

# Pottstown, Pennsylvania

## Transformation Strategies

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October 5–7, 2009  
An Advisory Services Panel Report

Urban Land Institute  
1025 Thomas Jefferson Street, NW  
Suite 500 West  
Washington, DC 20007-5201

# About the Urban Land Institute

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

ULI is committed to

- bringing together leaders from across the fields of real estate and land use policy to exchange best practices and serve community needs;
- fostering collaboration within and beyond ULI's membership through mentoring, dialogue, and problem solving;
- exploring issues of urbanization, conservation, regeneration, land use, capital formation, and sustainable development;
- advancing land use policies and design practices that respect the uniqueness of both built and natural environments;

- sharing knowledge through education, applied research, publishing, and electronic media; and
- sustaining a diverse global network of local practice and advisory efforts that address current and future challenges.

Established in 1936, the Institute today has more than 32,000 members worldwide, representing the entire spectrum of the land use and development disciplines. Professionals represented include developers, builders, property owners, investors, architects, public officials, planners, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, academics, students, and librarians.

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

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# About ULI Advisory Services

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The goal of ULI's Advisory Services Program is to bring the finest expertise in the real estate field to bear on complex land use planning and development projects, programs, and policies. Since 1947, this program has assembled well over 400 ULI-member teams to help sponsors find creative, practical solutions for issues such as downtown redevelopment, land management strategies, evaluation of development potential, growth management, community revitalization, 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. The Institute's interdisciplinary panel teams provide a holistic look at development problems. A respected ULI member who has previous panel experience chairs each panel.

The agenda for a panel assignment is intensive. It includes an in-depth briefing composed of a tour of the site and meetings with sponsor representatives; interviews with community representatives; and one day for formulating recommendations. On the final day on site, the panel makes an oral presentation of its findings and conclusions to the sponsor. At the request of the sponsor, a written report is prepared and published.

Because the sponsoring entities are responsible for significant preparation before the panel's visit, including sending extensive briefing materials to each member and arranging for the panel to meet with key local community members and stakeholders in the project under consideration, participants in ULI's five-day panel assignments

are able to make accurate assessments of a sponsor's issues and to provide recommendations in a compressed amount of time.

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

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# Acknowledgments

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The panelists would like to thank the sponsors of this Advisory Services panel, including the borough of Pottstown; the Hill School; the Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation; Pottstown Area Industrial Development, Inc.; the Pottstown Memorial Medical Center; the Montgomery County Community College; and the Pottstown School District.

Special thanks go to Dave Garner from the borough, who acted as the panel's primary contact before and during the site visit. Thanks also are extended to David Dougherty and the Hill School, for participating in the panel process and specifically for providing the facilities for the panel reception, dinner, interviews, and presentation. A special thank-you also goes to Doug O'Dell, who initially put ULI staff in contact with the borough. Finally, the panel would like to thank the more than 45 individuals who participated in the panel process through interviews, receptions, and tours that allowed the panelists to better understand the challenges facing the borough and its many entities and organizations.

# Contents

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ULI Panel and Project Staff . . . . .	6
Foreword: The Panel’s Assignment . . . . .	7
Market Overview . . . . .	9
Similar Communities . . . . .	11
Planning and Development Strategies . . . . .	13
Conclusion. . . . .	17
About the Panel. . . . .	18

# ULI Panel and Project Staff

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# Foreword: The Panel's Assignment

A sponsor team consisting of the borough of Pottstown, the Hill School, the Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation, Pottstown Area Industrial Development, Inc., the Pottstown Memorial Medical Center, the Montgomery County Community College, and the Pottstown School District asked the Urban Land Institute (ULI) to conduct a one-and-a-half-day Advisory Services panel to provide advice and suggestions to improve and maintain the economic health of the community. The assignment included researching issues, preparing briefing materials, a formal presentation from the sponsor, a tour of the town, and interviews and meetings with more than 40 to 50 stakeholders. The panel deliberated on these issues, and this report is the result of those deliberations.

With a population of approximately 22,000, the borough of Pottstown is located in the extreme southwestern portion of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. Like other older industrial areas in eastern Pennsylvania, the borough has been experiencing a significant decline in its manufacturing base over the past 30 years. ULI had previously conducted two advisory panels in Pottstown in 1976 and in 1989; many of the recommendations from those panels have been implemented.

Considered an exurb of the Philadelphia metropolitan area, the borough is characterized by a formidable, but aging, stock of single-family residences and rowhouses surrounding a mid-20th century main street. Major employers in Pottstown include the borough government, the borough's school system, the Montgomery County Community College, the aforementioned hospital, and the county's social service delivery offices. Steel manufacturing and fabrication plants, now underutilized, are located adjacent to downtown and the Schuylkill River.



Regional map.

Only a fraction of the borough's employment remains in heavy industry. The sites of former large manufacturers—specifically Bethlehem Steel—are underoccupied and being used for a variety of light and heavy manufacturing uses. New economic development, downtown revitalization, underutilization of existing industrial space, and crime are key challenges for the community.



## Assignment Questions

The sponsors collectively asked the panel to consider the following questions:

- What recommendations does ULI have for the major stakeholders and other constituencies within the borough to work together on a consistent and continuing basis to improve and maintain the economic health of the community?
- What communities of comparable size, composition, and character should we study as models for how best to revitalize our community?
- How can Pottstown capitalize on its assets and develop others needed to grow in accordance with the Keystone Principles promulgated by the commonwealth and Montgomery County?

# Market Overview

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Understanding the socioeconomic trends that are affecting the study area can help planners and public officials identify the potential and pressure for future economic development and the need for specific land uses. ULI believes that successful urban planning and land use policy can best be described as public action that generates a desirable, widespread, and sustained private market reaction. Therefore, Advisory Services panel reports typically have their foundation in market possibilities.

## Market Areas: Three-County, Primary Trade, Borough

The panel analyzed the real estate market for Pottstown from the following three geographical perspectives: Montgomery, Berks, and Chester counties, within which Pottstown is conveniently located at dead center; the primary trade area that corresponds with a ten-minute drive time from Pottstown's downtown; and the boundaries of the borough itself. The analysis shows that while there is continued regional growth in the three-county area, there is a consistent tendency for new residential, commercial, and industrial development to locate outside the borough.

## Observations

Over the next decade, it is projected that the primary trade area will grow by approximately 200 households annually while the borough of Pottstown will grow by roughly 40 households per annum. The projected demand of 200 households is broken down into about 178 detached single-family residences, 27 townhouses/condominiums, and 25 rental apartment units.

With office employment in Pottstown projected to grow from 5,800 employees in 2010 to approximately 6,200 by 2020, the borough will experience an additional demand of about 9,600 square feet of office and flex space annually. Assuming a 60 percent capture rate of office and flex space demand, the central/urban portion of Pottstown would experience demand of around 63,350 square feet of space in total over the next decade, or roughly 5,760 square feet per year. This translates into approximately 0.4 acre per annum or 4.2 acres total of additional office and flex space.

At present, based on the number of households within the primary trade area as well as secondary support, the primary trade area can support approximately 2.8 million square feet of retail space for a variety of shops. During the time period of 2010 to 2020, the primary trade area would generate support for an additional 231,000 square feet of retail space. Assuming that the urban location of Pottstown captures 30 percent of the demand for retail space (this is an optimistic capture rate given the downtown's reputation), over the next decade roughly 70,000 square feet of retail space would be needed in downtown.

## Market Summary

The projected need for nonresidential space in the borough proper over the next ten years is minor. Similarly, the projected demand for new residential uses remains consistent—which is to say, flat. The surrounding primary trade area, which lies within an approximately ten-minute drive of Pottstown, has grown at a much faster pace than Pottstown. Much of the residential growth projected over the next decade will occur on the land surrounding the primary trade area, outside of Pottstown and in the larger tri-county area.

The industrial base (i.e., existing structures) is underutilized and there is a substantial inventory of vacant industrial land that is more than adequate to accommodate any flex/industrial uses for the foreseeable future. There is limited office demand and limited locally serving retail demand in downtown. In short, there are no real external drivers to spur new private economic development in the borough. There is, perhaps, some pent-up residential demand that could be explored, but currently there is a lack of product/market choices in the borough.

# Similar Communities

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One of the panel's assignments was to identify communities that can be used as successful analogs by Pottstown. While there are innumerable examples of towns around the country that have adapted to new economic situations, the panel identified six towns that can be used as practical analogs for stakeholders in Pottstown.

## Conshohocken, Pennsylvania (Population 7,500)

Located on the Schuylkill River about 25 miles east of Pottstown, Conshohocken, Pennsylvania, has a similar market area, geography, demographics, and small-town design. Over the past ten years, Conshohocken has made significant progress toward attracting new business into its downtown and is moving forward with a commuter rail plan that will provide access to the metropolitan Philadelphia area.

## Bedford, Pennsylvania (Population 3,200)

Though smaller than Pottstown, Bedford, Pennsylvania, also has experienced an out-migration of residents and the loss of manufacturing. Bedford, however, has successfully reinvigorated its downtown with a variety of shops, restaurants, and public facilities.

## Fredericksburg, Virginia (Population 19,500)

Located about 45 miles south of Washington, D.C., Fredericksburg, Virginia, has experienced a revival that began during the 1970s with a focus on a core group of buildings adjacent to the Rappahannock River. In the 1990s, the revitalization was extended into outlying

neighborhoods with the arrival of the Virginia Railway Express (VRE) commuter train from Washington, D.C.

## Frederick, Maryland (Population 59,200)

Located 40 miles northwest of Washington, D.C., the downtown of Frederick, Maryland, is one of the most successful downtown revitalization programs in the nation. While the shops include a variety of goods and services, the focus has been on antiques. Collateral restaurant uses and various festivals have increased dramatically over the past 20 years. An inter-urban trolley system extending from the District of Columbia operated until 1961 and was one of the last of its kind in the country. The Maryland Area Regional Commuter (MARC) rail service for Frederick began in 1984 and includes several morning and evening trains.

## Greenville, South Carolina (Population 56,000)

Once referred to by some as the "textile capital of the world," Greenville, South Carolina, has emerged as one of the most desirable small towns in the United States. The municipality has a thriving arts community, with a number of venues to support performances. The Greenville Area Development Corporation is a public/private economic development partnership dedicated to the growth and prosperity of Greenville.

## Chagrin Falls, Ohio (Population 4,000)

A variety of older mills and downtown commercial buildings has been successfully adapted for new uses. With well-maintained tree-lined

streets, Chagrin Falls, Ohio, offers visitors a chance to see historic homes and landmarks, natural waterfalls, and parks and to patronize cultural arts programs, antique shops, boutiques, and fine dining establishments.

Some of the features these communities have in common include some amount of water frontage; traditional grid pattern streets; older industrial space adapted to new uses; well-preserved architecture; focus points such as town greens, parks, and train stations; and substantial history and community pride. For most of these locations, many thought that the task of revitalization was beyond their capabilities. Yet all of these communities have successfully transitioned from older, primarily industrial or commercial towns into successful, economically sustainable communities. Two important notes in this regard: 1) funds and regulatory issues were never the primary obstacle facing the community; and 2) the leadership initially, and continuing over the years, was focused on effecting a common vision.

# Planning and Development Strategies

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To address the borough's challenges, the panel framed the assignment as follows:

- Where is the borough going?
- How does the borough get there?
- Who in the borough is going to do it?

The panel answered these questions with a series of specific development and organizational recommendations.

## Where Is the Borough Going?

This question was the easiest of the three to answer. In 2008, the Borough Council approved an economic development strategic plan updating the initial plan from 2000, which is an ambitious, thought-provoking but ultimately rational road map for economic development with proposed lead entities and conceptual funding sources. As with most policy documents that are useful at the local level (this was confirmed through the panel interviews), it does not achieve unconditional consensus for each initiative or individual idea. But the panel believes that the borough listened to a diverse set of stakeholders and formulated actions that are in the community's best interest. The actions of this strategic plan capitalize on the borough's assets (e.g., good housing stock, waterfront location, historic district with wonderful period architecture, budding arts and cultural community, community health programs, recreational resources, and education resources such as the school system and the community college) that will allow it to grow in accordance with the aforementioned Keystone Principles.

However, the panel believes that there is no single common vision that is subscribed to by

leadership entities. The panel feels that a useful approach that can be used to address this common vision is to identify and implement some key catalytic projects that can be agreed to by the leadership.

## How Does the Borough Get There?

The panel proposes that the borough and stakeholder groups consider four catalytic projects, each of which is consistent with both the economic development strategic plan and the commonwealth's Keystone Principles.

### Open Up the Riverfront

People like water! As such, the Schuylkill River is a significant asset for the borough. Opportunities to enhance existing open space, to provide recreational options and unhindered access and views, and to market the borough as a waterfront town are at stake here. In light of this, the following actions should be undertaken:

- *Cut the undergrowth.* The public desires and expects access to the water's edge. Some of the borough's most prominent locations—such as the intersection of High and Hanover streets, the Borough Hall, the train station, the Bethlehem Steel site, and the community college—are all located within a quarter mile of the river. Nonetheless, the river is very difficult to see and an easy pedestrian path from downtown to the water is difficult to find. In accordance with applicable regulations, undergrowth should be thinned to provide useful, punctuated views of the river. The proposed brush management program would serve to minimize any potential impacts to mature trees, while allowing for minor grading and terrain alterations to enhance the views from Industrial Highway, College Drive, and portions of downtown.

- *Remove the tracks.* The railroad tracks along the river's edge were designed to provide access to the Bethlehem Steel site and other heavy industrial uses. They are no longer needed. These tracks are both a physical and a notional barrier to the river. The panelists believe that removing these tracks will eliminate the perception of the river being disconnected from the rest of the borough and will provide a better face for marketing properties.
- *Create a "place of magic" on five blocks of riverfront in downtown.* Centered on the blocks from the community college to Franklin Street and extending both north into the downtown and adjacent to the river, a variety of public and private facilities should be constructed to invite residents and visitors to indulge in the riverside amenities. Central nodes of activity with children-oriented activities are a useful way to activate the waterfront. Pittsburgh's Water Steps and Charleston's Waterfront Park are good examples, albeit on a larger scale. These nodes should draw kids and adults alike and include fountains, floating docks, and sheltered swings. The borough has already conceived and begun to implement many of these elements as evidenced by the Riverfront and Memorial Parks Master Plan. The proposal to connect Memorial Park, the proposed carousel, and Riverfront Park should be pursued as soon as possible.
- *Complete the long-distance trail plan.* This will allow the borough to connect with numerous other locations along the Schuylkill River and designate the borough as a stopping point for hikers, bikers, and day-trippers. The borough could then participate in the larger marketing efforts that are currently being considered for the trail system.

#### Encourage High-Value Employment

- *Build on existing economic strengths.* These include the hospital, the community college, the Hill School, the Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation, and existing industrial employers. Partnerships, perhaps focused on some of the catalytic projects outlined in this

report, should be forged and responsibilities and commitments promulgated.

- *The borough should consider a more business-friendly, time-sensitive approach to permitting, inspections, and planning approvals.* It should be the borough's goal to be recognized throughout the three-county area as the most considerate and responsive municipal government when it comes to real estate development and permitting. Staff and organizational changes should be used to achieve this approach and an ombudsman office should be established to help customers through the permitting process.
- *Sell the borough more effectively.* As the panel understands it, no one currently is charged with a full-time focus on economic development. This is a serious deficiency and more than any other organizational issue will handicap the borough's ability to attract new business. Brochures, a separate Web site, a marketing communications package, and a financing menu need to be developed for targeted uses. The borough needs to focus on this issue every day until it is achieved.

#### Expand Market Choices for New Housing and Revitalize Existing Housing

As noted earlier, the borough has some beautiful and affordable older housing. Yet the needs of the creative class, households without children, and other nonconventional populations do not all want to renovate stately 1920s craftsman- or Victorian-style single-family homes. Nor do they move into neighborhoods that are beginning to decay, appear to be empty, or have the perception of crime.

- Nothing breathes life back into a town like new market-rate houses with river views. As such, the borough should encourage the construction of new housing in a variety of locations near downtown. A survey of existing vacant parcels in and near the five-block area mentioned above should be completed to determine locations for new residential development.

- The Keystone Opportunity Area, located on the north side of Keystone Boulevard from the bridge to the lake, should be designated for residential development that includes a mix of primarily market-rate homes with some workforce housing. As noted earlier, there is more than enough existing and proposed industrial property in the borough.
- An aggressive neighborhood stabilization partnership among Montgomery County, the code enforcement department, the housing authority, and the police department should be established immediately. This partnership can ensure strict compliance with requirements of units using Section 8 and other federal and state housing vouchers.
- Create new incentives for renovating and occupying the upper floors of existing commercial buildings in downtown with market-rate residential uses.

### Encourage and Accommodate a Vibrant Downtown

Provide reasons for new daytime and nighttime visitation to downtown. Implement the following:

- Build a threshold of culture, arts, entertainment, and nightlife activity. Use the goal of three performances per night on weekends for downtown theaters, live performances at restaurants, and outdoor ad-hoc venues.
- Begin a program to cluster economic activity involving doctors, seniors, students, and non-social-service public offices in the block immediately adjacent to the intersections of High and Hanover streets.
- As noted earlier, create new incentives for renovating and occupying the upper floors of existing commercial buildings.
- Establish a robust program of public and private activities in the downtown. Consider a Fourth of July-style parade once a month, a Pottstown film festival that fills a niche market (black-and-white movies, classics, documentaries, instructional films, short clips, etc.), an arts festival employing a similar niche

approach, and sports activities such as 5k and 10k races. Also, ensure that restaurants provide special incentives that coincide with the programming, such as preshow happy hours, \$10 meals, and bite-size buffets. Marketing for downtown must include a diverse arsenal of media components. While a street signage program is a part of that marketing effort, it cannot be the only way for people to find out about the downtown events. As mentioned above, Web page, mail, and brochure advertising must be used to alert the populace to the programming and cultural activities.

- Establish a robust incentive package to get a few key retailers to consider locating in downtown. Uses such as bookstores, coffee shops, women's apparel, outdoor-oriented stores (e.g., kayaking and canoeing on the river), and, above all, restaurants can dramatically change the market area's perception of downtown Pottstown.
- An active commuter rail that goes to Philadelphia could be a real game-changing event in history of Pottstown. The borough's abundant and affordable housing stock, the location of the Hill School, and the proximity of the community college would substantially improve the ability to attract upper-income younger singles and couples who could breathe new life into downtown. Collaterally, the same group could be expected to help support the arts community and patronize the growing restaurant concerns.

### Who in the Borough Is Going to Do It?

Pottstown has strong economic and community development ideas and policies in the form of the aforementioned economic development strategic plan and the catalytic projects suggested in this report. The community knows what to do; however, the absence of effective leadership has worked against the borough achieving its vision for the future.

The panel suggests creating a new entity that can take the lead and make it happen. This development corporation would begin by having the



borough convene a stakeholder meeting with representatives of political and civic leadership who can recommend a board of directors. Based on the recommendations, the borough will create a corporation.

The membership of the board must be small (five people), its goals must be clear, and it must consist of individuals who are committed to improving the borough and have the depth of purpose and experience to implement actions to achieve the desired goals. The corporation can have a five-person board with authority and responsibility to move forward on catalytic projects, financing, and deal making. The process must be transparent, with a clear statement of public value and benefits. Also, there must be a focus on design excellence/sustainability and on the integrity of the board and corporation.

It is important that the corporation work closely not only with the organizations inside the borough, but also with Montgomery County. The county can be one of the key partners that can address funding issues and provide data, support, and in-kind services to help the corporation meet its goals.

# Conclusion

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The panel came to Pottstown and found a borough that was competing unsuccessfully with its surrounding region. The borough is also bogged down in what appear to be trivial political battles, has a reputation as a burdensome bureaucracy, and is still reeling from significant job losses in its historical industrial base.

But it is the panel's opinion that the borough is full of promise and that it has committed partners in the Hill School; the Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation; Pottstown Area Industrial Development, Inc.; the Pottstown Memorial Medical Center; the Montgomery County Community College; and the Pottstown School District. However, it must learn how to better compete with its primary trade area by providing more diverse housing products, and it must be willing to undertake a number of catalytic projects to show its meddle. Furthermore, it must eliminate the perception that Pottstown is a bad place to do business. It must also empower an entity that can focus full time on economic development, and that entity must be populated with individuals who can get the important work done.

Previous visits by ULI to Pottstown over the past 30 years have shown that the borough has the ability to take candid suggestions. As such, it is the panel's hope that the recommendations in this report will be taken to heart by the leadership of the borough and that the next time the Institute visits, the seeds planted by this panel will have already borne fruit.

# About the Panel

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## Tom Murphy

*Washington, D.C.*

### *Panel Chair*

Tom Murphy is a senior resident fellow, Klingbeil Family Chair for urban development at the Urban Land Institute in Washington, D.C. Murphy, a former three-time mayor of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, joins other ULI senior resident fellows who specialize in public policy, housing, real estate finance, and environmental issues.

His extensive experience in urban revitalization—what drives investment, what ensures long-lasting commitment—is a key addition to the senior resident fellows' areas of expertise.

Since January 2006, Murphy had served as ULI's Gulf Coast liaison, helping coordinate with the leadership of New Orleans and the public to advance the implementation of rebuilding recommendations made by the Institute's Advisory Services panel in the fall of 2005. In addition, he worked with the Louisiana state leadership, as well as with leadership in hurricane-affected areas in Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida to identify areas appropriate for ULI involvement.

As mayor of Pittsburgh, from January 1994 through December 2005, Murphy initiated a public/private partnership strategy that leveraged more than \$4.5 billion in economic development in Pittsburgh. He led efforts to secure and oversee \$1 billion in funding for the development of two professional sports facilities and a new convention center that is the largest certified green building in the United States. He developed strategic partnerships to transform more than 1,000 acres of blighted, abandoned industrial properties into new commercial, residential, retail, and public uses and oversaw the development of more than 25 miles of new riverfront trails and urban green space.

From 1979 through 1993, Murphy served eight terms in the Pennsylvania State General Assembly House of Representatives. He focused legislative activities on changing western Pennsylvania's economy from an industrial to an entrepreneurial one, and authored legislation requiring the commonwealth's pension fund to invest in venture capital. In addition, he authored legislation creating the Ben Franklin Technology Partnership, which is dedicated to advancing Pennsylvania's focus on technology in the economy. He also authored legislation to encourage industrial land reuse and to transform abandoned rail rights-of-way into trails and green space.

Murphy served in the Peace Corps in Paraguay from 1970 through 1972. In addition, he is a 1993 graduate of the New Mayors Program offered by Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. He holds a master of science degree in urban studies from Hunter College, and a bachelor of science degree in biology and chemistry from John Carroll University.

Murphy is an honorary member of the American Society of Landscape Architects, a board member of the Pennsylvania League of Cities and Municipalities, and a board member of the National Rails to Trails Conservancy. He received the 2002 Outstanding Achievement of City Livability Award from the U.S. Conference of Mayors and was selected as the 2001 Pittsburgh Man of the Year by Vectors Pittsburgh.

## James (Mike) Davis

*Retired*

*Former Associate Director—Office of  
Economic Adjustment*

*U.S. Department of Defense*

*Washington, D.C.*

James (Mike) Davis recently retired from the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), Office of the Secretary of Defense. He served as associate director with the Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) from September 1991 until January 2009. Davis provides technical advice and assistance to local governments affected by DoD decisions, including military base closures, expansions, and realignments; defense industry adjustment; growth management planning; and community encroachment issues that threatened the viability of a military installation. He was also the program manager for the OEA Joint Land Use Study Program.

Davis has over 47 years of professional planning and economic development experience with the federal and local governments. He served as community planner and development specialist with Montgomery and Prince George's counties, Maryland (1962-1975); director of planning with the city of Rockville, Maryland (1975-1986); director of development services with the city of Fort Collins, Colorado (1986-1991); and director of planning with the city of Aurora, Colorado (1991-1993); and lastly an associate director with OEA (1993-2009). Davis has practical, hands-on experience in the fields of land use planning and zoning, subdivision and site plan review, urban design, transportation system planning and management, community economic development, public facilities and utilities infrastructure planning, capital

improvement programming and budgeting, environmental planning and management, natural resources planning, and building and development code enforcement.

Davis earned a master's degree from the University of Northern Colorado in urban and regional planning (1975) and a bachelor's degree in urban geography from the University of Maryland (1969). A graduate of the Federal Executive Institute (2000), he is also a member of the Urban Land Institute.

Davis was awarded the U.S. Department of the Army's "Commanders Award for Civilian Service" in 1997, and the Office of the Secretary of Defense's "Award for Excellence" in 1997. In addition, he is the author of *The Practical Guide to Compatible Civilian Development near Military Installations* (2005).

## Thomas W. Eitler

*Vice President, Advisory Services  
Urban Land Institute  
Washington, D.C.*

Tom Eitler is the vice president of Advisory Services for the Urban Land Institute, a nonprofit education and research institute that focuses on issues of land use, real estate, and urban development. The Institute's mission is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. The Advisory Services Department conducts approximately 20 advisory panels each year that provide strategic advice to communities, developers, and organizations on a wide variety of real estate, planning, urban design, and development subjects.

Eitler is an urban planner and a public policy professional with 20 years of experience in comprehensive planning, revitalization,

historical preservation, transportation systems, military installation master planning, and sustainable design. He is an expert on zoning law, municipal codes, and urban design and government operations. He has prepared and conducted dozens of community engagement plans, charrettes, advisory groups, workshops, and panels. Eitler has authored numerous plans, studies, strategies, and reports on urban planning, design, public administration, and real estate development. Also, he has directed projects in both the public and private sectors in a variety of locations throughout the United States, Europe, and Asia.

Prior to joining the Urban Land Institute in 2006, Eitler was a principal with Community Planning Associates, a land-planning consulting firm headquartered in Washington, D.C. Before that, he was director of operations for the Onyx Group, a planning and architecture firm with offices in Alexandria, Virginia; San Diego and Oakland, California; and Honolulu, Hawaii. And prior to that, he was a principal planner with local governments in Maryland and Virginia, including chief of long-range planning for Prince William County, Virginia.

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



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