433
66	9201 Basil Court	74,788	1984	7.09	\$15,348,433
69	9200 Basil Court	103,936	1982	7.73	\$10,858,733
70	1801 McCormick Drive	113,709	1986	7.76	\$9,216,000
71	1701 McCormick Drive	31,860	1986	3.55	\$4,803,733
72	9400 Peppercorn Place	131,338	1989	7.95	\$21,980,600
73	9450 Peppercorn Place	—	—	5.11	\$1,179,967
74	9441 Peppercorn Place	—	—	2.96	\$661,700
75	9401 Peppercorn Place	—	—	5.52	\$1,120,800
80	1315 McCormick Drive	—	—	5.13	\$1,691,200
81	1301 McCormick Drive	181,000	2000	3.62	\$14,050,500
82	9550 Lottsford Road	—	—	7.68	\$1,963,400
Totals		701,216		69.32	\$92,471,499

Sources: Prince George's County Planning Department; assessed value data are from the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation.

panel understands that replacement candidates exist that can occupy the building, and the local community should be reassured about this concern.

The relocation of administrative uses associated with the executive offices and the Prince George's County Park and Planning group from the CAB would still leave a large concentration of county employees in Upper Marlboro, associated with the courthouse, judicial, and public safety functions. Departure from the CAB of the administrative uses would reportedly free up space to be repurposed to support these functions.

In addition, significant effort and funding have already been expended in anticipation of the eventual relocation of these uses. Nothing that has been presented to the panel members would argue against the presumption of relocating the administrative functions. Because the discussion of this subject seems to continue, the panel fully supports relocation of the administrative offices to the Largo area.

Considerations for Asset Building and Relocating County Employees to Largo

The agreement to relocate county offices shifts the analysis from "go/no-go" to addressing the program and business operational requirements associated with the uses moving to the Largo area, such as building type and layout needs, employee and public parking options, and ownership preference (i.e., build to suit or as built).

Prince George's County government has the opportunity to provide a positive experience for residents and for current and prospective employees through how it provides the physical space, tools, and technology to support the organization. Considering locational attributes as they relate to all constituents—customers and employees—is important.

The recently acquired property at 1301 McCormick Drive is the presumed destination of the relocated administra-

tive functions. Although relocation at 1301 McCormick Drive may be the appropriate decision, the panel posits whether considering the relocation as an interim move would be useful, with a permanent move subsequently to a purpose-built public complex constructed as part of a large-scale mixed-use project near the Largo Town Center Metro station.

In addition, the panel sees the relocation as an opportunity for the county to incorporate more contemporary workspace designs that are considerably different from the space plans of earlier decades. The application of contemporary design standards may result in a determination that consolidation of uses could create a net reduction in overall square footage and result in lower operating costs associated with modern and efficient building mechanical

systems. An accurate assessment of the total occupancy costs and the various cost scenarios associated with possible consolidation of all uses into a purpose-built facility requires a separate evaluation by a team familiar with this type of comparative analysis.

From law firms to corporate headquarters, a major shift is taking place to open space arrangements with only one or two office sizes and one or two cubical sizes. These arrangements include gathering areas in lieu of break rooms, “huddle rooms” for small meetings, more conference rooms, fitness facilities, and other amenities deemed important by younger workforce members. Brightly lit work areas and direct access to daylight have increased in importance. Employees also frequently express a strong

Case Study: Dallas Area Rapid Transit

Contemporary design standards significantly reduce the total square footage required to house the workforce while achieving lower operating costs.

Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) recently completed an analysis of its space requirements and the effect of introducing an open-space plan (see table).

The option chosen, called “Lift + Shift,” achieved a 20 percent reduction in total space requirements through adoption of an open-space concept. Other options studied included combinations of build-to-suit space, and having multiple or single office and work stations sizes.

Scenario Comparisons for Open-Space Plan Economies

	Current state	Lift + Shift	Multiple standard	Multiple standard, BTS	Single standard	Single-standard, BTS
Total GSF	271,000	221,500	190,500	175,200	178,800	164,500
Total RSF	251,000	203,800	175,300	161,200	164,500	151,300
RSF/person	481	408	351	322	329	303
Collaboration seats: individual seats	0.87:1.0	0.97:1.0	0.97:1.0	0.97:1.0	0.97:1.0	0.97:1.0
Open % : closed %	58:42	52:48	85:15	85:15	85:15	85:15

Source: Dallas Area Rapid Transit.

Note: GSF = gross square feet, RSF = rentable square feet, BTS = build to suit.

Asset Management and Consolidation Recommendation

Office and complementary space uses total 701,216 square feet on 69.32 acres. Seven of the 12 property parcels have buildings, while the balance is either undeveloped or used for parking.

The panel members were struck by the number of office buildings the county occupies and the relative age of those buildings. Although they are in relatively close proximity, the buildings owned and occupied by the county within Inglewood Business Park are still distributed on a mile-long corridor. Easy and regular interaction among staff members is not available, and the relative isolation of the groups within the various buildings creates workforce silos. The buildings are circa 1980s construction coming to the end of their useful life.

Thus, the county has substantial existing assets that can be managed and leveraged to accomplish both internal objectives (related to its own space occupancy and land use needs) and larger external goals (to stimulate

the private sector investment in Largo Town Center). The panel recommends that the county reevaluate its real estate asset program and consider the potential of selling the county cluster of suburban office buildings and consolidating those uses into a larger, purpose-built building complex.

- Perform an accurate review of long-term space needs for county government.
- Analyze the complete range of market options for county government, and develop these into economic scenarios for comparative evaluation.
- Assess how the county's workforce would be best served by adopting new workplace strategies.
- Perform a financial analysis to identify the cost savings of relocation.

preference for locations that permit them to walk to restaurants and retail stores.

The panel agrees that the county is well positioned to leverage its assets and prepare for the transition in a timely fashion. With relocation and consolidation, the county is poised to transform the Largo Town Center market using its own real estate assets and land and to create the compelling destination that signals a downtown and urban core.

In a separate section of this report, the panel speaks to the issues and opportunities associated with the ownership of the various office buildings in the business park. The county may be able to create two significant development opportunities in the future.

Implementation and Execution

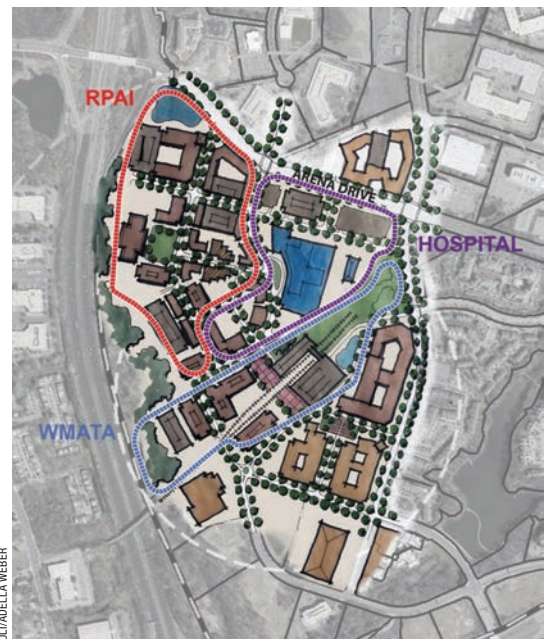
WHETHER THE COUNTY CHOOSES to use a catalytic or an organic approach, specific steps can be taken to stimulate private sector investment. In no particular order of importance, these steps, which are predicated on the relocation and consolidation of county government to Largo Town Center, include the following:

- *Create two well-defined civic plazas within the Largo Town Center core and near the Metro station.* One plaza would be located within the redeveloped Boulevard at the Capital Centre and the other adjacent to the Ascend Apollo project currently under construction.
- *Create a public/private partnership to develop an event center.* This should complement the civic plaza within the redeveloped Boulevard at the Capital Centre property.
- *Create a district facilities and parking management program for Largo Town Center.* This Town Center Parking District (TCPD) should leverage the development and redevelopment of all properties in the area bounded by Landover/Largo Road (Route 202 to the north and east), the Capital Beltway (I-495 to the west), and Central Avenue (Route 214 to the south).
- *Designate all existing, interim, and proposed parking facilities as part of the TCPD to be built and managed in a comprehensive manner.* This district would provide alternatives for current and future users, such as the medical center, and other major uses within the core.
- *Design a complete streets/road diet solution.* This solution should meet the needs of all transportation and access, including pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles for



ULI/ADELLA WEBER

The panel's redevelopment vision for Largo Town Center.



ULI/ADELLA WEBER

the proposed Harry S Truman Drive extension northward to Arena Drive, its connection to McCormick Drive throughout the Largo Town Center core north to Landover Road, and along Harry S Truman Drive southward to PGCC.

Placemaking in Largo

Largo is a somewhat large and spread-out community, currently comprising both rural and suburban areas. As infill has occurred over the past years, county planners and developers have clearly striven to provide well-thought-out, comfortable residential subdivisions with pockets of retail in various locations around the district. These pockets of retail are connected to the residents by a network of wide, automobile-dominated roads and are not generally within walking distance from each other or the residential subdivisions.

Although this model works well in a rural area, the very nature of sprawl does not lend itself to the dense mixed uses needed to create an urban feeling. When asked to pinpoint “where” Largo is or what one thinks of when one thinks of Largo as a place, stakeholders were generally unable to say more than where they thought urban density “should” be—radiating outward from the Largo Metro station.

Placemaking is a multifaceted approach to planning, design, and management of public spaces. Placemaking capitalizes on a local community’s assets, inspiration, and potential with the intention of creating public spaces that promote people’s health, happiness, and well-being. Placemaking can encompass everything from the width of the sidewalks to public events such as outdoor concerts or a temporary ice rink set up over the winter holidays, to the color of the light ambience coming from streetlights at night.

To begin to develop a place, Largo must do several things to create that sense of being a destination. First and foremost, one has to know where one is and where one is going.



[HTTPS://WWW.FLICKR.COM/PHOTOS/JAMESBONDV/376726487](https://www.flickr.com/photos/jamesbondsv/376726487)

Signage in cities improves city legibility and supports walkability.

Wayfinding

Wayfinding defines where you are within an environment, helps you discover where your desired location is, and tells you how to get there from your current location. Wayfinding starts with inclusion of Largo on highway directional signs, at the Metro station, and at the district boundaries, thereby creating an immediate sense of arrival. Wayfinding signage needs to be large and bright and simple, eye-catching for both quickly moving auto traffic and easy to find for the pedestrian.

Wayfinding is one of the most basic—and one of the most important—ways to brand a community. Using consistent color, fonts, images, and wording creates a sense of the town center’s personality and identity.

Currently, Largo suffers a lack of both identity and wayfinding. Individual businesses, retail areas, and housing subdivisions are identified only by their own signage directly adjacent or attached to their properties. Major attractions such as shopping centers, parking access, or public gathering spaces are not identified along automobile or pedestrian paths. Basic pedestrian walkways, such as the bridge from the Metro station to the Boulevard at the Capital Centre (soon to be a regional medical center), are not identified until one is literally standing at the foot of the bridge. Pedestrians may not realize that the path even exists, let alone where it is or how to get there from

the Metro station, or how to get to the Metro station from anywhere else in the district.

The minimal signage that does exist is in disrepair and does not consistently differentiate between Largo's town center—the designated downtown—and the Largo Town Center shopping mall.

Rebranding

Finding the natural or defined boundaries of the community or neighborhood is also very difficult. Furthermore, the Largo name is not widely associated with any particular community or affiliation. Leveraging the redevelopment in this area can contribute to community development efforts that are occurring at an appropriate scale that extends beyond the boundaries designated by the study area. To that end, the panel recommends a full rebranding process and would go one step further to suggest that Largo may need a new name.

Several ways exist to accomplish this task, and the panel suggests the county undertake this process thoughtfully and immediately. The county should work with the branding and marketing company assisting the medical center, hire a private firm, hold a communitywide naming contest, and talk to major retail stakeholders who will be part of the upcoming urban infill. Finding that individual community personality and creating a sense of destination are crucial.

Public Spaces

After wayfinding, implementing those aspects of Plan 2035 that clearly delineate green space, streets, public parks, and most particularly, a town square directly adjacent to the Largo Metro station is the next most important facet of placemaking. A vital piece in crafting a gathering space for Largo would be the construction of a fully functioning medium-sized event center, capable of holding events in the 100–500 attendee range, with an urban plaza that can accommodate diverse public needs: flat spaces for easy crowd gathering, landscaping for beautification and comfort, places to sit, places to play, public art to stimulate conversations and thought, and landmarks.



HTTP://WWW.PANORAMIO.COM/PHOTO/82739279

A medium-sized multipurpose event center can offer a flexible indoor/outdoor place where people can gather year round.

The community needs a place to gather, to come together organically on a day-to-day basis and catalytically for larger-scale events. It is absolutely essential to create vibrant active places for people to come and enjoy each other's company, to celebrate the joys of life, or even just to sit quietly and watch the world go by.

Programming this public space should be a combination of both active events that draw crowds of all sizes (outdoor concerts, food festivals, cultural celebrations) and passive activation (interactive public art pieces, benches, playgrounds, street performers).

An event center offers an indoor/outdoor place for crowd gathering year round. It offers a desirable alternative to the sometimes limited abilities of hotels to provide creative spaces for larger crowds both professional and social. This event center could be home to annual meetings, business training seminars, fundraising galas, weddings, countywide public meetings, trade shows, private conventions, and so on. It should be 50,000 to 100,000 square feet and have flexible indoor spaces as well as creative outdoor spaces such as ground-floor garden patios and rooftop access.

The funding to construct and maintain this event center should come from the formation of a tourism development zone (TDZ), as well as from dedicating state and local income, property, hotel, or amusement taxes apportioned and distributed to the zone. Amounts apportioned and distributed are based on excess revenue growth in the TDZ as compared to the county. The panel recommends the



Public spaces provide multipurpose venues where community members can gather and where markets and events can be staged.

TDZ cover approximately a one-mile radius from the Largo Metro station as the designated town center. This kind of opportunity for the public sector to partner with the private sector developers can truly create incredible structures and public spaces.

In addition to building a destination event center and a town plaza or green space, the current community assets need to be highlighted and reintroduced to the community. The walking path dotted with small-scale public art installations on the University of Maryland campus and the PGCC Performing Arts Center (currently undergoing exciting capacity-building capital improvements) are both within reach of the public. Wayfinding and marketing efforts to include these assets in a more comprehensive manner can have an immediate effect on placemaking.

Creating a more welcoming pedestrian environment throughout Largo, particularly around the Metro station and the major attractions, is important. Although the roads bear a heavy population of cars, not once during the interview process did the panel hear that traffic was an issue. This suggests that the panel can safely recommend a theory called road dieting. This process involves slowing traffic down by narrowing streets and adding curb-line enhancements in the form of bike lanes, grass and trees, decorative light posts, banner posts for branding identity, advertising community events, and wayfinding.

These elements also greatly enhance the pedestrian experience, but more needs to be done here too, such as widening the sidewalks to at least six feet, ideally eight to ten feet; adding streetscaping fundamentals such as benches, consistently coordinated containers of flowers and diverse plants, and public art installations; and reducing walls and property fences or installing attractive, sight-permeable fencing. Moving bus shelters to the back of sidewalks so that pedestrians have a consistent path to follow will make for a more consistent experience.

Any trip begins and ends with a pedestrian experience, whether it is a short walk from the office to the car or a more extensive walk from the front door of the home to the grocery store. Creating an open, well-lit, beautiful, and welcoming atmosphere invites pedestrians to wander and explore instead of hurry through. This kind of atmosphere dispels perceptions of unsafe or unsavory areas and turns them into friendly public spaces that contribute to the overall sense of destination and community.

Placemaking is fundamental to the rebranding of Largo into a densely populated urban area. Starting with pleasant sidewalks and wayfinding, and ending with a carefully contrived event center will be the basis for building Largo's identity as a true destination.

Town Center Parking District

The panel recommends creation of the Town Center Parking District (TCPD) to encourage development and redevelopment of properties in the study area. To accomplish this goal, the following four tasks must be executed.

- *Provide off-site parking facilities.* Off-site parking should be constructed and managed by the TCPD for all users (office, retail, industrial, institutional, and residential) in Largo Town Center.
- *Use surplus parking capacity.* The TCPD should contract with WMATA to use the surplus parking capacity at the Morgan Boulevard Metro station to complement facilities in the Largo Town Center core. Working with WMATA,

The Town Center Parking District areas of impact.



the TCPD should establish an incentives program that encourages employees at the future planned county government center to use the Morgan Boulevard Metro station and ride a shuttle the short distance to Largo Town Center.

- *Provide a dedicated shuttle.* The TCPD should provide a dedicated shuttle that circulates within the Largo Town Center area and serves all owned and managed parking

facilities. The shuttle should also connect to and operate in a partnership with PGCC.

- *Remove parking requirements.* Private sector developers should be relieved of any requirement to construct parking within the Largo Town Center core. Instead, all parking serving new development and redevelopment should be provided and managed by the district. This will create a significant incentive and stimulus for development.

Housing

As the county prepares to stimulate job growth in the area, examining the currently available housing stock, the number of renters versus homeowners, and whether housing stock is aimed at the correct demographics will be important. Based on the county human relations commission's data, 43.8 percent of all current households in Prince George's County are burdened by housing cost. Affordable workforce housing in Prince George's County is almost nonexistent. Middle-class residents are struggling to find affordable housing, and resources are not available to assist them, thus prompting many residents to move away.

Creating a Successful Housing Strategy in Largo

The panel recommends that to refocus public perception of the Largo Town Center area as a sustainable, livable community, the county incorporate effective housing principles and policies for current stock and future development in this area. The Center for Housing Policy, the research affiliate of the National Housing Conference, maintains an excellent portal of information and policy tools for public leaders to access and develop a strong strategy in their own communities (www.housingpolicy.org).

The panel believes that a good economic development policy is complemented by a good housing policy. The panel suggests the executive leaders of Prince George's County consider the following key factors in the development and implementation of an effective housing strategy, as outlined by the Center for Housing Policy:

- Exercise leadership.
- Know your market.
- Get ahead of the curve with proactive planning.
- Be comprehensive and inclusive.
- Create open lines of communication.
- Insist on excellent design.
- Promote a mix of incomes.
- Preserve and recycle resources.
- Consider a demonstration.
- Think locally and regionally.
- Build public support for affordable homes.

In Prince George's County, the cost of rental housing, or fair market rent, for a two-bedroom apartment is about \$1,469 per month. To afford this without paying more than 30 percent of income, a household must earn \$58,760 annually. Assuming a 40-hour work week, 52 weeks per year, this income translates to a wage of \$28.25 an hour. For Prince George's County and Largo, the estimated average wage for a renter is \$14.42 an hour. Thus, a moderate or low-income person must work almost 80 hours a week, 52 weeks per year, to afford an apartment at fair market rent.

Prince George's County and Largo have experienced a loss of workforce rental units. From 2005 to 2013, the county lost almost 15,000 rental units that rented for \$750 or less a month and more than 33,000 units that rented for \$1,000 or less a month. During the same period, the county added more than 45,000 rental units that rented for more than \$1,000 per month; 20,859 units were gained that rented for \$1,000 to \$1,499 monthly, and 24,485 units were gained that rented for \$1,500 or more a month.

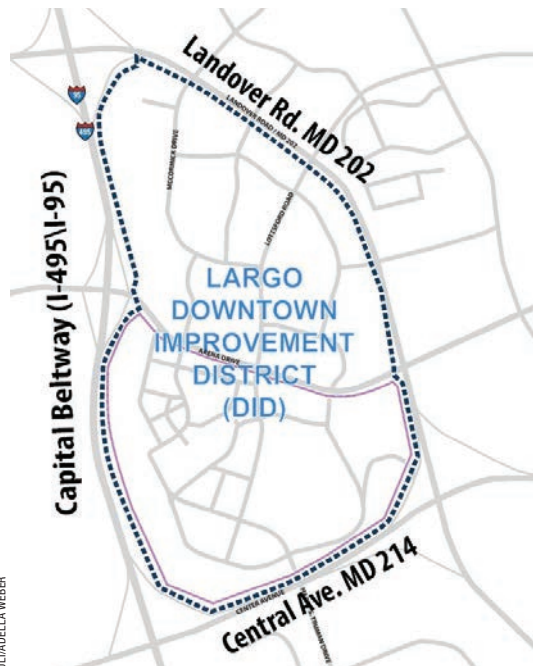
Now is the time for Prince George's County to develop a comprehensive workforce housing strategy. The county faces declining federal aid, need for housing stability to limit foreclosures, loss of further affordable rental housing, and a very slowly rebounding housing market. Furthermore, the county's population is projected to increase by almost 132,000 by 2040. The county will need more than 52,382 units by 2030, including 32,965 rental units. Bringing back inclusionary zoning, empowering the Housing Department to use right of first refusal, and financially supporting the Housing Investment Trust Fund are all critical for Prince George's County. Prince George's County and Largo will be successful in securing effective workforce housing if they meet certain benchmarks and create their own public/private housing partnerships.

Workforce housing is defined as homes aimed at households earning 60 percent to 120 percent of the area's median income. In contrast, the term *affordable housing* is generally used for households whose income is less than 60 percent of area median income. The panel reviewed several documents associated with the Prince George's

County workforce housing strategy, an inclusive effort between the county Department of Housing and Community Development and the County Council during the 2015 legislative session. The legislation only includes recommendations on standards to improve and address the shortage of workforce housing in the county. The panel recommends that both the council and the Department of Housing continue their important dialogue to establish a countywide workforce housing strategy.

Business Improvement District

Business improvement districts (BIDs) use special assessments that contribute to infrastructure, public space activation, placemaking, and community advocacy. Such tools have long been used to improve public spaces through safety, cleanliness, and economic development, using passive and programmed activation. Daily litter patrols; streetscaping and beautification; marketing and promotion of local businesses, events, and upcoming projects; coordination of police and private safety services; and advocacy for individual constituent needs by acting as a liaison between the community, elected officials, and county administration are all functions of a properly



Largo Downtown Improvement District.

executed BID. BIDs can be instrumental in helping shepherd projects through the approval and public input process by developing relationships between constituents, developers, and planners.

Although a BID should never have authority over either design approval or implementation, the BID should be allowed to act as the leading advocate for community building as it pertains to public space protection, promotion, and activation. A variety of improvement district models exist, the most effective clearly being that which is both well funded and representative of the community it serves. The panel recommends a downtown improvement district (DID) that would allow all properties within the specified boundaries (a quarter mile around Largo Metro station), whether commercial parcels or multifamily residential developments, to contribute and receive services. The assessment rate should be determined either at an equalized rate on total property value or by square footage. The DID should be governed by both a paid staff and a board of directors that is representative of each of the sectors within the district.

Finally, the additional benefit of forming a DID is branding. Simply put, any identification of the area being a “downtown” can only be for the better.

Target Industry Cluster Development

With new anchor institutions moving into the area, the target industry clusters have a variety of ways to develop. Although having government buildings and hospitals as anchor institutions can increase activity in the area, case studies have demonstrated that they can be black holes to pedestrian activities as well. Largo Town Center is projected to have anchor institutions from federal government, business services, health care and life sciences, as well as information, communication, and electronics.

To incentivize certain types of development relating to the anchor institutions, the panel supports the use of important development tools established by the Prince George’s County Economic Development Corporation:

- *Economic Development Incentive Fund:* This \$7 million to \$11 million per year fund can be used for land and building acquisitions, building construction and improvement, equipment acquisition, and working capital.
- *Enterprise Zone:* This can be used to encourage the expansion of existing businesses as well as attract new ones into the area. Although Largo Town Center is not one of the state-designated Enterprise Zones, the panel encourages Largo to be considered one.
- *High-tech real property:* This program aims to “encourage growth and development of existing high technology companies and to attract new high-technology companies.” Eligible business can apply for tax credit through the Economic Development Corporation.
- *Revitalization tax credit:* This tax credit is aimed to improve real property located within the inner-beltway communities on projects such as reconstruction or extension of both residential and nonresidential structures.

Implementation Leadership: Structure and Process

The *Approved Largo Town Center Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment* has an excellent implementation matrix that highlights the main course of action, recommended responsible parties and support entities, and timing and resources available to support these efforts. However, this matrix fails to address the one key step required to successfully execute these recommendations: identifying and designating the leadership that can translate the political will and available resources into concrete actions and accomplishments. This leadership is needed to marshal the responsible parties, support entities, and broad array of stakeholders to actually perform and execute their tasks in a timely and effective manner.

The leadership structure can take a number of formats. A preferable approach is to create a nonprofit or dedicated limited liability company with the authority to hire the capable, seasoned individual and team to lead the effort.

Following are the long-term goals of the potential limited liability company for town center redevelopment:

- Acknowledge and reinforce the relationship of Largo Town Center core to surrounding activity centers, large land uses, and redevelopment opportunities;
- Focus activity in locations that have already been developed and may lend themselves to future development;
- Proactively attract one or more major institutional uses, such as bringing the FBI to Landover Mall, recognizing that surrounding sites further support Largo Town Center;
- Encourage denser (not necessarily taller) residential development within and adjacent to core; and
- Improve safety.

The panel recommends that review by the Largo Town Center Development Board, a County Council–appointed advisory council of 15 representatives, be a required step in Largo’s process so that each new project undergoes the same scrutiny as the next project. This is not to say that the development board has any authority over implementation, but its very nature as an advisory council will ensure that each project is presented to the Planning Board and District Council only after making sure it meets the density and diversity requirements set forth in Plan 2035.

Leaving the final approval to elected officials is important but can be problematic in several ways. First, elected officials are rarely development and infill experts, though they usually become so after a term or two, simply by necessity. Second, their time and attention is necessarily diverted by any number of other issues brought to them by their constituents. Third, on the heels of the recent past, residents and property owners need to feel confident that projects will be treated with the utmost respect for design integrity.

Therefore, strictly adhering to deadlines and seeking input from the appointed experts on the County Planning Board, the county planning staff, and the Largo Town Center Development Board are critical. Examining projects within

the scope of their intended use, the location’s previous use, and their relation to the guidelines set forth in Plan 2035 is also crucial.

Consistent structure and development project approval processes will encourage positive and smart growth while simulating both community and investor confidence. In the past, major infill projects have been proposed that, for whatever reason, ran into issues that caused them to refine their plans to fit within a certain suburban model. Whether this has been a sprawling housing development or a sprawling retail center, this model will not stimulate the kind of density and diversity needed to create that much desired urbanity that is stated again and again in Plan 2035.

The County Planning Board has many resources at its fingertips to help keep this process open and moving in the properly identified direction in a timely manner. The current process involves a fairly typical structure of application submission, public hearing, layperson advisory input, and elected official oversight. To fulfill the aspects of density and diversity laid out in Plan 2035 and the Largo Town Center Sector Plan, all projects need to maintain a certain level of quality, and they must be encouraged to seek out and then required to preserve the aspects of their individual designs that drive placemaking and therefore stimulate economic development. The implementation of these plans ultimately rests with the developers, but the role of the Planning Board and the many competent staff, as well as the elected officials with their finger on the pulse of community desire, is to help mold the project into something that is ultimately achievable and contributes to Largo’s identity as a destination.

Keeping the train on the rails, so to speak, can be a difficult process, but implementation and construction can happen in a timely manner when each step of the procedure adheres to lawful, respectful, and consistent approval processes. Each set of authoritative bodies need to be given adequate resources to receive both public and expert input, as well as strict timelines that will dictate progress instead of being used as tools to obstruct prospective projects.

Conclusion

DEVELOPING LARGO TOWN CENTER into an inclusive, downtown economic engine for both the local community and the county is a multifaceted project. The panel sees a lot of promise in the area and the recommendations found in the county's Plan 2035 and the Largo Town Center Sector Plan, which show that multiple ways and approaches are available to address the study area's weaknesses. Although the panel presents two approaches the county

can use in considering development, the effectiveness of each depends on the county's leadership and the drive behind their vision of Largo Town Center. The panel strongly recommends the county to take advantage of the opportunities presented and immediately implement the recommendations.

About the Panel

David Leininger

*Panel Chair
Dallas, Texas*

Leininger joined Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) as senior vice president, chief financial officer, in December 2008. In February 2012, he was promoted to executive vice president and given additional oversight of the information technology, marketing and communications, procurement, and risk management departments.

In 2011, Leininger was recognized by the *Dallas Business Journal* as Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of the Year for Governmental Agencies. He is chair of the American Public Transportation Association's Financial Management Committee, a member of ULI's Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Product Council, and a former member of the National Program Committee as vice chair, public policy. He has served on nine advisory panels, the last four in the capacity of chair.

Before joining DART, Leininger was associated with the city of Irving for five years, serving initially in the capacity of CFO and subsequently as managing director of development services and economic initiatives. His previous public sector experience includes positions as budget director and director of the office of economic development for the city of Dallas and fiscal services administrator for the city of Garland. Leininger spent nearly 25 years in the private sector in a variety of real estate development roles, including senior vice president and managing director of the recreational real estate practice of Economics Research Associates, chief executive officer of ClubCorp Realty, chief operating officer of Triland International, senior vice president and chief operating officer of Network Security, founder and chairman of MultiNet Communications Corpo-

ration, founder and chairman of Community Management Associates, and vice president and general manager of the Las Colinas Association, which serves the 6,500-acre Las Colinas development in Irving, Texas.

Holly Barrett

Omaha, Nebraska

Barrett has been working to make downtowns clean, safe, and active for many years. She began her livelihood as a fundraiser for various social issues and progressed within the nonprofit sector to assisting neighborhood associations and historic districts to become better advocates for their communities' specific needs. She has devoted her career to helping connect neighborhood advocates to the city administrators, design review boards, and philanthropic organizations who can help make their dreams come true. Barrett has previously collaborated with the city of Denver, the Downtown Denver Partnership, the Downtown Denver BID, and the Lower Downtown Denver Historic District in promoting positive development that encourages connectivity and economic diversity.

She currently runs the Omaha Downtown Improvement District, where she stimulates economic growth through access to alternative transit, using parking resources more efficiently, beautification and activation of public spaces, and management of various events, services, and programs aimed toward creating a vibrant downtown community for residents, businesses large and small, and visitors to the retail and hospitality venues. She works with legislators and elected officials to help craft ordinances that protect and galvanize public spaces, and she advocates at the city, state, and national levels for important causes related to urban living.

Ian Carlton

Portland, Oregon

For more than a decade, Carlton has examined the complex and context-specific relationships between transportation investments and urban development so that he can help others implement transit-oriented development (TOD) and capture the value of transit. Carlton's research sponsors and consulting clients have included private and public sector entities committed to TOD: local governments, transit agencies, regional planning organizations, federal agencies, nonprofits, landowners, and real estate developers.

To help draft and implement strategies that influence urban development, he leverages the latest transportation and land use studies as well as his professional experiences in real estate investment, transport planning, economic development, business strategy, and primary research. Carlton's real estate experience spans the rehabilitation of historic homes in Atlanta, Georgia, to a 40-square-kilometer TOD plan implementation in China. Carlton's consulting work with U.S. city governments is equally diverse, with projects ranging from optimizing local transit services in a town of 100,000 residents, to writing an integrated transport and economic development plan for a city of 500,000 citizens, to developing a transit orientation strategy for a city of nearly 4 million people.

Carlton previously worked on real estate development finance research for the Center for TOD and managed real estate development initiatives at Central Atlanta Progress. He also worked at Bain & Company, where he consulted with Fortune 500 executives to develop data-driven business strategies. Carlton also co-owned residential property investment firms in the Atlanta area, which carried out more than 100 transactions.

Carlton has frequently collaborated with experts in the fields of real estate development and integrated transportation and land use planning to deliver customized

solutions for clients. Collaborators have included the Center for TOD, University of California, Berkeley, professor Robert Cervero, infill development expert Will Fleissig, and numerous others. Carlton is a member of the Urban Land Institute's TOD Product Council and sits on the Transportation Research Board's Transportation and Land Development Committee.

He has a PhD from the UC Berkeley where his research focused on TOD-related transit planning practices. He holds two master's degrees from UC Berkeley in city planning and transportation engineering and a BS in architecture from the Georgia Institute of Technology.

Charles Johnson IV

Chicago, Illinois

President and chief executive officer of C.H. Johnson Consulting, Johnson is a nationally recognized consultant with more than 30 years of experience in convention, sports, hospitality, and general real estate consulting. Before forming Johnson Consulting, he worked for the Chicago-based real estate development firm Stein and Company, which was design builder for the expansion at McCormick Place in Chicago. Before that, he was national director of KPMG Peat Marwick's Convention, Sports, and Leisure consulting practice.

He served as program manager for the Puerto Rico Convention Center District project in San Juan, Puerto Rico, for four years and successfully guided that project from an idea to a highly regarded 110-acre urban redevelopment project. He has worked on numerous projects in western New York, including the expansion analysis of the Buffalo Convention Center.

Johnson has worked on more than 600 public assembly and urban development consulting assignments in the United States and abroad. He is a member of ULI and he has served on five Advisory Services panels.

Ryan Johnson

Chicago, Illinois

Johnson joined C.H. Johnson Consulting in 2005 and holds a degree in international studies and finance from the University of Denver; he specializes in finance and business management. Before working with Johnson Consulting, he was a line producer for a leading commercial production company in Los Angeles and New York, where he worked with major advertising companies on campaigns for international brands such as YUM! Brands, Procter & Gamble, Hyundai, and others. This experience taught Johnson how to effectively manage client relationships, operate on or under budget, and complete projects within compressed timelines.

Johnson has extensive experience in conducting market and feasibility analyses for convention, exhibition, hospitality, fairgrounds, sports, and mixed-use developments. He worked on the analysis of a proposed convention center expansion for the Portland Convention Center, provided market analysis and developer solicitation support for a convention center expansion in Tucson, managed the developer selection process for the new Nashville Omni Headquarters Hotel, and worked on a facilities analysis for the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Johnson also led the firm's efforts for the long-range master-planning work for McCormick Place.

Most recently, Johnson performed an operational review of Pensacola Civic Center in Florida; a site and benchmark analysis for the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center in South Carolina; a master plan analysis for the American Bank Center in Corpus Christi, Texas; and a demand and financial feasibility study for a convention center headquarters hotel at Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center in Madison, Wisconsin. He is currently working on an audit of the Tucson Convention Center and the Rio Nuevo TIF District in Arizona.

In addition to project-specific work, Johnson oversees the day-to-day operations of the firm to ensure that all projects are staffed adequately and client expectations are met.

Stanley Lowe

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Lowe has more than 29 years of experience providing technical assistance to public housing authorities, historic preservation organizations, government agencies, universities, and community-based organizations. He has proven expertise in community revitalization and economic development, real estate development, asset management, community planning, organizational restructuring, budget and financial management, and public housing management. Lowe is the president and CEO of Pittsburgh Neighborhood Preservation Services and the managing director of the Richard Mellon Scaife Community Development Initiative Grant.

He is former executive director of the Housing Authority for the city of Galveston, Texas, and former managing partner in charge of Gulf Coast operations for Fourth River Development LLC. While acting as executive director of the Housing Authority of Galveston, Lowe implemented and managed a \$160 million Housing Development Strategy and worked in unison with board of directors of the Galveston Housing Authority (GHA) to develop a comprehensive development plan for the revitalization of Galveston's public housing. He also developed a cooperation agreement between the GHA and the Denver Housing Authority to implement a \$6 million energy cost-efficiency program and acted as a liaison between the GHA and historical and advocacy groups community-wide to effectively implement a mixed-income housing strategy. While with Fourth River Development, Lowe directed development and consulting activities in the Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama Gulf Coast communities. Previous projects include work with the Mississippi Gulf Coast Renaissance Corporation, Northrop Grumman Ship Systems, and the city of Pascagoula to develop the Northrop Grumman East Bay Shipyards into a mixed-income residential community. More recently, he has worked as a consultant for the Annie E. Casey Foundation in Baltimore, Maryland.

Over the years, Lowe has held a number of positions, including vice president of the National Trust for Historic

Preservation, president of the National Trust Community Development Financial Institution, and board member of the National Trust Community Investment Corporation, where he played an instrumental role in the National Trust's successful efforts to combine new markets tax credits with historic tax credits for community revitalization. In Pittsburgh, he worked as assistant to former mayor Tom Murphy for neighborhood housing and policy planning, as executive director of Pittsburgh's Housing Authority, and as vice president of Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation; he was a board member of the Pennsylvania Bureau of Historic Preservation and the Pittsburgh Board of Code Review. Of further note in the Pittsburgh community, Lowe founded the Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group, a coalition of 33 community-based organizations striving to improve housing and financial opportunities for Pittsburgh's low-income neighborhoods. He is also a former board member of Citizens Bank of Pennsylvania and chairman of its CRA Committee.

Mark Troen

Palm Beach Gardens, Florida

Troen is a Brookwood shareholder and senior vice president, based in Florida and New York. Until recently, he served as managing principal of Brookwood's affiliate, the Winnmark Group, whose strategic real estate services and development activities have merged with Brookwood Group.

He has 30 years of real estate experience, having worked with investment banks, development companies, real estate firms, institutions, and corporations. He has managed \$10 billion in transactions, achieving excellent returns on high-risk, turnaround, and problem assets. Troen has acquired, sourced, negotiated, conceived, analyzed, planned, entitled, developed, completed, and restructured mixed-use, retail, office, industrial, and residential projects nationwide and internationally, ranging in size from \$5 million to \$1 billion and up to 1 million square feet and 3,000 acres.

At the Weitzman Group, Troen created the Development Advisory Services practice for mixed-use, commercial, residential, and land properties. In the process he transformed and rebranded a highly regarded real estate feasibility firm into a comprehensive real estate services provider.

As chief development officer at Monday Properties, he developed new properties; redeveloped existing assets; marketed fee-generating services; revitalized a troubled loft conversion; planned signature developments; and sourced new acquisitions for a 7 million-square-foot New York and Washington, D.C. office, residential, and mixed-use portfolio.

Troen was a cofounder of Racebrook Capital Advisors (where he specialized in the acquisition of opportunistic real estate assets, nonperforming subperforming loans, and distressed properties) and recently served as the chief operating officer of Sheldon Good & Company (a Racebrook Portfolio Company), where he reinvigorated a 45-year-old nationwide real estate auction services firm; revamped legacy operations and restructured business development, marketing, and project management; introduced innovative technology to prospect for clients and manage the sales process; and achieved \$375 million in closed real estate sales.

Troen is active with ULI, is the chair emeritus of the Urban Development Mixed-Use Council Gold, and has served on ULI Advisory Services panels in Chicago, Charlotte, Detroit, and Raleigh-Durham. He has served on Consulting Corps Panels in Seattle, Boston, and Las Cruces, New Mexico, and cochaired the panel in Fresno, California.

Adella E. Weber

Atlanta, Georgia

Weber is an urban designer and planner with over 15 years of experience leading and collaborating with multidisciplinary teams on numerous urban design and livable transportation projects. She has worked with a wide range of clients to develop community-supported, context-sensitive

design solutions for suburban and urban environments. Her design perspective responds to the interconnected relationship between land use and transportation in transit station area planning, corridor redevelopment, strategic land planning, and small area plans.

She has been involved with the planning and design of over 75 station area plans that structure long-term, sustainable growth patterns benefiting countless public and private stakeholders. Weber's notable U.S. efforts include work on the Atlanta BeltLine, Charlotte's Light Rail Transit Extension, and Denver's Commuter Rail Corridor. Her international portfolio also includes large-scale structure planning efforts in Australia and the United Arab Emirates.

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