



A Technical Assistance Panel Report

North Capitol Main Street: Strategies for Revitalization and Redevelopment

Sponsored by:
North Capitol Main Street, Inc.

July 8-9, 2009

North Capitol Main Street Washington, D.C.

Strategies for Revitalization and Redevelopment

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A Technical Assistance Panel Report

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About ULI Washington A District Council of the Urban Land Institute

ULI Washington is a district council of ULI—the Urban Land Institute, a nonprofit education and research organization supported by its members. Founded in 1936, the Institute today has over 36,000 members worldwide representing the entire spectrum of land use planning and real estate development disciplines, working in private enterprise and public service.

As the preeminent, multidisciplinary real estate forum, ULI facilitates the open exchange of ideas, information, and experience among local, national, and international industry leaders and policy makers dedicated to creating better communities.

ULI's mission is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. ULI Washington carries out the ULI mission locally by sharing best practices, building consensus, and advancing solutions through its educational programs and community outreach initiatives.

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The objective of ULI Washington's Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) program is to provide expert, multidisciplinary advice on land use and real estate issues facing public agencies and nonprofit organizations in the Washington Metropolitan area. Drawing from its extensive membership base, ULI Washington conducts one and one-half day panels offering objective and responsible advice to local decision makers on a wide variety of land use and real estate issues ranging from site-specific projects to public policy questions. The TAP program is intentionally flexible to provide a customized approach to specific land use and real estate issues.

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Contents

Acknowledgments.....Page 5
ULI Washington Panel and Project StaffPage 7
Foreword: Overview and Panel AssignmentPage 8
Executive Summary: The Panel’s RecommendationsPage 11
Market PotentialPage 15
Planning and Design.....Page 22
Implementation StrategiesPage 25
About the Panel (bios)Page 27

Acknowledgments

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The panel would also like to thank the multiple other agencies and their representatives who provided briefing materials and participated in the tour and presentations to the panel, including Phyllis Love, Assistant Director of Commercial Revitalization, D.C. Department of Small & Local Business Development; Deborah Crain, Ward 5 Neighborhood Planner, D.C. Office of Planning; Allen Fye, Transportation Planner, D.C. Department of Transportation; John Salatti, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 5C; and Arlene Dedier, Design Chair, NCMS, Inc. The panel was also grateful to have the benefit of input from the stakeholders and neighborhood residents who attended the opening and/or closing sessions of the panel, as listed below:

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The findings and recommendations provided in this report are based on the collective expertise of the panel, along with the briefing materials, and information gleaned from the tour, stakeholder presentations, and roundtable discussions conducted during the panel's one and one-half day effort. ULI Washington hopes that the following information will help guide NCMS, Inc. and other interested parties they seek to revitalize the North Capitol Street area's historically and culturally important neighborhood commercial corridors.



Panelists meet with neighborhood stakeholders and public officials to learn more about the study area and the community's goals and concerns.

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Foreword: Overview and Panel Assignment

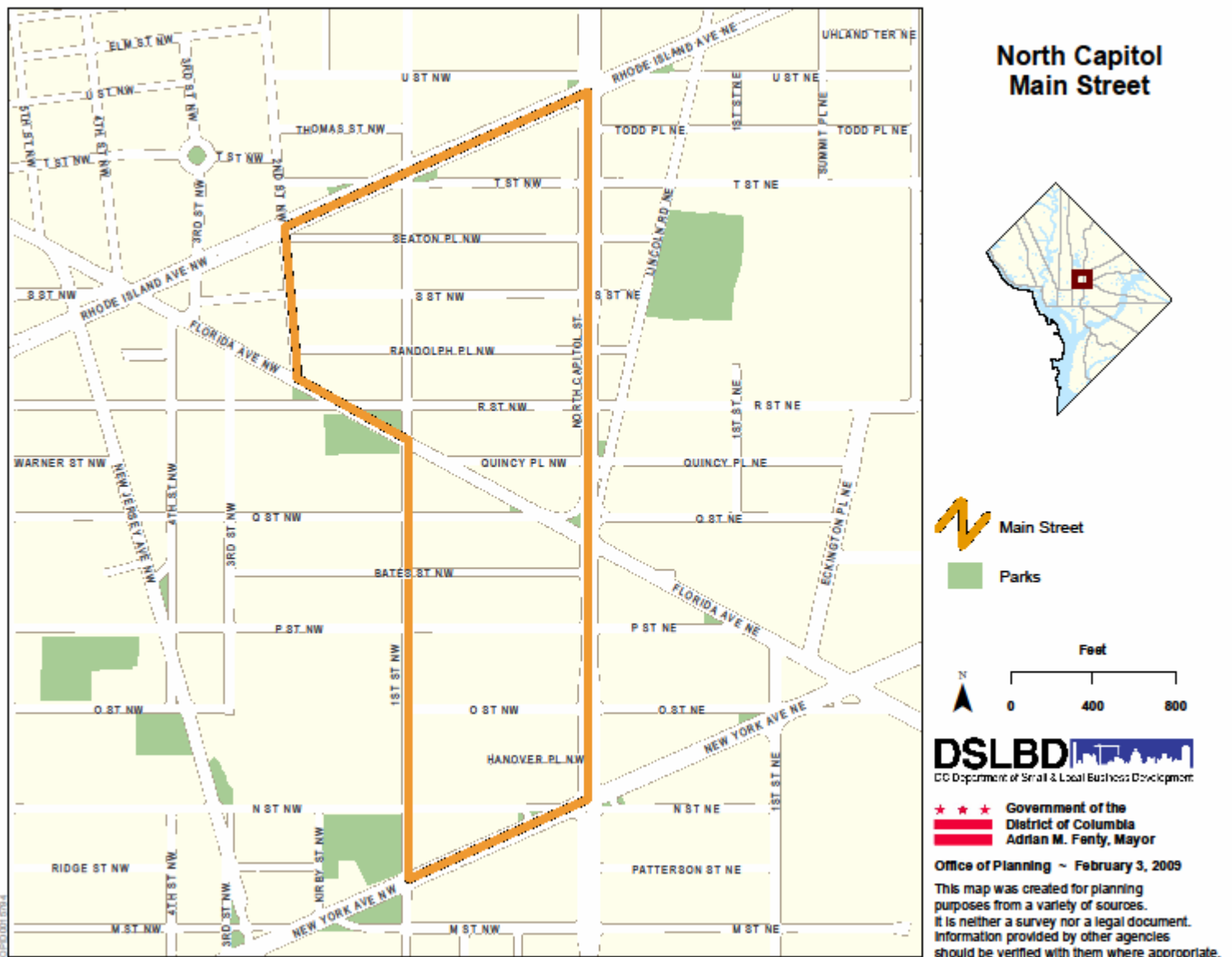
As a means to foster relationships and spur development in the Washington metropolitan region's emerging neighborhoods, ULI Washington issued a request for proposals (RFP) to provide a series of complimentary Technical Assistance Panels (TAP). Funded through proceeds from ULI Washington's 2008 Urban Marketplace Conference and Expo, the RFP resulted in the awarding of three TAPs, one of which was awarded to North Capitol Main Street, Inc. (NCMS, Inc.). NCMS, Inc. requested assistance with developing strategies for revitalizing the commercial corridors within its service area.

North Capitol Main Street, Inc. (NCMS, Inc.) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation established in 2003 by a diverse group of neighbors who came together to help revitalize neighborhood commercial corridors in the North Capitol Street area. In October, 2008, NCMS, Inc. applied for, and later received, official designation as a DC Main Street. Administered by the D.C. Department of Small & Local Business Development (DSLBD), the DC Main Streets program is based on the National Trust for Historic Preservation's nationally-proven approach to economic revitalization, which focuses on incremental change and self-help. The program aims to build the capacity of neighborhood nonprofit organizations to assist businesses and coordinate sustainable community-driven revitalization efforts.

During its first year as a Main Street program, NCMS, Inc. received \$233,000 from DSLBD to fund operating costs, including hiring an executive director and leasing office space, and to seed revitalization initiatives, such as storefront improvement, urban design, business promotion, and fundraising programs. DSLBD has since awarded a \$125,000 Clean Team service grant to NCMS, Inc., which will fund the cleaning of streets, sidewalks, and storefront buildings along the primary business corridors, and to care for street tree boxes. As a member of the DC Main Streets program, NCMS, Inc. is in an excellent position to apply for funding from other local and federal sources to help implement its goals, such as the District of Columbia Neighborhood Investment Fund (NIF), which provides a pool of resources to support investment and revitalization in emerging neighborhoods.

The NCMS, Inc. service area extends northward from the North of Massachusetts Avenue (NoMa) development area and the recently constructed New York-Florida Avenue/Gallaudet University Metro station. The district is bounded by three major commuter arterial roads: North Capitol Street, New York Avenue, and Florida Avenue. North Capitol Street, which functions as the primary corridor, is lined with two- and three-story row house buildings with ground floor commercial spaces. For the most part, these older buildings are in poor shape, many are vacant and boarded up, and some have been torn down altogether, leaving gaps of vacant lots between buildings. The ground floor retail businesses tend to be marginal, such as liquor stores and nail salons; most merchants are barely surviving. The volume and speed of automobile traffic along North Capitol Street, as well as its highway-like roadway infrastructure,

create a hostile pedestrian environment and are serious disincentives to retail businesses.



In sharp contrast to the commercial corridors on North Capitol Street and Florida Avenue, the tree-lined residential neighborhoods in the NCMS area are well-established and have experienced an influx of younger, more affluent residents in recent years. While this trend has sparked condominium conversions and considerable investment by homeowners in their personal residences, it has not had a similar impact in the commercial corridors. The arrival of new residents to the neighborhood has exacerbated long-standing, pent-up demand from residents for businesses within walking distance that cater to their need for neighborhood-serving food, goods, and services.

Tax assessments on commercial properties in the NCMS area have soared, along with increased assessments on the value of single-family residences in the neighborhood. The vast majority of buildings along the major business corridors are owned by absentee landlords who have passed the assessment increases on to their business tenants. The tenants—mostly independent “mom and pop” merchants—struggle just to pay their rent; much less invest in building renovations and merchandising upgrades to make their businesses more attractive to local residents.

NCMS, Inc. and the community are united in their desire to see the commercial district revitalized and to attract retail and services that serve residents’ needs. With NCMS, Inc.’s designation as a member of the DC Main Streets program, and the potential to receive financial assistance from the city and other sources, the community is positioned for revitalization. What is needed now is a community-wide vision for the neighborhood and a roadmap for implementing that vision. NCMS Inc. is now working with community stakeholders to develop a common vision for revitalization and strategies for realizing that vision.

To that end, NCMS, Inc. asked the ULI panel to provide advice and assistance in three specific areas:

- Analyzing the highest and best use for vacant properties;
- Developing strategies to catalyze development within the boundaries of the North Capitol Street Main Street service area; and
- Addressing issues with the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) to foster business development and growth along North Capitol Street.

An eight-member panel of experts spent an intensive one and one-half days touring the North Capitol Main Street district and surrounding neighborhoods; listening to briefings from the sponsor and community stakeholders; participating in a stakeholder roundtable session attended by a very knowledgeable and passionate group of residents, business owners, city staff, and others vested in the future of the neighborhood; and engaging in a full-day closed door session to address NCMS, Inc.’s issues and questions. The panel presented its findings, conclusions, and recommendations on July 9, 2009.

Executive Summary: The Panel's Recommendations

Market Potential

In order to evaluate the prospects for revitalization and redevelopment within the NCMS, Inc. service area, the panel first spent a significant amount of time touring the district, taking note of the existing commercial corridors, surrounding neighborhoods, streetscape, and adjacent uses, and studying the potential supply of retail development—both existing and proposed—in the vicinity. From this process, the panel identified a number of strengths and challenges that contribute to the district's development potential, as outlined below.

Strengths

- In the path of future development;
- Good regional access and proximity to downtown Washington;
- Well-defined architectural character of existing buildings;
- Intimately-scaled residential streets and neighborhoods;
- Access to public transit including two Metrorail stations;
- Zoned retail properties present opportunities on 1st Street at Rhode Island Avenue, NW; and
- Residents vested in the community's success.

Challenges

- Major arterial roadways, restricted turning options, lack of parking and complex, grade separated roadway infrastructure on North Capitol Street create pedestrian barriers to the neighborhoods and limit retail viability along North Capitol Street;
- Unwelcoming streetscape and appearance of disrepair along North Capitol Street;
- Heavy automobile commuter traffic on North Capitol Street and New York Avenue;
- Large cluster of social service facilities contribute to create (real or perceived) impressions of loitering, crime and vagrancy;

- Current and projected oversupply and mismatch of competing retail in the neighborhoods immediately surrounding and adjacent to the study area;
- Small lot sizes inhibit comprehensive redevelopment.

In addressing the questions presented to the panel regarding the highest and best use for vacant properties and opportunities for development in the NCMS district, the panel made the following conclusions and recommendations.

North Capitol Street is not a viable location for retail development. The panel strongly believes that North Capitol Street has too many strikes against it to attract retailers that rely on customers who come from outside the market area, or to support small retailers that serve the needs of residents in the neighborhood. This corridor is likely to remain a major commuter thoroughfare for many years to come and, in the panel's opinion, the district would be best served targeting neighborhood-serving retail and clustering it in more inviting commercial nodes off North Capitol Street, and encouraging more appropriate and sustainable uses along North Capitol Street.

Create two clusters of neighborhood retail in the Bloomingdale neighborhood. Small cafes, stores, and services that accommodate the needs of local residents have the best chance of success when they are concentrated in convenient, welcoming, pedestrian-oriented environments. The panel recommends that NCMS, Inc. focus its efforts on encouraging the concentration of up to 20,000 square feet of high-quality neighborhood oriented retail at two locations in Bloomingdale: 1) 1st Street, NW at Rhode Island Avenue, and 2) 1st Street NW at Florida Avenue. These locations, which already support successful small retail merchants, are primed for becoming vibrant neighborhood retail nodes. In the future, when the 1st Street retail nodes are well established and drawing residents from Eckington, neighborhood retail might become viable on certain corners along North Capitol Street.

Target residential, small office, and arts-related uses on North Capitol Street north of Quincy Street. The panel recommends capitalizing on the historic row house architecture along this northern stretch of North Capitol Street to attract new residents, small professional offices, home-based offices, and arts-related uses. NCMS, Inc. should encourage the renovation of existing buildings and infill development of vacant land for these non-retail uses in a manner that respects the historic architectural character of the neighborhood and revitalizes the streetscape.

Use the historic firehouse as a catalyst for redevelopment. NCMS, Inc. and the city should encourage the redevelopment of the landmark Old Engine Company #12 building for a use that sets the tone for future activity. Consistent with the panel's belief that North Capitol Street is not a viable location for retail, good uses for this neighborhood asset include small professional offices, loft apartments, and arts-related uses, such as an education or performing arts center.

Target longer-term residential, and office development on North Capitol Street south of Quincy Street. In the longer-term—post-economic recovery and with continued commercial development in the nearby NoMa district—North Capitol Street is well positioned for higher-density mixed-use development. A drug store could be a viable option for the Truxton Circle area in the short-term, if the neighborhood wants to attract this type of amenity. However, the panel believes the highest and best use for this area is residential or office development. When the market dictates, sites should be assembled in the southern-most portion of the district for high-density mixed-use development.

Planning and Design

To spur redevelopment, NCMS, Inc. must demonstrate visible evidence of positive change, showing that the business corridors are on the way up rather than on the way down. The panel therefore recommends that NCMS, Inc. and its stakeholders take the following steps to enhance the pedestrian environment.

- Encourage the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) to implement the infrastructure improvements identified in the *North Capitol Street Transportation Study Recommendations (2005)* to improve pedestrian safety and traffic flow.
- Create a small public plaza or pocket park on North Capitol Street at Florida Avenue by modifying the location and configuration of the southbound right-turn lane.
- Reduce the width of the pedestrian crossing area at the intersection of Q Street and Lincoln Road on North Capitol Street to facilitate better interactions between pedestrians and motorists at this location.
- Improve the fence aesthetics at Rhode Island and T Street.

Implementation Strategies

The panel recommends several initiatives that NCMS, Inc. and its strong network of neighborhood volunteers can undertake to facilitate revitalization and redevelopment in the neighborhood.

- Establish a database of vacant properties that includes information about ownership, square footage and the desired and permitted use for each building; post the database on the NCMS, Inc. website.
- Create a marketing campaign to introduce DC supported incentives that will promote the renovation of derelict row homes on North Capitol Street for (non-retail) residential and office uses.
- Increase pedestrian safety by putting more “eyes and ears” on residential streets; initiate a “Know Your Neighbor” campaign to encourage new and long-time residents to meet their neighbors.

- Discourage loitering on commercial corridors by lobbying for the ban of single item beer sales in liquor stores.
- Engage with social service providers in the NCMS district to let them to participate in the revitalization efforts and to encourage mutual understanding and collaboration; make them part of the solution.

Market Potential

The panel began its analysis of the market potential for the NCMS district by looking at the neighborhood's competitive strengths and challenges that contribute to its redevelopment potential.

Strengths

In the Path of Future Development. The NCMS district's location directly northeast of NoMa, one of fastest growing commercial districts in the Washington metropolitan area, puts it squarely in path of future development. As NoMa continues to gain momentum over the next 15 years, businesses and residents will move north into NCMS neighborhoods. The panel strongly believes that the commercial area of the district is poised to be in the next wave of development.

Good Regional Access and Proximity to Downtown Washington. The NCMS district's proximity to the amenities of downtown Washington and its excellent roadway and public transit access to the metropolitan region will be a strong plus for new business and residents moving to the region.

A Well-Defined Architectural Character. The NCMS district has something that many communities are trying to invent—an authentic identity. The area's historic row house architectural character is a major asset for the district and should be leveraged.

Intimately-Scaled Neighborhoods. The tree-lined residential streets off North Capitol Street have a low-rise neighborhood feel that will continue to attract new residents. The district's walkable, welcoming, intimately-scaled residential neighborhoods are among its greatest assets.

Proximity to Metrorail. The recently constructed New York Avenue-Florida Avenue-Gallaudet University Metrorail station on the Red Line, as well as the Shaw-Howard University station on the Yellow and Green Lines, provide residents and visitors with easy access to the greater Washington region.

First Street Retail Potential. As will be discussed in greater detail below, the panel believes that portions of First Street, NW between Florida and Rhode Island Avenues offer enormous potential for development as a vibrant neighborhood retail cluster where residents can gather and find everyday services in an environment not impacted by heavy traffic and intimidating street activity.

Residents Vested in the Community's Success. The North Capitol Street district has no shortage of impassioned and committed community groups working to revitalize and enhance its neighborhoods. Most notably, NCMS, Inc. and the area's civic and neighborhood associations appear to be united in their aspirations and their collaborative approach to community-based revitalization.

Challenges

While the NCMS district offers a significant number of opportunities for revitalization, the panel identified issues and conditions that seriously constrain the potential for viable new retail development along the major business corridors in the foreseeable future.

Major Arterial Roadways Create Pedestrian Barriers to the Neighborhood. The NCMS area is bounded and intersected by some of the busiest, most pedestrian-unfriendly streets in Washington: North Capitol Street and New York, Florida, and Rhode Island Avenues. These wide commuter thoroughfares are filled with high-volume, fast-moving automobile traffic day and night and are extremely hostile to pedestrians. Sidewalks along the major arterials are mostly treeless and generally unwelcoming. The net effect is that the major arterial streets create serious pedestrian barriers to and from the NCMS neighborhood and tend to isolate residents within their neighborhoods. Such adverse pedestrian conditions make these major streets unattractive to potential retailers, as well as to residents.

Unwelcoming Streetscape and Appearance of Disrepair along North Capitol Street. Much of North Capitol Street is lined by early 20th century 2- or 3-story row houses with ground-floor retail spaces. For the most part, these building storefronts are in poor condition, many are boarded-up or vacant, and most have security bars on the windows. The general impression of blight and vacant buildings along this corridor contributes to an unwelcoming pedestrian experience and works against attracting larger and solid retailers.

Heavy Commuter Traffic on North Capitol Street. North Capitol Street is a major commuter route along which thousands of downtown Washington employees travel to and from Maryland and the northern sections of the District each day. Loud, fast-moving traffic makes it a particularly unpleasant and sometimes unsafe experience for pedestrians, and a challenging environment for retail. Given the city's economic interest in maintaining the commuter flow, this corridor is likely to function more like a highway than a two-sided main street for the foreseeable future.

Cluster of Social Service Facilities. The close proximity to North Capitol Street of social service facilities serving drug addicts and homeless people contributes to significant loitering on sidewalks, particularly along the section of the street from New York Avenue to Quincy Street. Despite their laudable stepped-up efforts, the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) has been unable to contain illegal business activities—public loitering, drinking, drug dealing, shoplifting, burglary, and theft—making it even more difficult to do legal business on the street.

Oversupply and Mismatch of Retail Uses. According to draft findings from a retail demand analysis recently completed by the D.C. Office of Planning, there is a significant oversupply of retail uses in the North Capitol Street submarket through 2012. In other words, due to existing and planned retail in the area, including space at City Vista, Union Place, Constitution Square, and Washington Gateway, there is too much supply and not enough demand to support new retail space for the next several years.

In addition to the abundant supply of retail in the immediate market, the NCMS area must compete for tenants with well-established retail centers with superior infrastructure in other parts of the city. However, the draft findings also note that "markets evolve and shift as the amount and type of available retail changes; what today may appear to be oversupply can attract new spenders from outside the immediate trade area and become positive over time (such as Adams-Morgan or downtown Washington near the Verizon Center). A 'negative' supportable square footage estimate in 2012 does not mean an area is permanently oversupplied." The panel did find that there is a concrete need for some additional neighborhood based businesses in the district, while there is oversupply of some retail uses, such as liquor stores. This subject will be addressed in the section for Retail Market Potential.

Lack of Parking along North Capitol Street. Limited street and surface parking along the corridor constrains its ability to be redeveloped as a major retail destination. Lack of parking, difficult roadway infrastructure, and peak period traffic congestion also limit the ability for commuters to stop for a meal or shop in the area on their way home.

Small Parcel Sizes and Lack of a Consolidated Redevelopable Area. There is limited opportunity for a large scale redevelopment that could serve as a catalyst for surrounding redevelopment. Small parcel sizes prevent redevelopment, aside from building renovations. Parcel consolidation would require considerable effort by the private sector.

Retail Market Potential

The panel examined the market potential for two distinctly different types of retail in the NCMS area.

Neighborhood-Serving Retail. Neighborhood retail provides day-to-day services and amenities to local residents. Examples include cafés, quick-service restaurants, dry cleaners, small food markets, hair salons, and flower shops. Local neighborhood retail merchants can survive on dollars spent by local residents and are less dependent on having good automobile access and plenty of free parking than merchants who need to attract customers from outside the neighborhood.

There is clearly unmet demand for neighborhood retail from NCMS area residents. Residents expressed a strong desire to panel members for convenient neighborhood retail amenities. They want more cafes and small retail stores, attractive places they can walk to and enjoy in comfort and safety; welcoming places where they can relax, and see their neighbors. The NCMS, Inc. 2007 survey of neighborhood residents revealed a local market starved for local-serving retail. At least seven in ten residents said they would definitely patronize a gourmet food or wine store, bakery, banks, gyms, and garden stores. That study also uncovered a strong negative perception of the primary commercial districts, indicating that the major streets are regarded as unclean, unsafe, and lacking in diversity. Only about one in four residents shops in the commercial corridors.

Based on its own analysis of neighborhood demographics, its knowledge of the recent retail demand analysis study, and panel members' expertise in retail development, the panel believes that the NCMS district can support up to 20,000 square feet of neighborhood retail space. Viable businesses include one or two cafés, a convenience food market, and other personal service uses.

Destination and Transient-Serving Retail. Destination and transient-serving retail serves a broader geographic market beyond the local neighborhood. Destination retailers are typically regional and national brand stores that sell apparel, furniture, household goods, and other department store-type merchandise. Bed Bath & Beyond and Urban Outfitters are examples. Because people like to cross-shop, destination retailers like to be located in clusters of complimentary retail stores. Transient-oriented retail is drawn to high-visibility, high-traffic corridors. This type of retail attracts shoppers from outside the neighborhood, relies on frequent in and out shopping, and needs easy automobile access and plenty of convenient free parking. Walgreens is a good example of transient-serving retail.

Given the very real challenges for retail development along the major business corridors, and the competing nodes of retail in adjacent communities, the panel concluded that the opportunity for destination and transient retail in the NCMS district is very limited. Additionally, community members indicated very little desire for such retailers in the study area.

Neighborhood Retail Strategies

For all the reasons mentioned in the strengths and challenges section above, the panel does not believe that the North Capitol Street corridor is conducive to neighborhood retail. Small cafes, stores, and services that accommodate local neighborhood needs have the best chance for success when they are clustered in convenient, accessible, and welcoming pedestrian-oriented environments; safety in numbers attracts both retailers and residents. For these reasons, the panel strongly recommends creating identifiable retail nodes in the heart of NCMS residential neighborhood.

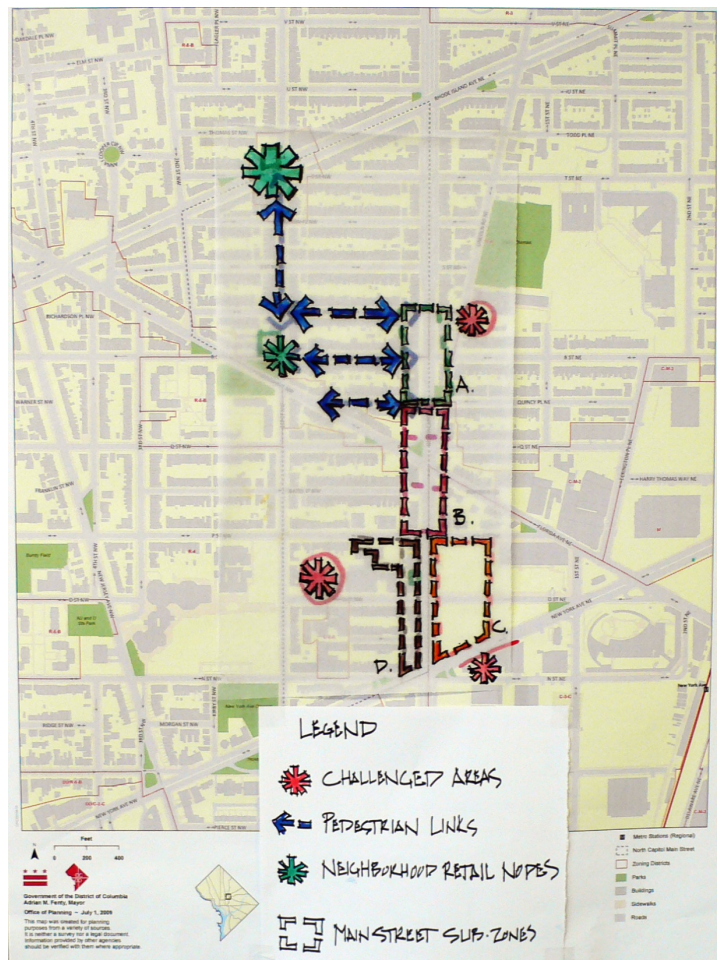


Illustration 1: Neighborhood Retail Nodes, with pedestrian linkages to Main Street Sub-Zones

Near-Term: Create Two Clusters of Neighborhood Retail.

The panel identified two locations in the Bloomingdale neighborhood that it believes offer the best opportunities for clustering neighborhood-serving retail: 1) 1st Street, NW at Rhode Island Avenue, and 2) 1st Street NW at Florida Avenue. These areas offer multiple advantages as retail nodes, which include the following:

- Existing commercial buildings that can accommodate desirable retail uses;
- Existing retail zoning;
- The presence of other successful retail establishments, such as Big Bear Café and Windows Café & Market;
- Serene, well-maintained neighborhood settings, and;
- Good pedestrian access along tree-lined residential streets that connect the Bloomingdale and Eckington neighborhoods, in particular R, Randolph, and Quincy Streets to 1st Street.



Windows Café and Market serves as an example of a successful retail establishment that would both help enable—and benefit from—clustering of neighborhood retail in its immediate vicinity.

The panel recommends that NCMS, Inc. encourage the clustering of up to 20,000 square feet of high-quality retail at these two locations. The community should take a less-is-more approach when it comes to the type of retail tenants it seeks to attract to these neighborhood retail centers. It is far better to lease space to a few high-quality tenants than striving to lease as much retail space as possible, as quickly as possible. Filling up space with marginal tenants is not sustainable over the long term, and will work against the neighborhoods' common cause.

Enhance the Pedestrian Environment between the Retail Nodes. In the near-term, NCMS, Inc. should focus its efforts on concentrating high-quality tenants in the 1st Street, NW retail nodes at Rhode Island and Florida Avenues. Every effort should be made to ensure that the pedestrian environment along 1st Street is safe, clean, and attractive. This section of 1st Street should be a priority for neighborhood clean-up and beautification initiatives.

Longer-Term Potential for Neighborhood Retail on North Capitol Street. New retail of the quality and mix that will appeal to residents and add to the economic vitality of the neighborhood is unlikely to locate on North Capitol Street any time soon. However, when the primary retail nodes recommended for the two locations on 1st Street, NW are well-established and drawing residents from both sides of North Capitol Street, new opportunities for corner retail could open up on both sides of North Capitol Street at the

intersections of Randolph, R, and Quincy Streets—the three major pedestrian linkages between the Bloomingdale and Eckington neighborhoods. It is important to keep in mind that restaurants and other neighborhood-serving retail will be viable on this stretch of North Capitol Street only after the primary retail nodes on 1st Street are thriving and attracting sufficient residents from Eckington. Thus the panel encourages NCMS, Inc. to focus its initial efforts on concentrating quality retail tenants businesses in the 1st Street retail clusters, not on bringing retail to North Capitol Street

North Capitol Street: Viable Uses and Revitalization Strategies

In developing its recommendations for viable uses and development opportunities on North Capitol Street, the panel focused on three distinct sections of the corridor: 1) the area north of Quincy Street, 2) the area between P and Quincy Streets, and 3) the area between P Street and New York Avenue. These sections differ greatly from one another in scale, character, and pedestrian issues, and they present distinctly different market opportunities.

Limited Retail Opportunities. As discussed in the strengths and challenges section above, high-volume automobile commuter traffic, split-level road infrastructure, access and turning limitations, a current and projected oversupply of retail space with uses that are not congruent with the locational factor and local demand, and on-going concerns regarding personal security combine to limit the potential for sustainable retail development along North Capitol Street corridor. The panel concluded that retail is not the highest and best use for North Capitol Street. Panel members agreed that the neighborhood would be better served by moving retail onto the residential streets and encouraging finding more compatible uses along North Capitol Street.

Target Residential, Small Office, and Arts-Related Uses North of Quincy Street. The panel recommends capitalizing on the historic row house architecture along North Capitol Street between Quincy and Rhode Island Streets to attract new residents, small professional offices, home-based offices, and arts-related uses. The city and NCMS, Inc. should encourage the renovation of existing buildings and infill development of vacant lots for residential and small professional office uses in a manner that respects the historic architecture.

Use the Historic Firehouse as a Catalyst for Redevelopment. The Old Engine Company #12 building is the landmark building that best defines the architectural and historic character of the North Capitol Street neighborhood. The city should encourage the redevelopment of this treasured building for a use that sets the tone for future activity. The preservation of the firehouse structure should be a priority, and the city should consider extending financial incentives to assist in



its redevelopment. The panel is aware that the city and many people in the community would like to see this very special building converted to a restaurant or other retail use. However, given the modest residential density within the neighborhood available to support a large restaurant, and the poor retail environment on North Capitol Street to attract customers from the larger area, the reality is that few restaurants and retailers would be willing to make a significant investment at this location. Even if a restaurant owner or a retailer could be incentivized to come to this location, the risk of failure is high. The panel advises the city and the neighborhood to think strategically and realistically when considering future uses for this valuable asset. Good uses for the firehouse building include loft apartments, small professional offices, and an arts-related facility. A dance school could be viable use at this location, particularly if the vacant building next to the firehouse were torn down to create a small surface parking lot. Another possibility is an arts center that combines studio space and an art school.

Target Higher-Density Office or Multifamily Housing between Quincy and P Streets.

Proximity to office buildings and three major arterial streets, and the availability of sites large enough to accommodate surface parking, make the Truxton Circle (as commonly called) section of North Capitol Street a potentially viable location for transient-serving retail. Thus, there is some potential for a drugstore at this location if the neighborhood wants to attract this type of amenity. However, the panel believes that the long-term highest and best use for this area is higher-density office and multifamily housing development. This type of development will become viable as NoMa gains momentum and the economy emerges from the recession.

Assemble Long-Term Development Sites between P Street and New York Avenue.

North Capitol Street between P Street and New York Avenue is well positioned to become a future extension of NoMa. When the market dictates, sites should be assembled for high-density mixed-use office and multifamily housing development. This is also a good location for a recreation center or other community-serving facility.

Planning and Design

The panel was asked to recommend measures that the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) should take to foster business development and growth along North Capitol Street. Recognizing that North Capitol Street will continue to be a major commuter thoroughfare for many years to come, the primary objective should be to improve the pedestrian experience along the corridor. To that end, the panel identified a series of cost-effective and achievable steps that will enhance pedestrian safety and walkability and set the stage for revitalization. Most of these improvements are not mere niceties to be considered when and if there is a surplus in the city's transportation budget. They address serious pedestrian issues and should be high priority action items.

Near-Term DDOT Improvements

NCMS, Inc. should encourage DDOT to make the following infrastructure improvements along North Capitol Street to improve pedestrian safety and vehicular flow.

Implement the *North Capitol Street Transportation Study Recommendations*. An in-depth study completed for DDOT in 2005 by DMJM Harris|AECOM identified numerous issues related to pedestrian safety along the North Capitol Street corridor and recommended improvements for mitigating these problems. The recommended improvements include:

- restriping crosswalks;
- repairing the sidewalks and replacing sidewalks that are less than four feet wide;
- modifying traffic signals, including installation of countdown pedestrian signals, to allow for better pedestrian crossings;
- improving ADA ramps to conform to current ADA standards and adding ADA ramps where they are required; and,
- adding and replacing school zone signs.

Add Textured Pavement at Pedestrian Crosswalks. As has been done in other parts of the city, DDOT could significantly enhance pedestrian safety by introducing textured pavement at pedestrian crossings. The vibration caused by driving across the textured pavement and the visual emphasis of a different-colored pavement texture reinforce motorists' awareness of pedestrians and reminds them to slow down.

Install Speed Cameras. Speed cameras placed at key intersections will help address the serious risk to pedestrians of speeding automobiles. Heavy traffic volumes and the resulting congestion during peak commuting hours minimize speeding through this section of North Capitol Street. However, speeding is an issue during off-peak hours, especially in locations near roadway grade changes.

Provide Additional Bus Shelters. Adding new bus shelters along North Capitol Street will help to support transit service, making it a more convenient and attractive location for residents and businesses. DDOT can take advantage of the city's shelter

advertising program and high visibility for commuters on this corridor to encourage the advertising agency to prioritize installation of advertising shelters in this area.

Create a Focal Point

To enhance the pedestrian experience along the North Capitol Street and Florida Avenue Corridors, and to establish a stronger neighborhood identity and sense of place, the panel suggests creating a strategically located small public plaza or pocket park. One potential opportunity to enhance an existing open space is the area currently occupied by the right-



turn lane for southbound buses, at the northwest corner of North Capitol Street and Florida Avenue, as seen in the illustration above. Buses currently make a sweeping turn around a triangular shaped island of land that is not very pedestrian-friendly. If the right-turn lane were to be closed and relocated further south with a tighter radius, the island could be reintegrated into the block and turned into an inviting public plaza. A landscaped plaza with benches and perhaps a centerpiece work of art or a fountain would create a sense of arrival into a neighborhood and signal the transformation taking place along the corridor. A public plaza amenity would obviously require significant planning, funding, approvals, and coordination. However, opportunities like this will become possible as the neighborhood continues its transformation.

Improve Pedestrian Crossing at Q Street and Lincoln Road

The paved open space at the intersection of Q Street and Lincoln Road on North Capitol Street is extremely wide and feels treacherous for pedestrians crossing the street. The panel suggests working with DDOT to explore the possibility of reducing the width of this pedestrian crossing area to both improve pedestrian safety and better control motorists making turns at this intersection.

Improve Fence Aesthetics at Rhode Island Avenue and T Street

Unattractive fences at the Rhode Island Avenue and T Street intersections with North Capitol Street create an unwelcoming, industrial feel to this block.

Upgrading the fence with a cost effective, but aesthetically pleasing alternative will provide a better gateway into the heart of the historic NCMS neighborhood.



Provide Metered Parking When Necessary

There is ample street parking on North Capitol Street at the moment. However, the demand for parking will increase when the recommended retail nodes on 1st Street, NW become active and residential and office uses begin to appear on North Capitol Street. When parking becomes an issue for businesses located along the corridor, metered parking during certain times of the day can help manage the problem.

Implementation Strategies

The panel recommends several initiatives that NCMS, Inc. could undertake to facilitate neighborhood revitalization and business development. It is important to note, however, that NCMS, Inc. does not have the internal capacity to implement these steps solely on its own. Developing and implementing a community-based plan for neighborhood revitalization will require buy-in and support from residents, businesses and city agencies. NCMS, Inc. is fortunate to have a strong network of talented, involved neighborhood volunteers on which to draw. Going forward, one of NCMS, Inc.'s greatest challenges will be to constantly expand this network of support and resources.

Establish a Database of Vacant Properties

To encourage the redevelopment of vacant properties, NCMS, Inc. needs to know what the redevelopment opportunities are. The first step is to create a database of vacant properties in the NCMS district that provides pertinent information about the building owners, as well as information about the desired use for the building. The database should include, among other items, address, owner or contact for the property, square footage, structure type, permitted uses by the zoning, and possibly photographs of the property.

Initiate a “Know Your Neighbor” Campaign

Provide opportunities for new and current residents to get to know each other and become more aware of activities on the street. More pedestrian activity will provide more “eyes and ears” on residential neighborhood streets and will enhance greater safety in numbers for residents.

Lobby for the Ban of Single Item Beer Sales

NCMS, Inc. should encourage the Washington, D.C. City Council to ban the sale of single bottles and cans of beer in liquor stores in Ward 5. The panel understands this has been done in other wards throughout the city to discourage loitering and public drinking.

Engage Existing Social Service Providers

Social service organizations provide much-needed services for the region as a whole, but they often have few connections with the neighborhoods in which they operate. NCMS, Inc. can try to change this dynamic by reaching out to the social service providers in its district and by encouraging a spirit of understanding and cooperation between the service providers and the community.

Continue to Support Local Businesses

One of the most important steps NCMS, Inc. can take to encourage business development is to take a proactive approach in working with existing and potential business owners. NCMS, Inc. should meet regularly with existing business owners to help them develop ideas and strategies for upgrading their merchandise, services, and buildings. NCMS, Inc. should develop a comprehensive list of financing sources and technical service assistance available to business owners. Most importantly, NCMS,

Inc. should not wait for merchants to seek help. Rather, it should invest the time and effort to go out to business owners and property owner to build a relationship of trust and collaboration, and then actively help them develop effective business plans and get access to financing.

Focus on Outreach Strategies to Enhance the Pedestrian Experience

- Establish regular “neighborhood beautification” days;
- Solicit expertise and technical assistance from local university architecture and business schools;
- Establish regular meetings with all involved citizen groups and public agencies, keeping them and NCMS, Inc. current and well informed of the progress;
- Apply for DDOT Transportation Enhancement Program funding;
- Compile a comprehensive list of potential sources of funding for streetscape, storefront, business and any other improvement and apply for all available grants; and,
- Learn from other organizations in the Washington, D.C area that have a longer history of leading similar neighborhood revitalization efforts.

About the Panel

Robert A. Eisenberg
Heritage Property Company LLC
Bethesda, Maryland

Bob Eisenberg formed Heritage Property Company in 2006 to pursue value-added real estate development opportunities in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. The company's focus is on commercial and multi-family residential development, re-development and repositioning in growth-constrained markets. The company's development activities are carefully conceived to not only address market conditions, but also to enhance and complement the communities in which its projects are located.

Mr. Eisenberg brings to Heritage Property Company more than twenty years of extensive experience in Washington area real estate acquisition, development, financing, leasing, asset and property management and disposition. His career has centered on class-A, institutional grade assets with an emphasis on ground-up development. During his career he has acquired or developed nearly 2 million square feet of office, multi-family and flex properties with an initial valuation of nearly \$500 million.

Mr. Eisenberg holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Maryland and is a licensed real estate agent and CPA in Maryland. He is an active member of the Urban Land Institute where he serves as an officer on the Washington District Council's Executive Committee and is also a member of the Real Estate Group. His philanthropic endeavors include significant support of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society and numerous other charitable organizations.

Erwin N. Andres, P.E.
Gorove/Slade Associates, Inc.
Washington, DC

Mr. Andres has a wide range of traffic and transportation project experience including: traffic impact studies, site access and circulation planning, functional parking lot and garage design, parking demand analysis, corridor studies, campus master planning, major data collection efforts, loading dock design, intersection improvement design, signal design and signing and pavement marking design. He has worked for public, private and institutional sector clients throughout the United States.

He is a Registered Professional Engineer in both Maryland and New Jersey, and received his Bachelor of Science in Civil & Environmental Engineering from Rutgers University in New Brunswick, NJ. He is a member of the following professional organizations: Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE); American Planning Association (APA); National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE); Urban Land Institute (ULI); and Lambda Alpha International, Board of Directors.

Mr. Andres has developed demand management plans, construction management plans, circulation studies, parking studies and transportation master plans for a number of universities, schools and institutions including Ohio State University, Columbus, OH; University of Virginia Health Sciences District Campus, Charlottesville, VA; George Washington University at Mount Vernon College, Washington, DC; National Institutes of Health Master Plan, Bethesda, MD; NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, MD; The National Cathedral Campus Plan, Washington, DC; Washington International School, Washington, DC; and The Norwood School, Potomac, MD.

He has also prepared traffic studies, parking analysis, site access planning, loading access design, site circulation planning and signal designs for projects including: USDOT Headquarters Building, Washington, DC; Exton Square Mall, Exton, PA; Hamilton Marketplace, Hamilton, NJ; and Hospital Center at Orange Redevelopment, Orange, NJ.

Mr. Andres has performed parking needs studies and garage planning for projects such as the National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, MD; Ohio State University, Columbus, OH; and Evermay Society, Washington, DC.

Mr. Andres has prepared traffic, parking, site access and site circulation studies for grocery stores, lifestyle centers, power centers, regional centers and urban retail including the Georgetown Safeway, Washington, DC; Exton Square Mall Expansion, Exton, PA; Lowe's Home Improvement Store, Stony Brook, NY; 7-Eleven Stores, NJ and NY locations; Commerce Bank branches, various NJ, NY, CT, and PA locations; Yum! Brands Restaurants, NY locations; and McDonald's Restaurants, various NJ locations.

Mr. Andres has worked on office and residential development projects involving site planning and access planning as well as the design of both traffic signals and parking garage facilities. Projects have included USDOT Headquarters Building, Washington, DC; National Academy of Sciences, Washington, DC; Orange Hospital Center Residences; Orange, NJ; Ivy Senior Housing Center, Newark, NJ; and the Washington Home, Washington, DC.

Mr. Andres has conducted numerous traffic impact studies in support of rezoning, subdivision, site plan approvals and EIS applications for large and small residential, commercial, office retail and institutional developments. His work includes experience in Pennsylvania, Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut and the District of Columbia.

Steven K. Graul
Innovative Concept Associates, Inc.
Reston, Virginia

Steve Graul founded Innovative Concept Associates, Inc. in 1997 with the vision of offering highly specialized, real estate services to a select group of elite, high profile, restaurant and retail growth companies, and to developers seeking to attract them. As an investment real estate trained professional with a restaurant operations background, he services a prestigious portfolio of clients, from James Beard credentialed chefs and publicly traded national companies to high profile, mixed use development firms. Many of his clients have been with the firm since its inception, almost 12 years ago.

In addition to overseeing all administrative and real estate brokerage functions of the company, Mr. Graul is retained by his clients to act as an advisor and outsourced real estate director, responsible for directing strategic planning and coordinating real estate and brand expansion initiatives. He is empowered by a collaborative network of restaurant and retail real estate specialists across the US and internationally, who support him in fulfilling his clients' goals.

Mr. Graul has negotiated or consulted for transactions valued at \$150 million in 12 states and is currently directing brand expansion for a high profile restaurant client in international markets. He was instrumental in the national expansion of *The Oceanaire Seafood Room* from 1 site to 16 sites, crafting a roll out strategy, managing market selection, asset identification and lease negotiations. He participated in creating the retail merchandising mix and directed retail leasing for *Harbor East* in Baltimore, MD, which includes 500,000 square feet of retail, theater, 10 restaurants, 4 hotels, 650 residential units, and 1 million square feet of office space.

Mr. Graul earned a Bachelors of Business Administration from the College of William & Mary and obtained his designation as a Certified Commercial Investment Member (CCIM) in 1989. He is a member of the Urban Land Institute (ULI) and International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC). He is licensed as a real estate broker in Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia. He can be reached at steve.graul@inconceptinc.com.

Bruce Leonard
StreetSense
Bethesda, Maryland

Mr. Leonard has over 20 years of experience in designing and executing mixed use projects throughout the United States and Europe. While directing design for Cooper Carry's Main Street office in Alexandria, VA, he played a key role in many important projects such as Mizner Park, Bethesda Row, Santana Row, and Crocker Park. Currently, Mr. Leonard is master planning and producing development strategies for a number of large mixed use projects such as National Harbor, Moorefield Station, and

The Village of Valley Forge. The program for these developments totals over 20 million square feet.

Prior to joining StreetSense, Mr. Leonard was a Vice President at Starwood Urban Investments, SUI. While at SUI, Mr. Leonard was responsible for managing and directing the design of all new projects. Mr. Leonard played a key role in evaluating potential development sites in key urban locations, creating development strategies and evolving the strategies into a physical design. Mr. Leonard's other responsibilities included working with the asset management and leasing/tenant construction teams and reviewing all tenant work within the portfolio.

Mr. Leonard maintains an active role in speaking and writing about key urban issues. He recently co-authored the publication Ten Principles for Reinventing America's Suburban Business Districts for the Urban Land Institute and worked on their previous publication entitled Ten Principles for Reinventing America's Suburban Strips. He is currently co-authoring Ten Principles for Successful Town Centers.

Joel Martineau
Burt Hill
Washington, DC

Joel worked at Burt Hill as an intern during his architectural studies at Howard University, where he received his Bachelor of Architecture. He joined Burt Hill full time in 2005. Since joining Burt Hill, he has worked on projects in several of Burt Hill's main market sectors including corporate commercial and higher education. He has gained experience in all phases of design on projects ranging from radio studios to academic buildings and campus planning. Joel has also spent time in Burt Hill's Dubai, UAE office, assisting in the construction administration of a multi-building commercial project. Joel is a member of the firm's Building Information Modeling group. In addition to managing BIM initiatives in the DC office, he is responsible for education and implementation of BIM software corporate wide. While at Howard, he served as a mentor to junior A/E students paired with a local A/E firm, assisting the students with projects geared towards giving them "real world" experience. Joel has also worked with the Washington Architectural Foundation to provide programming and schematic design services for a WAF client.

The following is a representational list of Joel's project work: George Mason University West Hall, Fairfax, VA; Tidewater Community College Portsmouth Campus, Portsmouth, VA; Montgomery College SA250 Lab Renovation, Germantown, MD; Virginia Tech Academic and Student Affairs Building, Blacksburg, VA; Limitless Towers at Downtown Jebel Ali, Dubai, UAE.

Anita B. Morrison
Partners for Economic Solutions
Washington, DC

Anita Morrison founded Partners for Economic Solutions after more than 30 years of economic and development consulting. During her career, Anita has specialized in public/private partnerships, real estate advisory services, redevelopment strategies and economic impact analysis. From large cities to small towns, she applies her understanding of real estate economic fundamentals to questions of development, redevelopment and smart growth. She helps decisions makers and the community to understand how economics and land planning interact. Her market analysis helps to frame the scale, mix and pace of development. Financial analysis evaluates project feasibility, quantifies any funding gap and required investment, and assesses the potential for long-term returns. Fiscal impact analysis forms the basis for realistic and creative funding strategies and allows decision makers to evaluate the potential returns and risks associated with their investment. Anita is adept at incorporating these economic realities into workable solutions.

While working with other consulting firms, she has assisted and represented a number of development agencies with major public/private partnerships, including the District of Columbia Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development, the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation, the Atlanta Development Authority, the Maryland Department of Transportation, the Fort Monroe Federal Area Development Authority, the Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority, the Orlando Community Redevelopment Agency, the Armed Forces Retirement Home - Washington and the City of Dallas. In her 12 years as real estate advisor to the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation, Anita quantified the potential returns from redevelopment as the basis for disposition strategies that encouraged residential, retail and arts development. She evaluated development team proposals for a variety of projects, focusing on the financial feasibility of their proposals and the resulting return to the Corporation. This highly successful endeavor remade the face of "America's Main Street", attracting \$1.7 billion in private investment.

Her redevelopment planning experience, while at another consulting firm, encompasses large and small business districts, corridors and neighborhoods, including: Washington, DC's Georgia Avenue; Landover Gateway in Prince George's County, MD; The Crescent District in Leesburg, VA; West Savannah neighborhood, GA; and Norfolk, VA's Park Place neighborhood.

In all her work, practical implementation strategies tap available resources and forge collaborations and partnerships to achieve a common vision and joint goals.

Paul J. Nabti
Burt Hill
Washington, DC

With a combination of experience in Planning and Landscape Architecture, Paul brings the ability to provide technical analysis as well as design services to each project. At Burt Hill he has worked through all phases of the landscape architecture process, from master planning and preliminary design through construction administration. Projects have also ranged in scale from single buildings in densely developed areas to entirely new university campuses on brownfield sites. Paul provides a willingness to explore whatever resources are necessary to accomplish the needs of a project such as alternative software technologies and information resources. He has also participated in the Planning Information Modeling technology research group at Burt Hill.

Prior to joining Burt Hill, Paul had over six years of experience as a transportation planner focusing on public transportation service planning and pedestrian accessible infrastructure. He has also worked with a research arm of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, as well as a local housing authority. This combination of experience has given him a strong work ethic towards developing unique and intriguing environments which are economically and environmentally sustainable and socially responsible. The following is a representational list of Paul's project work: George Mason University Housing VIIC, Fairfax, VA; Tidewater Community College Portsmouth Campus, Portsmouth, VA; Virginia Tech Academic and Student Affairs Building, Blacksburg, VA; Navy Yard at Noisette, North Charleston, SC; and University of Mary Washington Dahlgren Campus, Dahlgren, VA

Paul has a Master of Landscape Architecture degree from Virginia Tech, Washington-Alexandria Architecture Center; a Graduate Certificate in Landscape Design from George Washington University; and a Bachelor of Arts, Public and Urban Affairs from Virginia Tech. His registrations include the American Institute of Certified Planners, Certified Planner and US Green Building Council, LEED Accredited Professional.

Sakura Namioka
Arlington, Virginia

Sakura served as a Senior Planner for the Arlington County Planning Office (1989-2009) and the City of Harrisburg, PA, as well as Architectural designer for Cambridge Seven and Associates, and Architect, University of Tokyo, Laboratory of Architecture. She is a Member of AICP and APA, International Associate Member of AIA, and a Full member of ULI and Private/Public Partnership Council. She has served as an Instructor at Boston Architectural Center Urban Design Studio, and also served on the ULI National Advisory Services Panel in Mercer County New Jersey in 2004. In addition, she is serving as a faculty for ULI UrbanPlan since 2006.

She holds the following degrees: Master of Urban Design in Architecture from Harvard University; Master of Architecture from the University of Tokyo; and a Bachelor of Architecture from Tokyo University of Arts.