

Manhattan Beach California

January 11–16, 2015



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Recommendations for the Evolution of Downtown

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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 34,000 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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Suite 500 West
Washington, DC 20007-5201

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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 400 ULI-member teams to help sponsors find creative, practical solutions for issues such as downtown redevelopment, land management strategies, evaluation of development potential, growth management, community revitalization, 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.

ULI Program Staff

Gayle Berens
Senior Vice President, Education and Advisory Group

Thomas W. Eittler
Vice President, Advisory Services

Beth Silverman
Director, Education and Advisory Group

Daniel Lobo
Director, Awards

Carly Bushong
Senior Associate, Advisory Services

Kathryn Craig
Senior Associate, Education and Advisory Group

James A. Mulligan
Senior Editor

Laura Glassman, Publications Professionals LLC
Manuscript Editor

Betsy Van Buskirk
Creative Director

Deanna Pineda, Muse Advertising Design
Graphic Designer

Craig Chapman
Senior Director, Publishing Operations

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Contents

ULI Panel and Project Staff	6
Background and the Panel's Assignment	7
Market Scan.....	10
Planning, Design, and Development.....	17
Implementation	28
Conclusion	33
About the Panel	34

ULI Panel and Project Staff

Panel Chair

Richard Perlmutter
Principal and Cofounder
Argo Development Company
Rockville, Maryland

Panel Vice Chair

Michael Lander
President/Owner
The Lander Group Inc.
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Panel Members

Jonathan Bartlett
Senior Consultant, Global Buildings
Jacobs
Atlanta, Georgia

Peter Crowley
Partner
LandDesign
Alexandria, Virginia

Tom Hester
Urban Design Practice Leader
Parsons Brinckerhoff
Tempe, Arizona

Geri Lopez
Director, Economic Development and Housing
City of Clearwater
Clearwater, Florida

Richard Reinhard
Deputy Executive Director
Downtown DC BID
Washington, D.C.

Erin Talkington
Vice President
RCLCO
Bethesda, Maryland

ULI Project Staff

Thomas Eitler
Vice President, Advisory Services

Kathryn Craig
Senior Associate, Education and Advisory Group

Background and the Panel's Assignment

THE CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH asked the Urban Land Institute to take a look at the city's downtown and help provide strategic advice to formulate a vision for the next 20 years. Given how wonderful a place Manhattan Beach is, this was no easy feat. A lot of good ideas are worthy of consideration. From the panel's perspective, the city has new leadership and now is the time to take the opportunity to make some big decisions.

The panel's approach was to look at the city's culture, history, and land economics (with a focus on the retail environment); assess the planning, design, and transportation issues; and formulate strategies, including some development opportunities. These ideas are combined with some implementation strategies that will help the city establish a strategic vision to help balance the desires of the community with the pressures of the land economics facing the downtown.

Study Area and Surrounding Context

Given its assignment, the ULI panel focused on the city's downtown. As with all ULI panels, it was important for the panel to understand the history of the city and the study area and to recognize the many changes that are taking place.



Location map.

Since its beginnings as a seaside village in 1912, Manhattan Beach has attracted residents, businesses, and visitors to the sandy shoreline, the temperate climate, and the small-town character of this coastal jewel. Pedestrian streets from the railroad stop to simple beach cottages and the beach were the mobility option of the day. The land plan for Manhattan Beach predates the widespread automobile use we see today. Development of Manhattan Beach as a summertime beach town, particularly on the oceanfront, resulted in a pattern of narrow, 30-foot-wide lots providing adequate area for simple cottages of 600 to 800 square feet.

Historical views of Manhattan Beach. The middle photograph shows a classic grid street design, with Manhattan Beach Boulevard acting as the city's primary commercial spine terminating at the entrance to the pier.



This physical pattern underpins what residents refer to as the “small-town character” of downtown Manhattan Beach. The distinct character of those roots remains the primary attraction and distinction—the treasure and challenge—of Manhattan Beach residents.

So much has changed. Planning places like Manhattan Beach is just not possible now. Government standards—most responding to demands of the automobile and market demands for bigger houses, bigger stores, and multiple parking spaces for each car—drive the form of standard suburban California. These automobile-centric subdivisions, shopping centers, and office parks look nothing like Manhattan Beach.

The community is made up of a broad range of interests: longtime (20-plus years) residents; newer, high-income residents; business owners; property owners; civic groups; and city, county, and state governments. The population is the same as in 1970, so the community is not growing in numbers, but it has become less diverse, specifically from an economic perspective. In addition, many of the residents are new—an amazing 60 percent of residents have moved in since 2000!

Today Manhattan Beach is perhaps the most desirable and affluent community in the South Bay. The new residents have chosen Manhattan Beach from many options. They, too, value the small-town character and excellent schools. Citizen engagement and public participation are extraordinary. Most residents—new and old—talk about a safe,

friendly, supportive special place. But the new residents are economically different from the people they replaced. And in some ways, they have different interests.

Not surprisingly, the community is feeling the huge change. Some of the most important concerns revolve around the character of the ground-floor commercial space, which is changing from retail to office or professional businesses. Also, residents are anxious about the turnover from small business to chain stores and concerned over the rising rents that are the symptom of the downtown’s success.

Another historical use and significant impact are the beach visitors—who are now also 75 percent of the restaurant customers. The full-time residents share their precious place with an increasing number of visitors, and the retail and restaurant offerings depend on those visitors.

Manhattan Beach is no longer served by the train and is feeling the effects of the country’s love affair with cars and the pressures from increasing market demand for both prewar, walkable places like Manhattan Beach and larger homes, more commercial space, particularly restaurants, and more parking and less congestion. That is precisely the conflict the panel sees playing out today. Many of those interviewed by the panel mentioned two things: (a) concerns about preserving the community character and (b) terrible parking and traffic problems.

Now, Manhattan Beach is seeing effects on the retail mix downtown, automobile mobility and parking, and the overall public realm—all threatening the community character.

Modern views of the city, including the Manhattan Beach Boulevard commercial spine looking west toward the pier, modern high-end homes, and the new library.



The panel addresses all these areas in some detail. The panel hopes to distill an approach that produces a clear vision and strong private and public leadership to forge the future that the residents of Manhattan Beach want.

Summary of the Panel's Recommendations

The panel felt it was important for the elected officials, the city administration, and the residents to better understand the land economics that affect downtown. This requires an understanding of the past land economics, where the city stands today, and what the likely pressures are for various land uses in the future. In essence, the community's affluence attracts upscale merchants—both local and national brands—who are positioning themselves to serve the evolving needs of the community. Manhattan Beach must recognize that residents alone cannot support the current amount of retail. The vision for the future of downtown must align the desires of the residents and the realities of the market.

With these thoughts in mind, the panel's primary recommendations include the following:

- Consider a series of demand-side strategies to address small business viability, such as improved parking and visitor attractions, and supply-side strategies to address small business viability, such as store size, zoning and use regulations, and design.
- Address the parking issues in downtown with a series of on-street, structured, and remote parking facilities. Increase the supply of parking by identifying and constructing new parking, including as part of any new construction at the western terminus of Manhattan Beach Boulevard.
- Create a new parking management approach in the entire downtown. Use valet parking and feeder transit where possible. Redesign and better manage existing parking.

- Redesign and construct a new Manhattan Beach Boulevard between Morningside Drive and Ocean Drive that caters to the pedestrian and the cyclist. Consider similar treatment for limited lengths on other streets, such as Manhattan Avenue, 13th Street, and Highland Avenue.
- Increase the size of sidewalks, and improve pedestrian circulation in the downtown area.
- Create incentives, and partner with key property owners for redevelopment of key sites, such as Vons, that includes underground parking for both the public and the store.
- Create a new retail office facility that can address some of the pent-up demand for office space and smaller retailers that cannot afford higher rents along Manhattan Beach Boulevard. Locate this facility at Morningside Drive and 13th Street.
- Consider new parking on key public sites, including new underground parking under Live Oak Park.
- Focus attention on creating a new street art program.
- Create a new beach plaza with underground and surface parking at the western terminus of Manhattan Beach Boulevard.
- Actively engage the Downtown Business and Professional Association (DBPA) and a newly formulated group that represents downtown property owners. Encourage creation of a Property-Based Business Improvement District (PBID) to robustly lead and fund major improvement in downtown.
- Create a new facade improvement program.
- Create a downtown-specific plan that provides the detailed guidance for development in downtown.

The remainder of this report elaborates on these recommendations.

Market Scan

THIS REPORT BEGINS with an overview of local market conditions and economic indicators that have helped inform the panel's work and subsequent recommendations. Manhattan Beach is home to 35,000 people in about 14,000 homes. Manhattan Beach is one of the most affluent communities in the United States, with a median household income in 2013 of \$134,000 and an average net worth of nearly \$1.2 million. Thirty percent of residents earn more than \$200,000 per year. The median income is 2.3 times that of the broader Los Angeles metro area.

Population and Growth Trends

The community is home to a range of people, from natives and longtime residents to professional athletes and successful executives in finance, law, and the creative economy. A common thread among all residents is an attraction to the community's outstanding school system, stunning views, and elegant but laid-back village atmosphere.

Not surprisingly, given the level of success achieved by so many of its residents, the population of Manhattan Beach

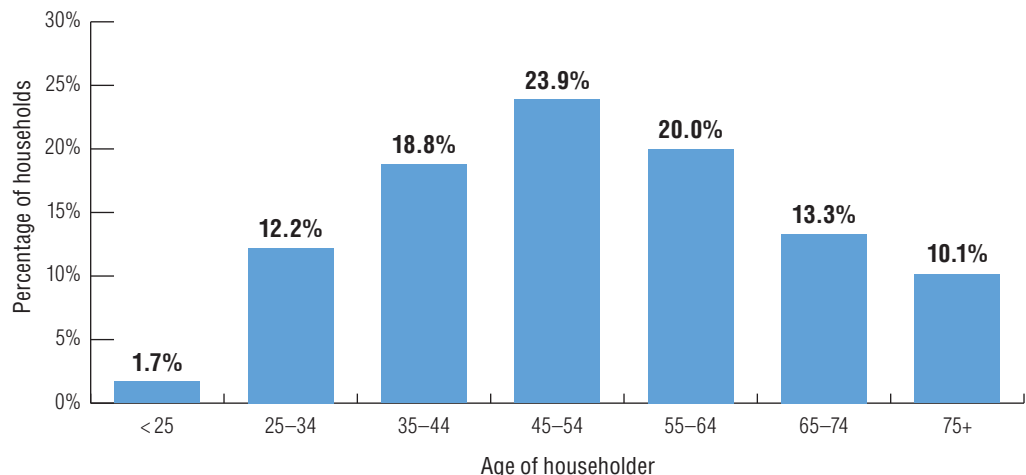
is an older demographic, with a median age of 42 and more than two-thirds of householders over age 45. The population is also highly educated; 73 percent of residents are college graduates, and 31 percent hold advanced degrees.

Employment and Economic Stability

Residential real estate in Manhattan Beach has always been valuable, but growth over the last five years has been dramatic. The average price per square foot in the most recent quarter was \$1,131, placing Manhattan Beach 90266 among the most expensive ZIP codes in the United States. Since 2009, average home sale prices have increased 46 percent, from a recession-era low of \$1.6 million to a 2014 high of \$2.3 million. During the same period, prices in neighboring Hermosa Beach have increased just 18 percent, while prices in Redondo Beach have increased only 16 percent.

About half the homes in Manhattan Beach were built before 1962, but the majority of the city's residents are

Distribution of Households by Age of Householder



Source: ULI Advisory Services panel.

newcomers. Fifty-nine percent have moved to the community since 2000, and a quarter of the population has been in Manhattan Beach only since 2010.

Commercial Implications

The rise in home values and the influx of new residents have changed the character of the Manhattan Beach retail market. The community's substantial affluence has attracted upscale merchants—both local and national brands—that are positioning themselves to serve the needs of this evolving community. Consistent with these changes, certain types of businesses wish to locate in or around the city. For example, Manhattan Beach household expenditures in the financial services category are 4.5 times the national average. This has placed the community high on the list of sought-after locations for banks and financial advisers. Similarly, the active housing market has resulted in increased demand for residential real estate services, and a proliferation of such businesses has logically followed.

The commercial vacancy rate in Manhattan Beach is extremely low. Total supply of space is limited, and particularly in the built-out downtown area, new space is extremely difficult to produce. Put simply, strong consumer demand and limited supply are driving up the cost of space.

The panel's interviews indicate that monthly retail rents in downtown Manhattan Beach tend to run from \$4 to \$6 per

square foot on existing leases. Anecdotal evidence is that certain well-located, rehabbed properties have commanded rents two to three times higher. These increases are fueled by a number of factors, most obviously the high cost of acquiring and renovating older commercial properties.

As a rule of thumb, many businesses operate on the assumption that rent should total no more than 10 percent of annual revenue per square foot. Naturally, this ratio varies by retail category and location. Using this assumption, however, a Manhattan Beach business paying \$5 per square foot per month in rent (\$60 per square foot annually) would require gross revenues of \$600 per square foot annually. In most settings, this would be considered very strong sales. At \$10 per month, however, the retailer would require sales of \$1,200 per square foot. In a 1,500-square-foot storefront—typical in downtown Manhattan Beach—this would mean annual sales of \$1.8 million, or about \$5,800 per day, Monday through Saturday. At \$100 apiece, that would be 58 haircuts (7.25 per hour), or at \$5 apiece, almost 1,200 pressed juices a day.

In reality, very few businesses are capable of generating this level of revenue. Examples of stores that can include Apple (average sales per foot over \$6,000), Tiffany (\$3,043), Lululemon (\$2,200), Kate Spade (\$1,280), and a fairly narrow group of similarly upscale brands. Restaurants and service businesses such as realtors value space differently from traditional retailers; therefore, they are also candidates to support higher rents per square foot.



A wide variety of retail space exists in downtown.

Clearly this dynamic creates an almost untenable situation for most small retailers. The risk that rapidly increasing rents will drive smaller stores out of business directly parallels the condition in the Manhattan Beach housing market, which has a similarly narrow group of qualified participants. On balance, however, \$10 per square foot (or more) is unlikely to prevail across the whole downtown in the near term, which gives the panel confidence that strong local businesses in the right locations can continue to succeed in downtown Manhattan Beach.

What is the ideal percentage of chain retail has no right answer. At some level, national brands attract shoppers who go on to make additional purchases at local stores and restaurants. But at the same time, with too many chains the community loses its unique character. Today, about 20 percent of the retail in downtown Manhattan Beach may be considered “national” or “chains.” Some communities are comfortable with 40 percent, 50 percent, or even 60 percent or more. Attempting to regulate this percentage with a heavy hand can have unintended consequences, so the panel does not recommend that approach. As it stands today, even if the square footage of chains doubled in the downtown area, the area would represent only 40 percent of the total. Although the retail profile in town will continue to evolve with the changing population, the panel believes the risk of wholesale overrun by national chains is overstated for the following reasons.

First, not every location downtown is created equal; therefore, rents will continue to vary by block, by corner, and even by side of the street. Second, downtown commercial space is not well suited for the needs of most national chains. For example, brands such as the Gap and Victoria’s Secret require 6,000 to 10,000 square feet for new stores, whereas the typical footprint downtown is generally 1,500 to 2,000 square feet. Third, Manhattan Village Mall is a much more desirable location for mass-market retailers such as those described above. Sepulveda Boulevard offers more square footage, critical covenants, high vehicle traffic counts, delivery access, ample parking, and lower rents. In fact, strong retail centers on Sepulveda Boulevard actually help protect the character of downtown.

Downtown Manhattan Beach contains approximately 400,000 square feet of retail and office space today, of which 70 percent is composed of small shops. These spaces contribute to the unique village character of downtown and contain a broad mix of office, hotel, and retail users as well as national and local tenants. As a point of comparison, Manhattan Village Mall—a regional-serving retail center with a different feel and function—is only slightly larger at 550,000 square feet of retail and office.

Although downtown has many local retail and office tenants, the commercial space does not exist in a vacuum. Within the broader South Bay marketplace, downtown, Manhattan Village Mall, and the regional retail along Sepulveda Boulevard all play distinct roles. Different types of businesses all thrive in different types of locations. For retailers, a place exists for large restaurants, for small restaurants, for Costco and Target, for car dealerships, and for local services such as salons and spas. For office tenants, a place exists for large corporate offices, for small businesses, and for service-oriented offices such as banks, financial planning, and real estate.

In Manhattan Beach, Manhattan Village Mall provides a regional destination for national fashion and soft goods retailers seeking an affluent market audience. This is where stores like the Gap and Victoria’s Secret will locate. Other retail space along Sepulveda Boulevard offers superior access and pass-by traffic that attracts anchor, big-box, and convenience retailers. This is where Costco, Target, PetSmart, and 7-Eleven will locate.

Breakdown on Retail

Downtown Manhattan Beach is for destination restaurants, specialty retailers, and local office and services. The retail and office tenant mix in downtown reflects this market niche, as well as the changing demographics of the surrounding community.

Downtown’s small commercial space contains about 170,000 square feet of restaurant, retail, and service tenants, including two small grocery stores, Vons and Manhattan Grocery. About 100,000 square feet of the space is

occupied by restaurants with an additional 50,000 square feet housing small shops and personal services. Another 130,000 square feet is office, medical offices, and banks.

Consumers

Two primary consumer groups provide support for downtown retail: local residents and visitors. The panel estimates in a typical community of 14,000 households, approximately 420,000 square feet of retail would be supported. Residents' expenditure patterns suggest that the average Manhattan Beach resident spends nearly \$60,000 on retail purchases each year. Therefore, Manhattan Beach likely supports nearly 840,000 square feet of retail.

Residents cited downtown as a top restaurant and dining destination and said they sought out particular shops for their high level of service and specialized products, yet most do the majority of their shopping at other retail areas in the broader South Bay community. The locational spending patterns suggest that residents can support about 50,000 square feet of local retail and services downtown, and an additional 25,000 square feet of res-

Retail Tenant Breakdown

Retail tenant	Count	Share
Arts	1	1%
Restaurant	43	34%
Grocery, and food and beverage sales	4	3%
Personal services	23	19%
Retail	53	43%
Total	124	100%

Distribution of Physical Space

Use	Square feet	Share
Purpose-built office (Skechers and three buildings)	60,000	15%
Metlox shopping mall	45,000	11%
Grocery (Vons and Manhattan Grocery)	20,000	5%
Small commercial spaces	275,000	69%
Total	400,000	100%
Shade Hotel	38 rooms	

Downtown
400,000 square feet



Manhattan Village Mall
550,000 square feet



taurants. That is a total of 75,000 square feet of retail and restaurants that can be supported by local residents alone.

Downtown contains nearly 200,000 square feet of these uses; that means visitors support 60 percent of the overall retail space. Although resident support is critical for local specialty retailers—about two-thirds of their sales may come from Manhattan Beach residents—restaurants rely on visitors for nearly 75 percent of their patrons.

A comparison of commercial space between the downtown and Manhattan Village Mall. The individual store sizes and quality of commercial space in the two areas are quite different, thus serving different clientele and shopping desires.

The success of retail downtown requires support from outside the community. Hotel occupancy is exceptionally strong. The Shade Hotel has occupancy of over 90 percent. Yet Manhattan Beach offers few places for visitors to stay. Manhattan Beach needs its visitors, yet driving to and parking in downtown and near the beach are challenging. This situation has significant implications on circulation and parking that are discussed in a later section.

The downtown market is functioning in a logical and healthy way based on supply-and-demand dynamics. Prices and rents are rising in reflection of the limited quantity of beach-adjacent real estate and the affluent market in Manhattan Beach. Although rising rents eventually present a challenge for smaller shops, a better environment can be created for small businesses to compete.

The rent that landlords charge merchants is the outcome of market dynamics: a limited supply of downtown space and a strong demand to occupy those storefronts. Regulating rents or prices ineffectively attempts to regulate the outcome of this dynamic rather than addressing the factors that create higher prices. The panel suggests that mechanisms exist to influence supply and demand that could help Manhattan Beach achieve its preferred outcome—one that reflects the community's vision for the future.

Influencing Demand and Supply Sides

On the demand side, three key ways exist to influence the viability of businesses:

- **Parking:** Improve access for customers so that more customers can shop in downtown.
- **Expenditure patterns:** Encourage existing customers to spend more in downtown, expand the available goods and services, or charge more for merchandise.
- **Visitor attraction:** Increase the customer base by attracting more visitors to patronize the retail.

On the supply side, four factors might result in moderating rent levels:

- **Store size:** Limit the maximum store size to maintain the quantity of storefronts in the city, which makes them less appealing to mass-market retail.
- **Zoning and use:** Regulate the type of businesses and where in downtown they can locate.
- **Design:** Focus on branding and the look and feel of downtown, and offer facade grants to improve the marketability of aging storefronts.

- **Quantity of space and downtown size:** Shrink or expand the amount of available space in downtown to better reflect consumer demand.

The city is already using most of these techniques.

Downtown has too much retail space to be supported by residents alone. If the objective is to preserve downtown for locals only, one strategy would be to reduce the downtown footprint. If that is not the preferred strategy, then the city must recognize the tremendous importance of visitors to the health of the downtown commercial market. Visitors are a critical customer base, yet they have few places to stay, and finding parking is difficult.

So where does this leave Manhattan Beach? The market is healthy and well-functioning today, but competitive threats are surfacing. These threats should be managed proactively, not reactively, with small tweaks to regulations already in place, a cohesive strategy to attract visitors and residents, and clarity on the future vision. For example, stakeholders told the panel over and over about the challenges associated with parking downtown, and the panel agrees that failure to address these issues will result in prolonged conversations about moratoriums, bans, and potential regulations that create uncertainty and inefficiency that is bad for business and the community.

Performance of Key Downtown Real Estate Sectors

The retail industry is in an ever-increasing, perpetual state of change. Web-based businesses are taking an ever-increasing share of retail sales. Traditional bricks-and-mortar businesses are moving to the web, and web-based businesses are opening bricks-and-mortar showrooms and delivery facilities. The current term of art is “omni-channel marketing,” which is the merger of online and bricks and mortar. Many national brands are publicly telling their shareholders they do not expect to open any new stores in the future. These bricks-and-mortar stores

will be showrooms and maybe delivery sites for web-based enterprises. The only constant in this new world is change.

In this dizzy environment, both small shops and nationals are dealing with extraordinary change. Of course, during times of change, winners and losers emerge.

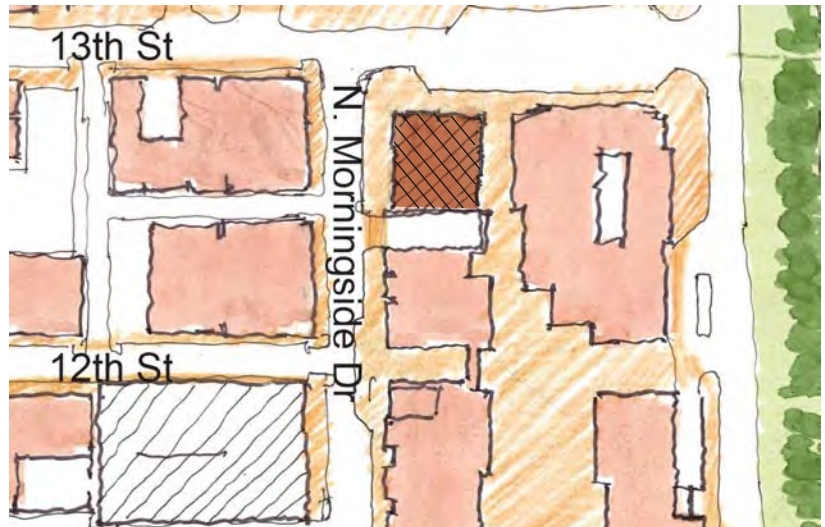
The winners will be high-touch and curated businesses that offer unique face-to-face experiences. Manhattan Beach has an advantage in this regard. These winners include restaurants from white tablecloth to casual; unique soft goods that are difficult to access online; groceries; and services, such as legal, medical, financial, insurance, and real estate businesses.

National trends can also affect a city like Manhattan Beach. Consumers want to stay current, and that means they do not have much brand loyalty. Today's new trendy restaurant quickly becomes yesterday's news. Nevertheless, in downtown Manhattan Beach, the high-end destination restaurants have become a regional draw. They are retail anchors. They pay high rent, which hurts locals. But these destination restaurants drive customers to the locals and are symbiotic in the retail ecosystem.

Everything has gotten much more expensive, including housing, education, food, transportation, and retail rents. That means eligible tenants of the future in Manhattan Beach are going to look different from in the past.

Overall, the economic health of the city's downtown retail is excellent. Rents are high, and vacancy is low. The tenants represent a healthy mix, with small-shop dominance. Of course, the city should remain vigilant in watching changes in the mix of local to national stores.

Changes in the Manhattan Beach downtown are owed primarily to megatrends that cannot be addressed by rent control or formulaic regulatory programs. However, land use restrictions on use and location should be consistently enforced. For example, the city should continue to resist efforts to combine storefronts.



Small shops with low profit margins cannot compete with high-margin stores. As one might expect, most landlords desire to make the most of their real estate investment and will seek tenants who have the best credit and can pay the highest rent. Expecting them to behave differently would not be fair. By analogy, few people would accept a lower offer for their home from a “nice” family who could not afford the market-clearing price. To support small retailers that cannot otherwise compete in this marketplace, proactive programs could be implemented.

People live differently today and use office, lodging, retail, and restaurant space differently. The panel believes that some additional density, a rearrangement of uses, revitalization of specific sites, and solutions to the parking issues can address this unmet demand in a manner consistent with the desires of the community.

The city should consider leading development of a 20,000-square-foot multiuse building with first-floor retail kiosks and second-floor executive suites to be located at the corner of Morningside Drive and 13th Street.

Shared Retail and Office Space

The panel believes an interesting option exists to provide space for small retail tenants, executives, and tech and media startup groups. This type of space has worked well in other parts of the country, including the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. This project could be facilitated

through a public/private partnership. For example, the plaza on the north side of Metlox could be a possible site. This type of facility could help support cherished retail operators, new startup retailers, executives living in Manhattan Beach, and creative startups. The building could be

15,000 to 20,000 square feet. It also would help animate the intersection of Morningside Drive and 13th Street and complement Metlox; a good start to that has been the successful farmers market.



An example of shared space managed by a city is the Torpedo Factory in Alexandria, Virginia. The panel recommends a similar approach for Manhattan Beach that could include both retail and office space.

Planning, Design, and Development

THE PANEL BELIEVES THE KEY to a successful set of recommendations is an understanding of a community's character. Community character is defined by many physical and social elements. Of the physical elements, the primary components are the roadway transportation system; the urban form, defined through street blocks and building form; and the public realm, defined by all the places that are publicly owned.

The panel recognizes the physical beachside character of Manhattan Beach is defined by its low-scale buildings with limited setbacks, tight street and block pattern, and wide streets with understated adornment. One of the biggest visual impacts on small-town village character is the scale of the buildings. Everyone focuses on height, and that is important. The panel agrees that the one- to three-story character of Manhattan Beach's buildings contributes to the village scale. But equally important is the length and quality of frontage (building fronts should rarely exceed 40 feet with some exceptions for civic buildings) and the quality of the ground-floor facade: windows, presentation, lighting, and so on. Garage doors and curb cuts interrupt

the pedestrian environment and limit on-street parking, which are additional negatives.

The development pattern of Manhattan Beach has evolved from its establishment in the early 1900s. The initial development pattern in the beach area was physically organized around *walk streets*—pedestrian-only pathways—with development fronting onto the streets, and vehicles were accommodated through a few streets and in alleys. As the development pattern evolved, accommodation of the vehicle has been in more demand, and therefore the street spaces have had a greater impact on the Manhattan Beach character. The great number of walk streets provides excellent pedestrian access and very limited vehicular circulation. The buildings that adjoin sidewalks also become important players in overall walkability.

Character of the Urban Form

The integration and treatments of street blocks, building form, and the public realm define the physical character of communities. The overall form of downtown has evolved into an anchor-based typology with the beach as one

The commercial and residential buildings of downtown do not represent a uniform design or style. Part of downtown's charm is the eclectic nature of the buildings in terms of architectural details. Nevertheless, the mass, bulk, and human scale of most buildings help define the feel of downtown that has made Manhattan Beach so successful and desirable.



destination and the gateway defined by Manhattan Beach Boulevard, the Metlox redevelopment, and the Vons grocery store. The redevelopment of the Vons corner should strengthen this location as the gateway into downtown Manhattan Beach.

Streets and Blocks (Horizontal)

The size and scale of street blocks largely define the character of an area's urban form. In addition, the configuration of blocks, either square or rectangular, affects the character and walkability of an area. The panel recognizes that the existing street and block system is a main driver of the small-scale beach character of Manhattan Beach.

Building Form (Vertical)

Whereas the street and block system creates the basic system for circulation, the detail of the building mass largely defines the character of areas. Surfaces with minimal facade treatments, massing undulations, ground-floor treatments, and roof shapes greatly affect and limit the character of places. The panel found that the downtown area contains a wide array of architectural styles and many inconsistent ground-floor treatments. Many new buildings are modern. This diverse character has created an inconsistency that is not distinctive as a whole and does little to contribute to a specific Manhattan Beach character.

Land Use

The panel believes that the spatial distribution of commercial uses in the downtown works surprisingly well. Some suggestions for additional uses include considering expansion of office uses along Manhattan Avenue and additional boutique hotels. These land use modifications should be considered as part of the downtown-specific plan.

Public Realm

In Manhattan Beach, the character of the public realm is primarily defined by its streetscapes and the treatments of street lighting, plazas, paving, and landscaping.

Streetscapes are understated with narrow sidewalks and include street utilities and some street furniture, which hinder two people from walking side-by-side in many areas. The panel observed instances where a single sidewalk area was simultaneously being used by couples walking, women with baby strollers, and people walking dogs. Because of the conflicts, people were either delayed or detoured into the streets. Moreover, the paving materials are outdated, are in disrepair, and have become unattractive. Landscaping treatments are understated and inconsistent and contribute to a nondescript beachside character. The streetscapes do not promote a minimum standard—in design or quality—that is expected by the quality of retail and restaurant customers and residents.

The Metlox development is a successful example of redevelopment with newer venues for dining and shopping.



The panel observed that primary street lighting was adequate in most areas but identified many areas along walk streets and in alleys where lighting levels are very low. In addition, the community commented that some alleys feel unsafe to walk in at night. Lighting solutions should promote pedestrian and bicycle safety while contributing to the character of the place and promoting minimal undesirable light shed and dark sky principles. The panel recognizes that opinions on this element differ, with some stating a desire for lower lighting levels. As uses change, the city will need to evaluate the necessity to change lighting levels.

Although many plaza spaces exist as part of building configurations, not many promote active uses, including nonprogrammed setbacks for commercial buildings. Logical programming of these spaces could expand the public realm and increase the perceived size of sidewalks in some areas. The recently completed Metlox development provides a meaningful plaza space for downtown that is programmed and well used by people. More places for spontaneous activities are needed, such as plazas, active streets, and outdoor dining.

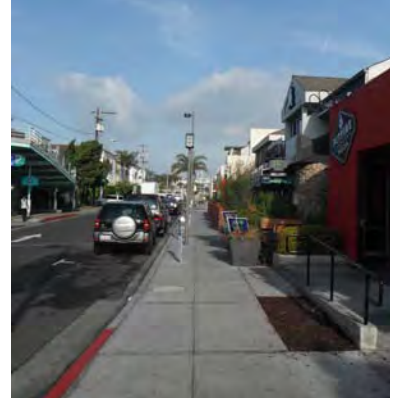
The panel observed some businesses with sidewalk, patio, and outdoor dining. The Manhattan Beach culture and climate are ideal for outdoor dining opportunities, including sidewalk dining. Sidewalk dining is one of the most dynamic ways to create activity on streets. Sidewalk dining opportunities are limited for many businesses because of narrow sidewalk sections. Wider sidewalks would make desirable sidewalk dining more achievable in many areas.

Findings and Recommendations

The following recommendations comprise the panel's attempt to address most of the questions provided at the beginning of the panel process; however, other issues arose as part of the public input and interview process. The panel expects that specific solutions to land use and design issues are best worked out as part of a downtown-specific plan and that the preceding suggestions provide the framework for the city within which to address those



Through a variety of sidewalk widening, parking modifications, and lane modifications, circulation can be improved on the roads that define downtown.



issues. From that perspective, it is patently clear that a downtown-specific plan is the only approach that will serve. The following recommendations also need fine-tuning as part of a downtown-specific plan, although they are site specific and more concrete.

Manhattan Beach Boulevard

Manhattan Beach Boulevard is the main iconic gateway to the downtown and the beach. The urban design treatment of this street will have the greatest influence on the character of the downtown entry. In addition, because of the roadway circulation patterns, Manhattan Beach Boulevard acts as the “main street” both for car entry and as a character gateway entry. Based on the various functions along

Manhattan Beach Boulevard and the parking strategies previously described, the panel recommends treatments that address each of these functions. For analysis, the panel has divided Manhattan Beach Boulevard into several distinct parts: East, Central, West, and Beach.

East (Valley Drive to Morningside Drive). The panel's parking strategy encourages capturing a high number of parking needs between Morningside Drive and Valley Drive, specifically at public parking structures located in the civic center, Metlox, and a structure proposed to be integrated when the Vons property redevelops. The panel recommends maintaining the existing travel-lane section to focus a dedicated right lane northbound to Morningside Drive and limiting left turns. The Metlox development has created an improved streetscape as part of that redevelopment.

Central (Morningside Drive to Manhattan Avenue). The central section of Manhattan Beach Boulevard is the primary location for downtown retail in Manhattan Beach. The panel's immediate concern was walkability of the sidewalks and overreliance on the automobile. The panel suggests that the entire two blocks from building face to building face be redesigned so that pedestrians and bikes, not cars, are the center of attention. This will require wider sidewalks on both sides of the street, more green space, new hardscape and landscape material with a focus on contrasting materials between driving and parking areas, and a new approach to allowing outdoor dining. Gaining the space necessary for these improvements will require reducing travel lanes to two 11-foot lanes (one in each direction) and replacing angled parking with parallel parking. Additionally, a new integrated public art initiative (mentioned later in this report) will need to concentrate on this area first.

West and Beach (Manhattan Avenue and Ocean Drive). Like the central section, the West and Beach areas will require a complete redesign of the streets. Here the panel recommends the elimination of on-street parking. The panel believes that this part of Manhattan Beach Boulevard can function as a commercial walk street, using

the extra street space for outdoor cafés, vending, and the creation of a new beach plaza at Ocean Drive. Again, high-quality hardscape and improved landscaping along with public art will be key.

Other Roads. Manhattan Avenue, Highland Avenue, and 13th Street can receive similar treatments that view the pedestrian and the cyclist as the primary consideration. Those streets with angled parking should also be converted to parallel. Also important is that all streets should have the ability to provide a flexible circulation plan. For example, during heavy activity (holidays, festivals), roads can be made one-way only, eliminating some left-turn lanes to allow additional cyclists and pedestrians.

Opportunity Sites

The panel identified four locations in downtown for specific development opportunities. Each of these opportunity sites will help the downtown maintain its market viability, increase its parking inventory, provide space for startup businesses (including both retail and office), and improve the downtown's vitality.

Civic Center Edge. At the southeast corner of Morningside Drive and 13th Street, the panel envisions this structure as a public/private partnership for a city-sponsored site that consists of a multiuse building of 20,000 square feet with first-floor retail kiosks and second-floor executive

The Skechers site occupies a key block on Manhattan Beach Boulevard. It is clearly underused and has a deadening effect on pedestrians and vehicular traffic. The panel envisions the revitalization of the building with more lively retail on the lower level and offices on upper levels.



suites. The building would be complementary to the farmers market and will provide space for those future retailers who may not be able to meet the premium rents on Manhattan Beach Boulevard. The details of the design and the specifics regarding ownership could be referenced in the downtown-specific plan; however, putting these details in the plan would require a financing approach in which the city partners with private sector entities.

Skechers Site. The Skechers site occupies a key block in the central section on the south side of Manhattan Beach Boulevard. It is clearly underused and has a deadening effect on pedestrians and vehicular traffic. The panel envisions the revitalization of the building with more lively retail on the lower level and offices on upper levels. The city should engage with Skechers's management about how to best achieve this outcome. This project may involve some type of monetary incentive from the city. The panel believes that some ground-level retail in outdoor kiosks could be one way to enliven this portion of Manhattan Beach Boulevard.

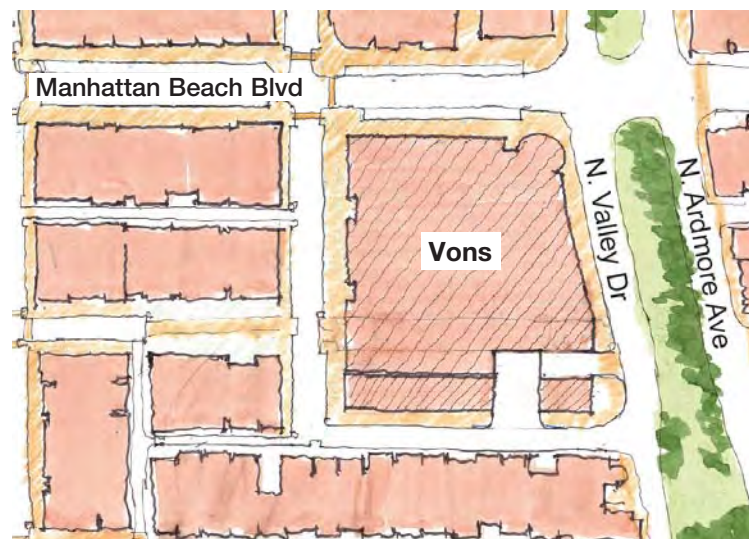
The panel believes that redesigning the beachhead will significantly improve downtown's viability. The panel feels that the interface of Manhattan Beach Boulevard with the Strand in the form of a grand staircase should be considered. In addition, relocation of the bike path under the pier and a significant investment in landscaping and public art will make the beachhead a focal point for visitors and residents.



Beachhead. The beachhead is the key focal point of the entire downtown. The panel believes that the correct design and development of this area will significantly improve downtown's viability. In addition, the opportunity exists to increase the supply of parking on the two existing state-owned surface public parking lots on the north and south sides nearest the Strand with both below-grade and surface parking. The panel recognizes that the design of this parking will be critically important to the feel of the Strand. A preliminary evaluation by the panel shows that the dimensions of the parcels, the turning radius need from Ocean Drive, and the eventual height of the surface parking can all be accommodated without compromising the integrity of the Strand.

In addition, the panel feels that the interface of Manhattan Beach Boulevard with the Strand needs to be redesigned. This would include consideration of a grand staircase from Ocean Drive (or strictly speaking, the new level of the surface parking) to the Strand and the relocation of the bike path under the pier. It will also require a significant investment in landscaping and public art.

The redevelopment of the Vons corner can be instrumental in setting the tone for the right evolution of Manhattan Beach. Similarly to the Metlox site, a mixed-use model that incorporates the Vons store, the bank, and some additional density—perhaps even residential space—should be considered. This can reduce surface parking area and replace it with development fronting on Manhattan Beach Boulevard.



Vons. The redevelopment of the Vons corner can be instrumental in setting the tone for the right evolution of Manhattan Beach. The panel believes that Vons, in cooperation with the city and the other property owners on the block, could redevelop with several levels of underground

parking. This parking would achieve the dual purpose of providing the Vons customers with sheltered parking and creating a new supply of public parking on lower levels.

The redevelopment approach should be a mixed-use development with a reconstituted Vons as the centerpiece.

Suggested Guidelines for a Downtown-Specific Plan

A downtown-specific plan is a regulatory tool that local governments use to implement the general plan and to guide development in a localized area. While the general plan is the primary guide for growth and development in a community, a specific plan is able to focus on the particular characteristics of a special area by customizing the planning process and land use regulations to it.

A specific plan is enacted pursuant to section 65450 et seq. of the California Government Code. Implementation is regulated through detailed development standards, design standards and guidelines, and land use regulations related to the specific plan. These important specific plan features are consistent with the goals and policies set forth in the city General Plan.

The downtown-specific plan is a tool to create public improvement projects, promote development, evaluate development proposals, and facilitate historic preservation. The provisions of the specific plan apply to all properties included in the downtown-specific plan area. No construction, modification, addition, placement, or installation of any building structure shall occur, nor shall any new use commence on any lot, on or after the effective date of this specific plan, except in conformity with the provisions of this specific plan.

ULI believes that the greatest opportunity for success exists when a locality's land economics (i.e., market potential) and its community vision interconnect. A downtown-specific plan approach can provide the community's vision component to this equation. The downtown-specific plan process requires input from residents, property owners, and business owners as well as consultant work to integrate that input into a usable plan. The panel envisions a series of specific and focused charrettes conducted by the city's consultant. The panel feels that providing some guidance to the quantitative and qualitative components of the downtown-specific plan will be helpful.

Therefore, that panel recommends the following:

- **Balance of local vs. national retail:** Several communities in this country put specific limits on the amount of gross floor area (GFA) for national retailers. Many communities limit national retailers to no more than 30 percent, 35 percent, or 40 percent. One New Jersey community has an upper limit of no more than 60 percent of total GFA for national retailers. Currently, Manhattan Beach has approximately 20 percent national retail. The panel believes that a reasonable GFA limitation should be in the range of no more than 30 to 40 percent.
- **Office vs. retail on ground floor:** Many residents and downtown small business owners expressed concern about the limitation on ground-floor offices and banks. Communities around the country impose limitations on a wide variety of uses, most often food establishments, and most often using linear street frontage as a means of calculation. The panel believes that no more than 25 to 30 percent of the linear street frontage of any one block should be office or bank uses on Manhattan Beach Boulevard and no more than 35 to 40 percent in the rest of the downtown area.
- **Height limits:** A key component of downtown character is defined by the height of the buildings. Currently, most downtown buildings are one or two stories, with an occasional three-story building that is built into the grade of the topography. Other factors such as parking and loading-space requirements would, even with current land values, limit the potential for taller buildings. The panel believes that some densification could be beneficial to the economic development goals of the city and would support higher buildings. A suggested range is three to four stories, not to exceed 30 to 45 feet, with consideration for higher buildings with a use permit.

■ **Store size (i.e., lot consolidation):** The issue of store size has been the subject of heated debate in urban planning circles for the last decade. Most arguments revolve around localities limiting big-box retail stores in suburban locations on major arterial roads. The issue of limiting store size in smaller-scale downtowns is less common but is understandable where issues of community character arise. The panel surveyed a number of communities (Huntington Beach, San Luis Obispo, Carmel, Santa Barbara, Half Moon Bay, San Clemente, Redondo Beach, Sausalito, and Santa Cruz, among others) and found a staggering array of requirements. Some communities had no square-footage regulations and relied on floor area ratio, lot size, parking, and even historic precedent to address the issue. Other locations permitted up to 16,000 square feet. Many used a range of 2,500 to 5,000 square feet as the demarcation point before a use permit was required. For such regulation to be effective, it must address the potential for circumvention. For example, a square-footage cap could be avoided by combining two adjacent spaces that effectively operate as one space. This can be addressed by defining two or more adjacent buildings operated by one company as a single retail store for the purposes of the size cap (meaning the total square footage of all the buildings cannot exceed the cap). That said, the city already has what the panel believes are appropriate square-footage thresholds for office and retail and use permits as the appropriate mechanism to ensure compliance.

■ **Quantity of space and downtown size:** The panel estimates that the downtown has approximately 400,000 square feet of retail and commercial uses. Of those uses, 70 percent are in a small-shop format that gives the city its character. Part of downtown's charm is the constantly fluctuating boundaries for downtown, and the panel would encourage this idiosyncratic style to continue. With the future redevelopment of the Vons site, the densification of some existing sites and the development of the shared office/retail building there will be an increase in this square footage. The panel believes that an upper-end goal of 500,000 square feet would be appropriate. Boundaries for this space would generally be 15th Street to Ninth Street and the Strand to Valley Drive. The downtown-specific plan and its implementation tools (use permits, rezoning process, occupancy permits) would be used to ensure this goal.

■ **Residential uses:** An important component of any successful downtown is a mix of residential and nonresidential uses. The panel suggests that the city consider upper-floor residential; however, entrances should be located off primary streets such as Manhattan Beach Boulevard, Manhattan Avenue, Highland Avenue, and Morningside Drive. In addition, to ensure that downtown retains its primarily nonresidential flavor, no more than 60 percent of any one building should be used as residential space (excluding lodging).

■ **Sidewalk cafés:** The panel has recommended that sidewalks on Manhattan Beach Boulevard be widened to accommodate both green space and sidewalk cafés. It is important that not every linear foot of the newly widened sidewalks be inundated with tables and chairs. The creation of the downtown-specific plan should address cafés in depth, but taking cues from other jurisdictions, the city should consider the following regulations for unenclosed cafés:

- The cafe may not obstruct the means of egress from any portion of a building.
- No surface cover or treatment of any kind (e.g., paint, artificial turf) may be applied to the public sidewalk.
- The maximum height permitted for any boundary marker, railing, fence, or planter (including vegetation) is 30 inches above the sidewalk.
- A space of a minimum of eight feet must be left clear on the adjacent sidewalk.
- Café awnings and umbrellas should be limited and must not project onto the eight-foot clear sidewalk.
- Only tables, chairs, and one wait staff station (maximum 24 inches wide) are permitted in café area.
- The café must be at least 15 feet from large sidewalk obstructions such as bus-stop shelters, newsstands, and wayfinding maps or signage.

If the regulations are crafted carefully, cafés should be permitted by right and not through a use permit process; however, city review and permitting should be required.

The panel believes that additional retail and commercial businesses (for instance, the bank) along with residential can be accommodated on the site. The panel envisions a site as dense as the Metlox site with building frontages on Manhattan Beach Boulevard.

The city must take the lead in approaching Vons management and helping provide incentives for the proper redevelopment of the site. Staff time, infrastructure replacement, and priority processing from the city will be necessary to build into the city future capital improvement programs and budgets.

Street Transportation

For downtown Manhattan Beach, the street transportation system has evolved to a point where it has a significant impact on the physical character of downtown. The character is primarily affected by circulation patterns and lack of vehicular connectivity. Following is a description of the influences on the physical character of the transportation system.

Connectivity and Accessibility

Much of the charm of Manhattan Beach is defined by the large number of walk streets. However, the walk streets limit the connectivity and circulation for vehicles, as previously described. Limited vehicular connectivity has created increased conflicts between people and cars that have resulted in increased congestion during most weekends and most days during the summer.

Because of the small block sizes and number of street connections, Manhattan Beach is extremely well connected for walking, and walking should be the main travel mode emphasized in the downtown area.

Roadway Network and Hierarchy

The street network supports a walkable community but has limited circulation options for vehicles. Because of the street hierarchy connecting to the regional arterial, Valley/Ardmore, the effective downtown circulation system is defined by connections to 15th Street, 13th Street, and Manhattan Beach Boulevard. South of Manhattan Beach

Boulevard, direct connection to Valley Drive is not provided from Highland Avenue or Manhattan Avenue. Primary north-south circulation within the downtown is defined by Highland and Manhattan Avenues. With limited circulation to get cars back to Valley Drive, congestion is increased throughout the downtown area and results in driver frustration and increased pedestrian-to-car conflicts.

Based on the limited circulation patterns, strategies to address these effects range widely from managing vehicles, on one extreme, to managing the roadway network, on the other. Management of vehicles can be accomplished in various ways, including vehicle size, type, and number. Management or expansion of the street network can be done through the conversion of streets from walk streets to mixed-use driving streets or by the creation of new streets that provide new connections to Valley Drive.

Access Management

Because every parcel in the commercial area does not require on-site parking, these uses do not have a large number of curb cuts. Access to many commercial uses is provided from many streets that provide full turning access. The presence of left-turn lanes on the local streets creates additional congestion from the short block length and limited car-stacking distances. Additionally, these lanes take away public space that could be added to sidewalks, bikeways, or other spaces. The issue is about balancing the needs of all users, improving the quality of mobility flow, and improving safety for all users.

Because of the increased congestion, part of a traffic management strategy should include the management of specific left-turn lanes during different times of the day and during different seasons or events. This could increase the capacity of streets for all modes and manage vehicular access through right turns.

Residential access to many of the units is provided through alleys. However, in many cases residential uses provide access to the front and rear of parcels. This configuration creates large sections of residential frontage with a great number of curb cuts. The panel also observed areas where

parked cars were blocking portions of the sidewalk, which reduces the character and walkable nature of the street.

Travel Speed

Based on street width, circulation, and accessibility patterns, travel speeds are increased by drivers looking for parking or trying to get to a street to connect to Valley/Ardmore. The increased speeds are safety issues as well as a deterrent to walkability.

Parking

The panel heard from the community that the lack of parking is a difficult problem in the downtown area. Moreover, the parking situation is complicated by the conflicting needs of

residents and visitors. The panel recognizes that the limited amount of parking in the downtown area results in cars excessively driving around looking for parking and contributing to congestion. Many retailers are sensitive to parking issues, which can affect their ability to attract customers.

Based on circulation patterns and limited vehicular accessibility, the provision of new parking spaces is achievable but limited. The panel recommends reducing the number of spaces through the use of parallel versus angle parking on Manhattan Beach Boulevard, so the initial work of the city will be to replace those spaces in nearby or remote facilities. An effective employee parking management program will free spaces for shoppers. For every employee vehicle removed from downtown parking, up to six cus-

2008 Parking Conditions in Downtown

Understanding the current situation regarding parking is the first step in solving the parking issues facing Manhattan Beach. The *2008 Downtown Parking Management Plan* provides some useful insights regarding parking. This inventory and survey, combined with the knowledge that visitors provide support for 60 percent

of the retail space in downtown, will help the community prioritize parking management strategies.

That assessment includes:

- 2,258 spaces
- 50 percent off-street parking
- Peak demand 1–5 p.m. nonsummer
- 550 cars parked by valet each month
- 75 percent of employees start after 9 a.m.
- 35 percent of employees use alternate transport to get to work
- 84 percent of customers have trouble parking in summer, according to the merchants
- 51 percent of residents conclude off-street parking is inadequate
- 41 percent of parking demand is by restaurants
- Mixed-use/off-peak parking could reduce demand from 3,436 to 1,561 spaces

Note: The panel assumes that parking needs for restaurants have increased significantly since 2008. The restaurants' use of valet parking has correspondingly increased to address that demand.



Below: New parking opportunities for downtown include A) new parking under a newly revitalized Vons corner, and B) active valet parking on the smaller existing city lot on 12th Street. Bottom: New parking opportunities also exist under a redeveloped Live Oak Park.



tomor vehicles could be accommodated during the daily business hours. For instance, relocating 50 employee vehicles would enable approximately 300 additional customer vehicles to park downtown each day, which in turn would result in more than 600 additional shoppers and visitors. This is a substantial increase in customer accessibility and should assist the bottom line of local business. Reducing the need to hunt for parking minimizes circulating traffic and improves traffic flow. From a management perspective, retailers need to be vigilant regarding employee parking. The city, the store owners, and the property owners should collaborate on the best way to enforce this.

Parking solutions will require leadership from the city and cooperation from property owners, store owners, and customers. The panel's recommendations take two forms (a) increase the number of spaces and (b) manage, manage, manage the parking inventory.

The panel believes a number of possible locations exist for new parking either in downtown or nearby. These sites include the following:

- **Parking under the Vons corner** (A in the map at top left) in the form of two or three levels of parking, with the first level dedicated to Vons's customers. This will require the city to be proactive, presenting Vons with the proposal and a time frame, priority processing of city review and permits, and financial contributions from the city. The levels of additional parking should charge for public parking, and the fees collected will be used to offset the financing.

- **Parking at the smaller existing city lot on 12th Street** (B in the map at top left). This site could be actively managed and on-site valet service could reformat parking areas and create options for a higher efficiency and capacity.

Other options include:

- Additional parking in on-street locations.
- A new remote parking structure at Live Oak Park should be considered under a reconstituted playing field.

In addition, the following strategies should be undertaken:

- Allowing and encouraging mechanical systems that count these spaces; and
- Encouraging underground parking for new buildings.

Parking in areas of limited supply needs to be properly designed, located, and managed to maximize the use and benefits. The city has already implemented many of the recommendations of the earlier parking study. But clearly parking management, especially in terms of self-parking technologies (i.e., parking and mapping applications for smart phones), has advanced significantly since 2008. An updated study will provide a new understanding of parking needs and new technology and tools to address those needs. The panel also recommends the following:

- Expand the valet program for all residents, which could simply take the form of expanded dispatching applications with use of Uber-like services. Vehicle dispatch services usually have a community relation division that can help coordinate with city on the needs for its residents.
- Move employees outside the district and provide shuttle and bike-share for the “last leg.” The last leg in this instance would be destinations west of Sepulveda Boulevard.
- Expand on-street parking through better or reclaimed frontages.
- Create a remote free or low-cost parking option, targeted at beach-bound visitors. Some portion of visitors would park remotely and take bikes or shuttles into the center and the beach.
- Use technology to do demand pricing; increase the cost of meters to ensure 15 percent is available all times.
- Create new signage for finding parking and an app, such as Parking Mate, ParkMe, or Parker, to direct residents and visitors to available parking.

- Create an active shuttle from Manhattan Village Mall or offices and schools to downtown to take advantage of their parking inventory, share visitors, and increase spending (15-minute headway).
- Revise the current residential parking permit program to take advantage of new innovations since 2008.
- Charge more for auto use to reduce intrusion and mitigate impacts. Increase parking revenue from public parking to finance ongoing upgrades and mitigation measures.
- Expand valet parking to restaurants including signage, web, and mobile app information.
- Increase biking options. Citywide bike sharing is probably not feasible, but consider a bike-share option only for the “last mile” to more remote parking. Make this option available for visitors and residents.
- Create smartphone payment methods for visitors and an app allowing “no cash/card” payments for residents.

Implementation

THROUGH A ROBUST INTERVIEW PROCESS of a cross section of the community, the panel heard key elements of a vision for downtown Manhattan Beach. In summary, a strong community desire exists for a local gathering place that is pedestrian-friendly with a connection to the beach, an upgraded streetscape, additional and improved parking solutions, and a vibrant retail street.

The success of a new vision will require bold moves and dedicated leadership. The public and private sectors must work together to execute important action plans to achieve the ideas envisioned for Manhattan Beach. Bold does not mean foolish, nor does it mean achieving unconditional consensus for each initiative or individual development proposal.

The clear role for the City Council is to provide strong leadership in creating and implementing a new vision for Manhattan Beach and adopting policy and regulations. Be decisive in your actions.

Leaders in the community must listen to a diverse set of stakeholders and formulate actions that are in the best interest of the community. Taking action, even if it is in incremental steps, is critical. From the panel's observations and interviews, political will is important, as is avoiding analysis paralysis.

Public Sector

The panel has suggested a rather lengthy array of initiatives for the Manhattan Beach community to implement. But the panel is very clear about three things:

- These initiatives are the responsibility of the entire community, not simply the city of Manhattan Beach administration.
- They must be implemented over time, not in a sudden rush, but they need to be implemented.
- They must be funded through means other than increases in residential property taxes.

The panel's judgment is that the city administration has been doing day-to-day tasks in a competent manner. But for Manhattan Beach to progress to its full potential as a place of sun, sand, and sea—the place the residents have told the panel they want—all parts of the community must rally to produce and implement a series of initiatives to achieve results.

The City Council has already made a significant move toward this end by hiring key high-level professional staff who will assist the council in this implementation effort. The City Council has also hired a consultant to create a downtown-specific plan.

The city of Manhattan Beach needs to take the lead in terms of identifying each project, setting the time frame for implementation, and appropriating the funding. The City Council should embrace the following concepts:

- Create plans and programs that support downtown as the “center” or gathering place of the city for its residents and visitors.
- Fund improvements to the public realm and plan for these improvements in the Capital Improvement Program.
- Balance the needs of residents, business owners, commercial property owners, and visitors.

- Be proactive to the business community to ensure a healthy downtown commercial base.
- Actively seek private partners to develop key downtown redevelopment sites.

Funding the vision is a tough topic of discussion when one sees the price tag. However, the city and its residents should view this as an investment in the future. The city is to be commended for its financial strength and resilience during the recent recession. In fact, a AAA bond rating is a superb accomplishment. For this reason, the panel recommends a bond issue to fund the infrastructure improvements recommended in this section. In addition, the panel recommends researching revenue sources other than property taxes to balance the sources used and perhaps identify a dedicated funding source for other projects and programs. Last, the City Council needs to create a strategic plan that aligns city values with available resources and identifies priorities for preparing the city's budget and funding the Capital Improvement Program.

As the city proceeds through the implementation process, it should balance the needs of residents, business owners, commercial property owners, and visitors. The retail along Manhattan Beach Boulevard and throughout downtown is beloved by residents; however, the change of use from retail to restaurants has caused some concern. Although the city should support a vibrant retail and restaurant district, approvals of new restaurants need to be sensitive to resident concerns of noise, trash, deliveries, and odors. To address these concerns, the city can implement the following:

- Assign a city representative to facilitate business and resident complaints.
- Ensure the consistent enforcement of codes to include closing time for bars and restaurants near residential, warnings vs. tickets for parking, and so on.

The city needs to be proactive and conduct outreach to the business community to ensure a healthy downtown commercial base, preserve hometown treasures, and attract new businesses that support the Manhattan Beach

vision. To encourage the desired retail and commercial activity, the city needs to actively engage the DPBA and commercial property owners, listen to their needs, and work collaboratively to identify programs and incentives. For example, a facade improvement program could assist the longtime property owners to improve their buildings without raising the rents for local tenants. In addition, the city should continue to partner with community organizations to support events that help foster activity that will help retail.

Identifying opportunities for public/private partnerships to develop key downtown redevelopment sites will be an important component of the city's role. The city should seek out these partnerships to encourage the type of land development patterns, additional parking, and desired uses it wants to see. Through site-specific tax increment revenues, the city can provide incentives to develop these projects. The panel recognizes that mixed-use redevelopment projects are a challenging proposition and difficult to do, but the benefits to the community are significant.

Understanding the market dynamics, the character of Manhattan Beach, and community desires, the panel recommends the city spearhead and fund the following priority action items:

- Create a downtown-specific plan to give the city staff, developers, property owners, and residents the certainty they desire for how Manhattan Beach will develop. To give the community additional confidence for how Manhattan Beach will look, the panel recommends that as part of consultant engagement for the downtown-specific plan, a community design charrette be included to create an image-based vision plan that establishes principles to serve as the basis for the plan.
- Evaluate pricing and improvements to the parking system, and adopt a parking management plan that will enhance both the resident and visitor experience to downtown. In the interim, use the city's existing Parking and Public Improvement Commission to evaluate suggested locations recommended by the panel for

additional parking spaces in the downtown, remote parking, and a trolley or shuttles.

- In coordination with the downtown-specific plan, design and construct streetscape and parking improvements as suggested in this report. The new streetscape elements should include wider sidewalks, decorative elements, LED lighting, landscaping, public art, and other amenities. The streetscape is a critical component of the brand and vision of the city and therefore should incorporate the look and feel of Manhattan Beach.
- Undertake the steps to begin negotiating with Vons and adjacent property owners to encourage redevelopment of its site.
- Create the partnership to evaluate, plan, finance, and construct the multiuse site at 13th Street and Morning-side Drive.
- Immediately engage the state to activate the beachhead area with vendors (food, umbrella, chairs). Work with the state on the long-range modifications to the pier area.
- In coordination with the creation of the downtown-specific plan, begin the process of redesigning and redeveloping the beachhead area with parking, streetscape, and landscaping, including rerouting the bike path under the pier. Engage state stakeholders to foster cooperation on these incredibly visible and vital areas.
- Fill the economic development manager position recommended by the city administration to address the traditional economic development activities needed by the city for an improved tax base and high-quality jobs that will help lessen the burden of property taxes on Manhattan Beach residents. However, the panel recommends adding a revitalization scope to the job description. The panel believes that this position will be instrumental in interfacing with the business and development community, facilitating redevelopment projects, developing incentive programs, and implementing portions of the downtown plan. This position should be filled by an experienced person with real estate development, mixed-use, redevelopment, and private sector experi-

ence and should operate out of the city manager's office or the community development office. This position will act as the point person for outreach to the DBPA and commercial property owners and actively seek public/private partnerships for redevelopment of recommended downtown sites.

- Develop a new *Downtown Urban Design Guidelines* document (last updated in 1998) to ensure that new and renovated buildings reflect the desired physical quality and culture of community. These guidelines should not specify an architectural style or color but serve to highlight the pedestrian nature of the commercial corridor and specify the desired spacing of windows, signage placement, and preference for awnings, amount of glass, and the like. The panel recommends including intent statements, guidelines, and standards. These guidelines do not relate to use or zoning but rather deal with categories such as building orientation and placement, access and driveways, parking, utility location and screening, pedestrian access, materials, lighting, landscaping, street furniture, and signage.
- Incorporate public art as a way to maintain the special vision of the community and showcase the history of Manhattan Beach's culture.

Private Sector

A famous American once quoted an African saying: "It takes a village to raise a child." Similarly, the panel might say: "It takes a village to raise a village."

A number of entities are involved in the present and future of downtown Manhattan Beach. At the risk of leaving some out, they include or will include:

- City Council;
- City administration;
- City commissions (cultural arts, planning, parking and public improvements, parks and recreation, library, board of building appeals, and other appropriate entities);

- DBPA and Downtown Manhattan Beach Business Improvement District (BID);
- A newly constituted PBID, which could be a reconstituted Manhattan Beach Commercial Property Owners Association (MBCPOA);
- A newly constituted downtown residents group;
- Manhattan Beach Chamber of Commerce; and
- Other public bodies, such as Los Angeles County, California state, and the Coastal Commission.

It is easy for a community, especially one as well-educated and hyperinvolved as Manhattan Beach, to get into a situation where everyone has the ability to block initiatives but no one has the responsibility for carrying them out.

The panel recommends a game plan that assigns responsibility for leading the formation of various strategies while at the same time ensuring that citizens participate fully in the processes to create these strategies.

- Form a downtown PBID. Downtown property owners have begun to coalesce to form a MBCPOA. That is laudable. They should strongly consider moving a step further and forming a PBID, which, since they have been permitted under California law, have burgeoned throughout the state.

The MBCPOA manages a business-license-based BID, which enthusiastically focuses on maintenance and promotion. A PBID, however, typically raises five to ten times as much as a BID, can focus on issues of economic development, and convenes major property owners who have a major financial stake in downtown's future. A PBID would be a likely partner with city government on some of the key initiatives addressed in the previous section on the public sector. With commercial properties escalating in value, a PBID would represent a relatively modest investment in downtown Manhattan Beach's future.

- Create a retail strategy (MBCPOA/DBPA/downtown citizens). Downtown Manhattan Beach needs a detailed retail

strategy and a physical plan. No shopping center would be without such a plan, but the difference is, a shopping center has one owner, one manager, of all the space.

But more and more downtowns, where property ownership is diverse and there is no one decision maker, are still engaging consultants to develop retail plans and strategies. The panel's research team gave Manhattan Beach a broad analysis of its space, customers, numbers, and competition. But in today's fast-moving world, Manhattan Beach needs to be on top of retail and needs to be able to show prospective retailers a plan.

- Develop a local retail marketing strategy or downtown events strategy (DBPA/Parks and Recreation Commission). DBPA, working with the Parks and Recreation Commission, should develop an overall downtown marketing and events strategy. Getting marketing and events right is critically important in supporting downtown retail.
- Formalize an informal group of downtown residents. Homeowners who live downtown or adjacent to downtown have unique interests, most notably working to balance their interests with those of commercial property owners and tenants.
- Formulate a public art plan (Cultural Arts Commission). The panel kept hearing about the proliferation and importance of artists in Manhattan Beach but was disappointed by the amount of downtown public art. The panel strongly recommends the formulation of a downtown public art plan, particularly one that emphasizes enlivening public plazas and producing murals and other public art on barren walls.

The panel's list of initiatives might appear somewhat daunting. However, every successful city has a compendium of strategies—and they must be kept up to date, because our world today changes so fast.

All of the laudable work that has been done on downtown (1996 strategic plan, 2008 parking plan, the streetscape, the public art plan) needs to evolve to include an action plan to react to a fast-changing world. But it is very

apparent that the citizens all want to play a role in planning Manhattan Beach's future.

The City Council and administration need to continue to provide high-quality day-to-day municipal services and, in just a few cases the panel has mentioned, improve those services. In addition, the city, its commissions, and organizations such as the DBPA and the MBCPOA need to up the ante to set strategies for improving downtown Manhattan Beach, and then to make them happen.

Funding

The totality of the panel's recommendations would cost the city a lot of money—perhaps as much as several hundred million dollars over several years. Some may say: “Why spend more money when you’ve told us we’re doing well just the way we are?”

The panel's answer is: “Because to continue to do well in an ever-changing environment, you need to invest, and the time you can afford it is when you're doing well.”

The city should consider a number of sources to fund not only these initiatives but also capital projects throughout the city. Whenever possible, ULI suggests using what is called “OPM” (other people's money) or having those who benefit from the improvement pay for it or harvesting a small stream of money from an appreciating asset.

As such, the panel recommends that the city look at funding sources such as the following:

- Increasing parking fees: Such income could be used to help fund parking and transportation improvements.
- Special benefit districts: This could be used to help fund physical improvements that maintain or improve property value.
- Tax increment financing (TIF) districts and payment in lieu of taxes (PILOTs): These strategies are particularly useful in funding site-specific physical developments.
- Privatization contracts: The city can look at capitalizing future streams of revenue from cash-producing assets.
- Local real estate transfer tax: Manhattan Beach's high influx of newcomers makes this a potentially high-revenue alternative. The panel understands that five other municipalities within Los Angeles County are currently using a transfer tax.

Perhaps some priorities within the city budget can be modified or other revenues exist that can be considered. The important point is that large amounts of money are needed to fund these improvements, and these good economic times are when to go after funding.

Conclusion

THE CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH is the jewel of the South Bay. With rising property values and an influx of new residents, the concern about the loss of small-town character has many residents wondering what lies in the future. The ULI panel was engaged to address many questions that lead back to this same theme.

The panel heard a strong community desire for a local gathering place that is pedestrian-friendly with a connection to the beach, an upgraded streetscape, additional and improved parking solutions, and a vibrant retail street. From the panel's perspective, these goals can be achieved only by having the city evolve physically, economically, and socially.

The land economics driving this evolution are unlikely to stop into the foreseeable future. The panel analyzed the land economics that have led to the current situation and has suggested a series of physical, organizational, and leadership actions that can help the city continue to evolve in a manner that meets citizens' vision for the future.

About the Panel

Richard Perlmutter

Panel Chair

Rockville, Maryland

Perlmutter cofounded Argo Development Company in 1996. The firm has expertise in developing retail, office, residential, and urban mixed-use projects. Since its inception, Argo has acquired or developed over 3 million square feet of commercial and residential space in the Washington, New York, and Boston metropolitan areas. Over Perlmutter's professional career, he has developed and managed property valued at over \$2 billion. The firm is strategically aligned with the Foulger-Pratt Companies and develops and acquires real estate primarily for its own account.

One of the firm's noteworthy projects is Downtown Silver Spring, a 1 million-square-foot mixed-use development in Montgomery County, Maryland. The development includes retail, office, hotel, multifamily, and civic venues. The project received the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's 2008 National Award for Smart Growth Achievement. The development is a public/private partnership with Montgomery County, Maryland.

Before founding Argo, Perlmutter held numerous positions in government and the private sector, including the Bank of America and the U.S. Senate. He is a frequent speaker and participant on ULI panels and workshops and is a member of numerous boards and the District of Columbia Bar.

Michael Lander

Panel Vice Chair

Minneapolis, Minnesota

Lander is a real estate developer and broker, urban planner, speaker, new urbanism advocate, and expert on

smart growth and transportation policy with 40 years of experience. As founder and president of Lander Group, a Minneapolis-based real estate development firm specializing in urban infill projects, he leads the planning, design, and development of commercial, residential, and mixed-use developments across the Midwest and California. Lander Group, alone and in partnerships with other firms, has designed, developed, and sold over 500 units and \$100 million of infill residential/mixed-use projects, both new construction and substantial renovations or adaptive use.

Lander's work is known for creating thriving urban spaces incorporating new urbanist principles, high-quality design and construction, and a commitment to the public realm. Lander Group was awarded the prestigious Multi-Family Developer of the Year Award from the National Association of Homebuilders (NAHB) and has received multiple other awards, including from *Builder* magazine Builder's Choice, *Professional Builder* magazine's "Best in American Living," Minneapolis Historic Preservation Commission, Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission, and the Committee on Urban Environment. Lander's work has also garnered recognition from the American Institute of Architects (AIA).

For Lander Group and as partner in urban planning firm Town Planning Collaborative, Lander has held lead planning roles for many major new urban developments over the last two decades. In the Twin Cities, he helped create the award-winning plan for Excelsior & Grand, St. Louis Park's new town center, and led an acclaimed design charrette for Minneapolis's Uptown district.

Lander's commitment to high-quality urban development includes active roles as a member of Urban Land Institute, Congress of the New Urbanism (CNU), the Minnesota chapter of the AIA, and the Steering Committee of LOCUS, a national smart growth real estate group working to re-

form federal and state transportation policy. He has served on the jury and Advisory Services panels for ULI and on jury panels for Minneapolis AIA and CNU. He speaks regularly to local, state, and national industry groups and is a guest lecturer to University of Minnesota, St. Thomas University, Macalester College, University of Miami, and Harvard University. He studied at Arizona State University and the University of the Pacific in Stockton, California.

Jonathan Bartlett

Atlanta, Georgia

Bartlett is a senior consultant in the Advance Planning Group (APG) of Jacobs Engineering, based in Atlanta. Jacobs established APG to provide unequalled predesign and planning expertise to clients around the world.

Bartlett's core skills are in forward-looking market, financial, and strategic analysis of commercial and residential real estate opportunities. He represents the end-user point of view, using economic, demographic, and competitive market data to help guide projects to superior return on investment. He believes that even the grandest plans must be financeable, so he applies an understanding of a range of tools from private equity to P3 and tax credit sources. Bartlett also brings expertise in fiscal and economic impact analysis, financial modeling, and site selection.

Before joining Jacobs, Bartlett was a vice president with RCLCO in Bethesda, Maryland, and Atlanta. He also established a real estate advisory practice at CohnReznick, a top-ten CPA firm. A Boston native, Bartlett holds a BA from Washington & Lee University in Lexington, Virginia, and an MBA in real estate finance from the University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill.

Peter Crowley

Alexandria, Virginia

Joining Land Design in 1979, Crowley established the Alexandria office in 1983 and is a partner who participates in multidisciplinary teams domestically and internationally,

with the stated objective of creating a balance between market forces and design aspiration.

With 35 years' experience, Crowley has used his planning skills to craft a wide variety of compelling projects involving town planning, urban infill, mixed-use and master-planned communities. He actively advocates aligning client needs with market conditions, bringing stakeholders together, embracing and sustaining the environment, and differentiating a place to engage the user. His dedication to creating memorable space and developing community through design has been an integral part of the firm's development and the marketable success of its clients.

Over the last five years, Crowley has been active on transit-oriented development, town center design, and innovative master-planned communities. Among his notable projects are a master plan for 27,000 acres at East Edisto; an urban redevelopment plan in Fishers, Indiana; and the town center in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania.

Crowley earned a bachelor of landscape architecture from the University of Georgia and is a registered landscape architect in Virginia, Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, North Carolina, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina. He is also a member of several professional organizations, including the American Society of Landscape Architects and the Urban Land Institute.

Tom Hester

Tempe, Arizona

Hester is a regional place making manager and the urban design practice leader for Parsons Brinckerhoff. Place making strategically integrates land use and transportation into the design of great places that enhance quality of life and leverage economic development. Hester has earned a national reputation for his ability to help public and private sector clients strategically position community and development projects and improve their overall performance and viability. His strong leadership and management skills have helped diverse groups build consensus and attain project goals. Hester brings effective skills in architec-

ture, urban design, community planning, transportation planning, real estate finance and development, public and private partnerships, zoning, and design guidelines to his projects. Throughout his career, he has been a speaker at professional conferences, lectured at universities, and published articles in professional journals.

Hester earned a master of architecture in urban design from Harvard University's Graduate School of Design, where he earned top honors for leadership and academic studies, and a bachelor of architecture from California State Polytechnic University in Pomona. He has taught architecture, planning, and design at Cal Poly Pomona and Otis College of Art and Design and is a member of the Urban Land Institute where he has participated in a number of forums and Advisory Services panels as well as taught at ULI's Real Estate School.

He is currently designing great places with communities in Oklahoma City, Salt Lake City, Wichita, Kansas City, and Lewisville and McKinney in Texas. In Oklahoma City, Hester is helping the community design a "great street," created from the relocation of I-40 outside the downtown core. The new Crosstown Boulevard will be Oklahoma City's most iconic street and connect downtown to a new Hargreaves-designed Central Park.

Geri Lopez

Clearwater, Florida

Lopez, the director of economic development and housing for the city of Clearwater, Florida, is a Certified Economic Developer with 19 years of experience spanning the redevelopment, economic development, affordable housing, community development, and neighborhood revitalization markets in the municipal, private, and nonprofit sectors.

In Clearwater, Lopez is responsible for improving and expanding the city's economic base through business and community development efforts, including the recruitment and expansion of value-added new residential, retail, office, industrial, mixed land use, cultural, and tourist-based resort developments as well as the administration of the

city's affordable housing programs. With a staff of 11, she administers two divisions, including incentives for the Clearwater Community Redevelopment Agency, state and local economic development programs, and federal and state affordable housing programs for low- to moderate-income residents. Lopez started with the city as assistant director of community redevelopment where she focused on downtown and beach redevelopment.

She received her bachelor's degree in architecture from Yale University and her master's degree in city planning with an Urban Design Certificate from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Lopez is active in ULI, Tampa Bay Partnership, Florida Redevelopment Association, and the International Economic Development Council. Before Clearwater, she lived in Boston, Massachusetts, where she worked as a consultant with clients such as the cities of Memphis, Boston, and Houston and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development on community redevelopment plans and housing policy.

Richard Reinhard

Washington, D.C.

Reinhard is deputy executive director for the Downtown DC Business Improvement District, a nonprofit organization that works to create a remarkable urban experience in the heart of our nation's capital. The Downtown BID is funded through a special district, within which property owners tax themselves and govern how the money is spent to improve the one-square-mile BID area, which has grown from a federal office precinct to a 24/7 activity hub over the past decade and a half that the Downtown BID has been in existence.

Reinhard has spent more than two decades on the improvement of cities. He directed the Infrastructure Initiative at the Urban Land Institute. He has managed urban revitalization organizations in Richmond, Buffalo, Atlanta, and Londonderry, Northern Ireland. Reinhard served as chief of staff to the mayor of Buffalo and chief operating officer of a Toronto-based real estate development corporation. He began his career as a newspaper reporter in his hometown of Syracuse.

As an adjunct faculty member, Reinhard has taught planning and policy at the University at Buffalo, Emory University, Georgia State University, the University of Ulster, and Virginia Tech's National Capital Campus.

He has a bachelor's degree from the College of William and Mary and a master's degree from Rice University. He was a Loeb Fellow in Advanced Environmental Studies at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design.

She holds a bachelor of arts in architecture from the University of Pennsylvania. Her coursework and research focused on the intersection of design, economics, and urban planning in development. She is a member of the Urban Land Institute in Washington, D.C., and part of the Young Leaders Group's Mentorship committee.

Erin Talkington

Bethesda, Maryland

Talkington is a vice president based in RCLCO's Washington, D.C., office. Since joining the firm in 2010, she has engaged with a wide variety of clients in both the public and private sectors. Her experience includes highest and best use analysis for large mixed-use sites, downtown and corridor revitalization studies, and regional growth analysis. Applicable to projects of all types and scales, her strength is her ability to quickly synthesize the key market opportunities and strategic positioning for a particular site and communicate that vision to project team members, clients, and community stakeholders.

In addition to client work, Talkington has been integral in the continued development of RCLCO's MetroLogic™ methodology, which forecasts regional competitiveness for growth and development. The MetroLogic platform also integrates scenario modeling that measures the impact of proposed transportation investments on both the quantity and value of development in a local area.

Talkington draws upon a broad background of experiences in planning and development. Prior to joining RCLCO, she served as a project manager for the Reinvestment Fund Development Partners, a leading nonprofit involved in the revitalization of urban communities throughout the mid-Atlantic through the development of affordable homeownership opportunities. Her background also includes experience at the transportation planning firm Kittelson & Associates.

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1025 Thomas Jefferson Street, NW
Suite 500 West
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