

ULI Washington

A Technical Assistance Panel Report

The Long Branch Community

**Sponsored by:
The Montgomery County Department of Housing and
Community Affairs**

February 8-9, 2005

The Long Branch Community Montgomery County, Maryland

How to Spur Redevelopment Within and Beyond the Long Branch Community's Commercial Center

February 8-9, 2005
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 institute supported by its 23,000 members worldwide. 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 members who live in the Washington Region (1,500 total) are automatically members of the Washington District Council. They include developers, builders, property owners, investors, architects, public officials, planners, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, academics, students and librarians.

About The Technical Assistance Panel Program (TAPs)

The objective of ULI Washington's TAP program is to provide expert, multidisciplinary advice on land use and real estate issues facing public agencies and non-profit 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

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Acknowledgements | Page 4 |
| ULI Panel and Project Staff..... | Page 5 |
| Foreword: Overview and Panel Assignment | Page 6 |
| Introduction and Summary of Recommendations | Page 9 |
| Market Potential | Page 11 |
| Redevelopment Strategies | Page 14 |
| Planning and Design | Page 16 |
| Implementation | Page 20 |
| Conclusions | Page 21 |
| Appendices:..... | Page 22 |
| About the Panel | Page 26 |

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The panel also appreciates the time and energy of the members of the Long Branch Task Force who helped procure the panel, provided insight onto the panel's scope, led the panel site tour, participated in the roundtable discussions and attended the final presentation. The panel was impressed with the level of commitment these members have to the betterment of their community.

Special thanks are extended to Roylene Roberts, Denise Stilla, Frances Snetter-Carey and Tim Miner of Montgomery County as well as Joel Gallihue of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission for the time they took to plan for the panel, prepare briefing materials and ensure that the panel went smoothly.

The panel would also like to extend its thanks to Douglas M. Duncan, Montgomery County's County Executive; Montgomery County Council members Thomas E. Perez, President; George Leventhal, Vice President; and Nancy Floreen; as well as other area stakeholders and community leaders for their participation in the panel process.

ULI Washington hopes that the comments and recommendations provided in this report result in a valuable contribution to the redevelopment of this area as a whole. We encourage Montgomery County to inform us of new developments associated with Long Branch's revitalization and allow us to participate in future panels should the need arise.

This report has been dedicated to the memory of W. Retta Gilliam. Ms. Gilliam contributed significantly to this panel, but more important was her contribution to the Anacostia area of Washington, DC, where she had worked tirelessly to create a better community. Ms. Gilliam was enthusiastic about the opportunities that the Long Branch community has to offer and was pleased to have been able to contribute to the plans for its future.

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Foreword: Overview and Panel Assignment

The Long Branch community of Silver Spring, Maryland is an economically and ethnically diverse community with over 27,000 residents located inside the Capital Beltway in Maryland's most populous jurisdiction of Montgomery County.

Long Branch's commercial center, which was the focus of the Technical Assistance Panel, has 292,000 square feet of retail space in six small retail centers at scattered locations along Flower Avenue and Piney Branch Road. The 95 retail shops and restaurants that make up the retail



One of four grocery stores within the community

centers are primarily small "Mom and Pop" stores, and an abundance of them are discount retail shops. There are also a large number of grocery stores in the area. Giant Food grocery store, located within the panel's study area has higher than the national average sales for a large grocery store and reportedly succeeds in drawing from beyond the immediate trade area. In addition to Giant Food, three other grocery stores (Bestway, Americana Grocery and Oriental Supermarket) have a special niche, offering both Latin and Asian groceries.

While investment in the commercial area has been primarily limited to the County's façade treatment program, there have been recent discussions with Washington Adventist Hospital to locate a medical office building on the site, which the County hopes will spur additional redevelopment in the commercial area.

The diversity of Long Branch is also reflected in its housing stock, which is among the oldest in the County. Multi-family complexes, garden apartments, townhouses and single family houses are located within the community with approximately 42 percent of those being used as rental apartments. While rents in the community are among the most affordable in the County, they are still high with only 10% of the units being rented at below-market rates. For sale homes on the other hand have appreciated significantly, with sales exceeding \$500,000 for some single family homes.

Creation of the Long Branch Task Force

After the East Silver Spring Master Plan was approved in December 2000, the County recognized that the Long Branch community, whose ethnically and economically diverse population differed significantly from any other part of Montgomery County, required further study due to its unique needs.

Montgomery County Executive Douglas M. Duncan and the Montgomery County Council therefore appointed The Long Branch Task Force to undertake a two-year in-depth examination of their community and make recommendations to the County Executive. The

objective of the Long Branch Task Force, as defined in the enabling resolution, is “to address the full range of issues affecting the quality of life in the Long Branch community, including the needed revitalization of the residential and commercial areas in Long Branch. It should work to achieve a healthy, stable and sustainable community.”¹ The Task Force which was convened in 2002 concludes on May 31, 2005.

Issues

Over the past two and one-half years, the Long Branch Task Force identified several key issues that it has worked to resolve. Task Force members have learned that residents of Long Branch often leave the community for shopping and other services -- needs that the Task Force members believe could be satisfied within the community itself. One of the main reasons that people shop outside of Long Branch is because the current commercial district lacks cohesiveness, linkages, safety, and connectivity, making it an unfriendly place to drive and walk. The district also lacks the type and variety of stores that residents desire, as well as gathering places where residents feel that they can safely congregate and provide a sense of community.



The community currently lacks the variety of stores that would draw residents to the commercial center.

Task Force members concluded that in order to promote the rejuvenation of Long Branch, the community needs a catalyst that will invigorate the commercial district and help to revitalize surrounding areas. Long Branch needs to create an atmosphere that will draw its residents back to the core of the community.

The Assignment

Having recently released its Second Annual Report, the Long Branch Task Force made one of its priority recommendations to enlist the assistance of the Urban Land Institute’s Washington District Council in conducting a Technical Assistance Panel to respond to the issues the Task Force had enumerated.

The ten member ULI Washington TAP panel spent an intensive one and one-half days touring the Long Branch community; participating in a briefing led by Elizabeth Davison, Director of Montgomery County’s Department of Housing and Community Affairs; sitting down with Task Force members and area stakeholders to discuss their hopes and concerns; and spending hours behind closed doors deliberating on the issues and formulating recommendations.

In the context of the challenges outlined above, Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Affairs put forth the following questions for consideration by the ULI Washington TAP panel:

¹ Resolution 14-975

1. The Catalyst. What types of uses would successfully create a catalyst for the redevelopment of the commercial district and lead to the revitalization of the surrounding area, such as the ERA Market study suggested “restaurant row”?
2. Medical Office Building. What is the demand for professional/medical office space in the Long Branch area? How can the Long Branch Town Center best accommodate this need?
3. Demands on Infrastructure. What would be the impact of a medical / office building or other retail development have on the infrastructure?
4. Bi-County Transit Way. Is the Arliss Street location a suitable location for a metro (Purple Line) station?
5. Connections. How can the redevelopment of the commercial core create cohesiveness within the commercial area and provide better connections to the surrounding residential and civic areas?
6. Parking District. What effect would the creation of a Parking District have on the development potential of the study area?
7. Parking Needs. What is the best means to address the parking needs in Long Branch?
8. Joint Effort Among Landowners. Given the many owners of Long Branch, what can the sponsor do to get the property owners to agree to develop their properties as part of a larger revitalization effort?
9. Phasing Redevelopment. Can the development of Long Branch be done incrementally or do the properties require consolidation?
10. County Involvement. What role should the County play in the development of Long Branch?
11. Zoning Incentives. Are the Commercial Revitalization Overlay Zone (CROZ) incentives effective?

After finalizing its recommendations, the panel presented its findings to the Department of Housing and Community Affairs, Task Force members, and invited guests.

Introduction and Summary of Recommendations

When redeveloping a community it is important that it have a positive impact twenty to thirty years into the future. In order to determine what was best for the future, panel members took the opportunity to look at what has made Long Branch successful in the past.

Silver Spring and specifically the Long Branch Community have always provided the gateway to the American dream. Beginning with Roosevelt's New Deal administration in the late 1930s, there was a commitment to the ideals of social justice. Housing with ample open space, sunlight, privacy and good design was built in the community for lower income people who could not otherwise afford good housing.

Long Branch remains a gateway today, providing some of the most affordable housing in the County as well as single family homes for first time home buyers. The panel found it important to respect the New Deal goals when considering how best to redevelop Long Branch's commercial center.

The panel also took into consideration the priorities of the community. Panelists had the opportunity to sit down with members of the Long Branch Task Force, public officials, and area stakeholders which gave them additional insight into the community's main concerns. Coupled with the information in the panelists' briefing materials, panel members left the roundtable discussions understanding the key priorities for the redevelopment of the community as: safety, affordability, an identity for community, connectivity, new business development, home ownership, and parking.



Douglas M. Duncan, Elizabeth Davison, ULI panelists and members of the community discuss Long Branch's issues

Keeping in mind the history of Long Branch and the community's hopes for its future, the panel developed recommendations on how to revitalize the commercial center. The environment of the commercial center is in the panel's opinion what has led to the center's downfall, and what will be the catalyst for its redevelopment. Through good design and a mix of uses that satisfy a broad range of consumers, the center will bring itself back to life. Currently residents do not come to the center because they do not feel safe, it is difficult to drive and walk through due its design and large surface parking lots, it is not a place to socialize, and it does not offer a broad retail mix. These deficiencies have also discouraged new stores that serve moderate- and middle-income residents from locating there. Incrementally redeveloping the study area to provide for a pedestrian friendly environment with new stores will bring the critical mass of people, who are already there, into the core of Long Branch.

To create a catalytic environment through good design, the panel recommends taking the commercial center, which is a super block in an otherwise urban grid setting, and breaking it into

four quadrants. By implementing a “Main Street” concept, these four quadrants will be able to support an array of uses including a medical office building, a larger, redeveloped Giant Food grocery store, restaurants, retail shops, housing, parking structures and a transit station.

In order to support redevelopment, facilitate land assemblage and attract private sector investment to the area, the panel found it necessary to increase the density of the commercial core. Providing for greater height limitations as well as residential units above retail shops, will attract new business development, provide for home ownership within the core of Long Branch, and allow for the development of parking structures. Home owners and tenants within the commercial core will also provide additional eyes and foot traffic within the center, inherently increasing safety in the area.

Concurrent with the incorporation of incentives to redevelop the commercial core, the panel felt it necessary to encourage redevelopment of the adjacent residential apartment properties utilizing similar density incentives. This will enhance the success of the commercial core redevelopment.

To implement the recommendations for the study area the panel recommends that a separate entity be formed to foster the relationships of property owners in order to revitalize the commercial center and surrounding areas. The panel recommends that the County help facilitate the establishment of a separate entity such as a Community Development Corporation (CDC).



At the onset of the panel, panel members took both a bus and walking tour of the greater Long Branch Community.

Market Potential

The panel recognizes that there is substantial demand for revitalization of the commercial center from a base of households within Long Branch with strong aggregate spending power. The key in revitalizing the area is therefore to create a place that attracts residents to both shop and socialize. Currently, a majority of the residents come to Long Branch for groceries and dry cleaning, turning to downtown Silver Spring and other areas for all other forms of shopping and entertainment.

While the panel realizes that Long Branch is not destined nor desired to become the next downtown Silver Spring, panelists felt that there was ample demand to create a quality place with a pedestrian environment where neighborhood serving retail and services could thrive in a walkable center. The key will be to create convenience shops and services that serve the entire community of different income levels.

Grocery Store

The Giant Food grocery store located in the Long Branch study area is reported to have higher than average sales levels and the panel found it to be the one thing that continues to bring Long Branch residents to the commercial center on a weekly basis. The Giant Food's lease does not expire until August 31, 2021, and its sales have proven that there is demand for a large grocery store within the commercial center. The current Giant Food however is housed in a 40,000 square foot footprint while newer Giant Food grocery stores require a 60,000 square foot or larger footprint. The panel believes that the grocery store is necessary to the vitality of the center and every effort should be made to keep it in operation throughout the entire redevelopment process.

Restaurant Row

The Economics Research Associates (ERA) market study that was prepared in November 2002 and provided to the panel in their briefing materials presents the opportunity of a "restaurant row." The panel echoes ERA's recommendation believing that restaurants will be an important use in the commercial core and recommends that this idea be pursued. The panel does recognize however, that restaurants in this location will operate primarily during the evening and on weekends, which makes it more difficult to attract restaurants that need activity during the weekday hours as well.



The panel recommends keeping the Flower Theater for when the demand arises.

Medical Office Building

The panel learned that there have been discussions with Washington Adventist Hospital to locate a medical office building within the study area. The panel found this to be a unique opportunity

of which the community should take advantage. While not guaranteed to bring additional medical office development to the community, it could be the lever to kick-off redevelopment.

A medical office building would generate daytime activity within Long Branch and would generate approximately 80 jobs. The panel felt that the office building would be best accommodated with shared parking² that supported other retail uses. While the panel recognized community concerns that a 50,000 square foot building would be a stark contrast to the single family homes that line Flower Avenue, the panel pointed out that a medical office building would buffer the residential neighborhood from more active uses and if accompanied by a coordinated parking strategy, would alleviate some of the causes of congestion on both Piney Branch Road and Flower Avenue.

Bi-County Transit Way

The Bi-county Transit Way also known as the Purple line will provide a high-capacity public transportation link between Bethesda in Montgomery County, and New Carrollton in Prince George's County. The Maryland Transit Administration is currently in the process of identifying key locations for transit stations and the panel understands that the corner of Piney Branch Road and Arliss Street is under consideration.

The panel believes that the corner of Piney Branch Road and Arliss Street is a suitable location for a transit stop. There are a large number of residents living within walking distance of the location, and redevelopment of the commercial center will also add residents and jobs.

The panel points out however, that being chosen for a transit stop is a competitive process. By increasing the residential population and density, thereby creating a larger critical mass, the site will become more feasible and desirable from the perspective of the Maryland Transit Administration.

Residential Uses

In order to successfully redevelop the commercial core the panel believes that it is necessary to include residential units in and around the commercial center of Long Branch.

Commercial Center. Residential apartments and condominiums above retail space within the commercial center will activate the district. There will be more foot traffic, as well as additional eyes and ears around the clock, increasing safety, and adding homeowners, who care about their neighborhood, to the community.

Residential units above retail will help to offset the risk to private sector developers. While the demand for retail and restaurants has not proven itself in the area, residential units in this particular location will likely sell and rent quickly compensating for any delay in finding tenants

² ULI's shared parking standards determine how many spots each of the uses for the parking need and then analyze when those parking spots would be filled by each use to determine whether uses can share parking spots. Here, the medical office building would require parking spots for office hours, leaving their spots unused on evenings and weekends. The grocery store's parking needs however increase during evenings and weekends and therefore could use the medical office building's spaces instead of building additional spots of its own. Reducing the overall number of parking spots therefore reduces the overall cost of building the parking garage.

for the retail or restaurants locations. The residential units will in turn activate the market for the higher quality retail that current residents are seeking. These additional residents also generate tax revenues to the County that will allow for the County to provide reasonable subsidies to the overall project.

Flower Branch Apartments. While not officially included within the panel's study area, panelists found it difficult to focus on the commercial center without considering the future of the Flower Branch Apartments.

While the panel believes that the redevelopment focus should begin with the commercial center, the panel clearly sees redeveloping the Flower Branch Apartments into a mixed-income residential community, as necessary for the long-term viability of the commercial core.

Looking through the eyes of a future investor, the panel was concerned with the negative impact that the Flower Branch Apartments could have on redevelopment. The 316-units situated on the 10-acre property appeared deteriorated and bursting at the seams with residents. If developers were to make a large investment in the redevelopment of the commercial center, the panel believes that they would look for plans to redevelop the adjacent property as well.



The panel recommends that the County consider the future of the Flower Branch Apartments.

Redevelopment Strategies

Commercial Revitalization Overlay Zoning

The purpose of the Takoma Park/East Silver Spring Commercial Revitalization Overlay Zone (CROZ) is to foster economic vitality and attractive community character in areas needing revitalization; promote an enhanced pedestrian environment and an improved circulation system to pedestrians and bicycles as well as motor vehicles; ensure consistency with the master plan vision for specific existing commercial areas; and provide for the combination of residential with commercial uses by providing for flexibility of certain development standards which may allow for more commercial development and better design than would otherwise be achieved; providing for design review either through site plan review, or administrative review for minor changes; allowing or limiting uses consistent with the master plan vision for specific commercial areas; and enabling the master plan to modify the development standards of the base zones.³



The panel looked at how it could better link the Community Center and Library with the community



The panel found however that current incentives provided by the CROZ are not effective as evidenced by the private sector not utilizing the incentives. More importantly though in the panel's opinion, the CROZ does not provide for the level of density and building heights necessary to encourage redevelopment in the Long Branch commercial center.

Height and Density Limitations. Currently the CROZ limits building heights to 30 feet within the overlay zone. It is only with the Planning Board's approval that additional height may be added to buildings; up to 42 feet for commercial development, and up to 50 feet for residential development. The CROZ does not however, define the floor area ratio (F.A.R.)¹ for the area. It is the panel's opinion that the CROZ needs to be more specifically defined from Flower Avenue to the Long Branch Community Center to provide for additional density and allow for greater height.

The Long Branch commercial center currently has a floor area ratio (FAR) of 0.35:1. It is the panel's opinion that in order to create the critical mass to bring to Long Branch the services and business that the community is seeking, the density within the commercial core needs to be increased to 3 FAR. Areas like Silver Spring, which have been successfully redeveloped have allowed for a FAR of 4 to 5, a density that while appropriate for that area, would in the panel's opinion, overwhelm the Long Branch community.

³ Montgomery County Code, Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 59, Sec 59-C-18.21

Taking into consideration the grade change on the study area and how much of the current site is surface parking, the panel believes that an increase in density to a 3 FAR will not be nearly as dramatic as the number sounds. Currently the CROZ allows up to 50' in height for residential uses. By starting at a 50' height along the west side of Flower Avenue, and increasing in height at appropriate increments eastward and away from the residential homes on Flower Avenue, the impact of a 3 FAR in regards to height is not any different to the existing homes than what is currently in place with the CROZ.⁴

Affordable Housing. Montgomery County's Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (MPDU) program requires new residential developments to set aside 12.5% of their units for the MPDU program. By increasing the density of the development to an FAR of 3, approximately 150 new affordable units would be developed within the commercial core,⁵ improving the economic diversity of the community. With the added redevelopment of Flower Branch Apartments at a 3 FAR, over 190 additional affordable units could be added to the community.⁶ This total of 340 MPDUs is achievable at a set aside of 15%. A higher set aside for MPDUs or a separate set aside for workforce housing could bring even more affordable units to the community. An increase in density within the study area will maintain the affordability of the project, increase the number of affordable residential units that will be built, and require less county investment.

Parking Strategy. When redeveloping the commercial site, the current surface parking lots will have to be removed in order to develop the land to its highest and best use; creating the need for structured parking. As outlined in the Market Potential section, the panel believes that a parking analysis be undertaken to determine the extent in which the redevelopment could support a shared parking strategy. Every effort should be made to overlap uses for the parking spaces in order to decrease the overall number of spaces needed and therefore the cost of the structures.

While the creation of parking districts and meters were suggested to support the building of the parking structures, the panel would rather see that cost born by the developers in return for a



One of many parking lots that would be replaced with a more efficient use of the land.

greater FAR. The more in line the redevelopment is with an FAR of 2 or 3, the more likely the private developer will be able to pay for the structured parking. Conversely, if the redevelopment plan remains at its low FAR, then the County will need to subsidize the parking structures. The panel felt however that a parking fee to use the grocery store or other retail establishments within the center would only deter people from coming to the commercial district.

⁴ Please see Appendix 1 for examples of an F.A.R between 2 and 3.

⁵ Calculated with 15% MPDUs.

⁶ Calculated with 15% MPDUs.

Planning and Design

Looking beyond the immediate study area, the panel noted that the Long Branch, Takoma Park and Silver Spring neighborhoods all adhere to an urban grid system. The commercial center on the other hand appears as a suburban super block, out of place in the midst of an urban framework. In order to redevelop the center into its natural urban framework, the panel determined that it was necessary to fracture the super block and create a grid system that would provide for a hierarchy of streets and reconnect the community to its parks and civic assets.

Urban Grid System

As depicted in Figure 1 the panel took the study area and divided it into four quadrants (A, B, C, & D) creating two new secondary roads. The new road running on a horizontal axis extends east beyond the quadrants, following an existing foot path past the Long Branch library and the Long Branch Community Center eventually connecting to Piney Branch Road. By allowing both vehicular and pedestrian access via the new street, both civic uses are integrated into the center of the community. The new road framework also provides better access to Piney Branch Creek and its surrounding park area.



Figure 1: Urban grid system connects civic uses to the Long Branch Community. See Appendix 2

Create an Identity. While panel members found Long Branch to be a vibrant, diverse community, it was apparent that the community and its commercial center lacked identity. The panel recommends establishing both a beginning and end to the precinct through the use of gateway monumentation, continuous streetscaping treatments, pedestrian amenities and signage. The panel strongly believes that integrated within the redevelopment of the commercial center, there should be a memorable gathering spot such as a public plaza where residents can socialize, wait for a friend, or sit with a cup of coffee. The area does not have to be large; Bethesda accomplished this with a simple fountain and seating in front of Barnes and Noble on Woodmont Avenue.

Development Framework

By breaking the commercial center into more manageable blocks the panel was able to clearly see how this large study area could become a very walkable, inviting area. The newly created road on the vertical axis provides a new main street for the center. A visually and functionally strong public environment must be created along all streets in the core area. Pedestrian in scale, these walkways provide a vibrant opportunity to enjoy shopping, socializing, and safe havens to sit at neighborhood cafes and restaurants to ‘people-watch.’

Quadrant A. The panel envisions Quadrant A to contain primarily retail uses with a 600-space structured parking garage located in the middle of the block. This would serve as a parking reservoir for the retail space and combined with parking in other quadrants, would be the central part of parking management plan for the district. The panel recommended keeping the Flower Theater, noting that while it may not have a current reuse, over time it will.

It was evident to the panel through its briefing materials, roundtable discussions and the Task Force’s reaction to County Executive Douglas M. Duncan’s suggestion to move the liquor store, that there is little desire for a liquor store at the gateway to Long Branch. Panel members shared this sentiment recommending that a more vibrant use occupy this prime space.



A liquor store currently occupies the space at the corner of Piney Branch Road and Flower Avenue.

Quadrant B. Quadrant B makes room for the Bi-county Transit Way by leaving the corner of Piney Branch Avenue and Arliss Street untouched. The panel felt that the Chevron gas station was an appropriate use for the corner until or even without the proposed transit station stop.



The Chevron gas station is an appropriate use for its location.

Adjacent to the gas station, the panel proposes retail / restaurant and green space to pull people into the core of the redevelopment, and create an identifiable front door to the commercial district. The remainder of the block is designated to a mix of retail and residential. The panel proposes residential apartments and for sale condominiums above retail with parking in the middle of the block. The panel believes that the parking could be shared by both the residents and retailers. The retail space could then carry the cost of its own parking.

Quadrant C. The two most prominent uses within Quadrant C are the proposed medical office building and the grocery store. The panel agrees with the County that the proposed location at the northwest edge of the study area at the corner of Flower Avenue and Arliss Street is an appropriate location for the medical office building.

Keeping in mind the importance of the Giant Food grocery store to attracting residents to the commercial center, the panel proposed rebuilding the outdated grocery store next door, on a 60,000 square foot footprint of what is currently surface parking. This will enable the Giant Food to turn out the lights in its current location one night and turn them on in the new location the next morning. Given its proximity to the medical office building, the panel recommends that the Giant Food be built with below grade parking that can be shared with the medical office building. The panel recommends that retail and restaurant and perhaps residential uses be accommodated on the remainder of the quadrant.

Quadrant D. Similar to Quadrant B, the panel recommends that Quadrant D accommodate a mix of uses with an interior parking structure accessible from Arliss Street. Following the same model as Quadrant B, this quadrant would allow for retail on the first floor with residential units above.

Phasing. The redevelopment of Long Branch's commercial center should begin with Quadrant C. The panel believes that relocating the grocery store and bringing the medical office building to the community is an essential first step in the redevelopment of the commercial district. This would allow for the remaining parcels to be combined and reconfigured facilitating orderly redevelopment as illustrated in the concept plan (Figure 3). For the next phase of development, the panel proposes Quadrant A, with the 600-car parking structure be developed, followed by Quadrant C and Quadrant D as the market demands.



Figure 2: Open space framework; see Appendix 3 for larger version



Figure 3: Concept Plan; see Appendix 3 for larger version

Traffic and Circulation

After reading the Long Branch Resident Shopping Study completed by Hollander Cohen & McBride in May of 2004, it was evident to the panel that residents found the study area to be congested, confusing, and unfriendly to pedestrians.

The panel noted that the traffic experienced in the community is a regional traffic problem, not a local traffic problem. The volume is due to people passing through the area to and from their way to work.

To address this issue the panel suggested improvements to Piney Branch Road such as widening the right-of-way to allow for the creation of a landscaped boulevard, which would slow traffic and make an enjoyable and safe pedestrian environment. This feature could also help identify the greater Long Branch area to those traveling along Piney Branch Road.

The panel also recommended a speed table at the intersection of Piney Branch Avenue and Flower Avenue. A speed table is nothing more than an extended speed bump, bringing the grade of the road up to sidewalk level. Placing a speed table at this intersection will not only slow traffic, but increase awareness that pedestrians are in the area.

The panel addressed the circulation issues with a revised grid for the study area. By extending the new horizontal road past the library and community center to Piney Branch Road, vehicles will have an alternative to Arliss Street if their destination is the shopping center, library or areas north of the library.

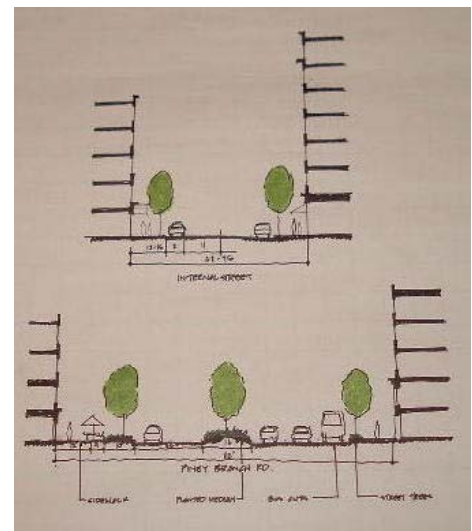


Figure 4: Landscaped medians will increase pedestrian safety; See Appendix 4 for larger version.

Implementation

The panel commends the role that Montgomery County has taken in forming the Task Force and providing staff liaisons to determine how to best revitalize the Long Branch Community. Given that the Task Force dissolves in May 2005, the panel believes going forward there needs to be some organization other than the County working full time to foster the relationships of property owners in order to revitalize the commercial center and surrounding areas. The panel believes that a separate entity is the most effective means in doing this and therefore the county's primary role should be to help facilitate its establishment. While further research should be undertaken by the County to determine the most appropriate entity formation for this revitalization project, the panel recommends that the County consider following a model such as or similar to a Community Development Corporation (CDC).

A CDC is a locally based, independent, 501(c) (3), not-for-profit agency that focuses on leveraging the public and private sector in order to redevelop the targeted area. Led by an experienced Executive Director who in this case has expertise in real estate finance and community development, the CDC could have up to one or two additional staff members as well as any number of needed consultants. Directed by its mission and objectives as determined by a diverse policy making board, the CDC would work with the development community and land owners to create a shared vision and development plan. The CDC acts a liaison between residents, property owners, and the County to initiate strategic planning and redevelopment.



The panel discusses their recommendations behind closed doors

The three keys to a successful CDC are first, to have a clear mission and objectives; second, to structure the policy making board with a strong mix of citizens, government officials, deal makers, and financial experts; and third to have a targeted boundary of operation from which the CDC can work within.

While funding for a CDC is provided by both the public and private sector, the panel recommends that the county help seed the CDC or similar organization over the first few years. The CDC can also look to area foundations such as the Meyer Foundation, the Cafritz Foundation, the Fannie Mae Foundation, and area banks for financial support.

CDC's also have the ability to receive recoverable grants. A recoverable grant is funding that is provided under terms that provide for the return of capital under certain circumstances. It is a non-interest bearing loan that is unsecured and is unconditionally repayable if the project is completed or moves to the next phase. The primary advantage of this type of funding, compared to low-interest loans, is the simplicity of the transaction. The documentation may be quite similar to that of a traditional grant and require no more than a modified grant agreement.

National non-profit intermediaries such as Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC) or the Enterprise Foundation are usually sources of this type of financing.

In addition to grants and recoverable grants, a CDC would also have access to below market rate funding from foundations and non-profit intermediaries interested in neighborhood/community revitalization. These funds can provide leverage, along with public sector financing, to produce the required rate of return for traditional funding sources. This tiered financing structure produces a win-win situation for residents, the county government, land owners and investors.

Whether the new entity is formed as a CDC or in another manner, the panel believes that efforts should be made to create an organization that can offer the same value that a CDC can bring to a community like Long Branch.

Conclusions

The panel's recommendations build upon the strong foundation of the Long Branch Community and respond to the concerns heard throughout the panel. With continued community participation and an understanding that in order to finance and attract the type, size and scope of redevelopment that the community members are seeking, added heights and additional residents will be required, the panel believes that the Long Branch community will continue to thrive as the gateway to the American dream.

Appendix 1

Examples of development with a 2-3 Floor-to-Area Ratio



Appendix 2

Figure 1
Urban Grid System connects civic uses to the Long Branch Community



Appendix 3

Figure 2: Open Space Framework

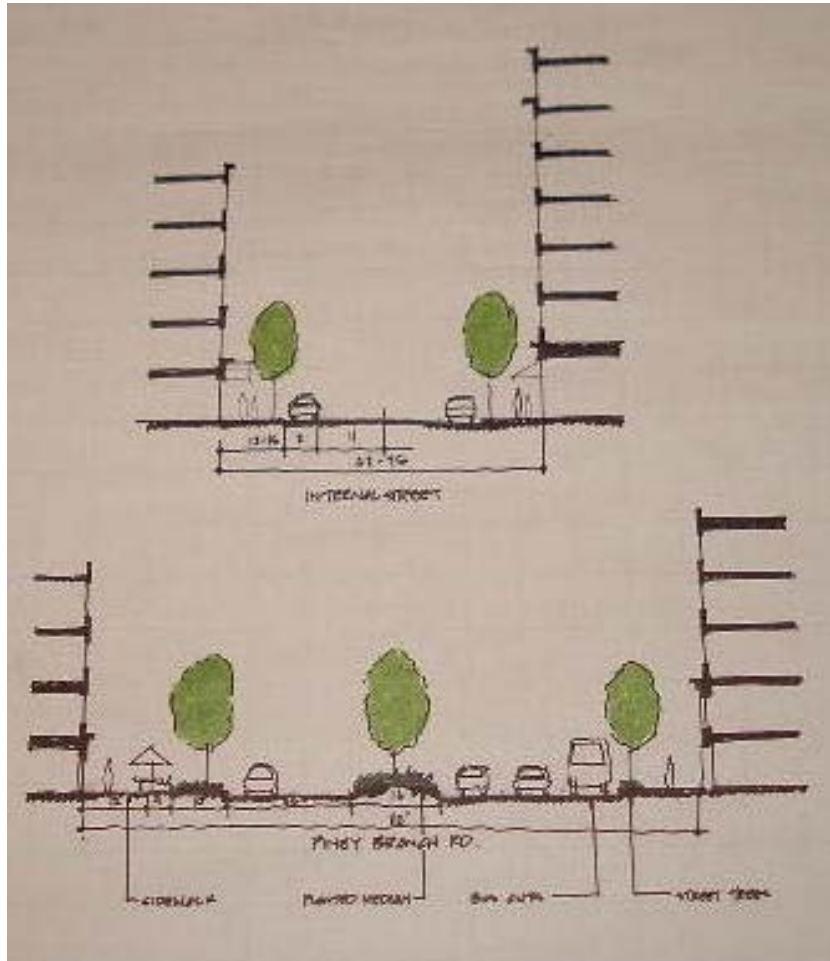


Figure 3: Concept Plan



Appendix 4

Figure 4: Landscaped medians will increase pedestrian safety



About the Panel

Edward W. Gosselin
Intrepid Real Estate
Washington, DC

Ed Gosselin has been in commercial real estate for the past 18 years, completing \$600,000,000 in leasing, development and acquisition transactions representing 3,500,000 square feet, in Chicago, Denver and Washington, D.C. He joined Intrepid Real Estate when it was founded in 1998. He is responsible for property acquisitions, financing and asset management. Intrepid concentrates on property redevelopment and has completed \$130,000,000 in transactions representing 600,000 square feet of office and residential properties in Washington.

Mr. Gosselin moved to Washington D.C. in 1996 to become a principal in the acquisitions group of a local development firm where he completed 260,000 square feet of joint venture suburban office development. Prior to his relocation to Washington, Mr. Gosselin was Vice President of Acquisitions for HMB Partners in Denver, Colorado. While in this position HMB created a 1,200,000 square foot office portfolio in Denver and Phoenix.

Mr. Gosselin has a BA in Economics from Colorado State University and a MBA from DePaul University. He is on the Executive Committee of Urban Land Institute's Washington District Council, Vice-Chairman of Board of Trustees for the Maryland Chapter of the Multiple Sclerosis Society, Board of Trustees of the Anne Arundel Medical Center Foundation and Board of Directors of the Annapolis Boys and Girls Club. Mr. Gosselin lives in Annapolis, Maryland with his wife Debbie and their two children.

D. Gregory Ault
EDAW, Inc.
Alexandria, VA

Greg Ault is a senior planner and landscape architect with more than 23 years experience with international design firms and in private practice. As a Practice Principal of EDAW, Inc., his work with large-scale mixed-use projects assists in bringing a focus to the conceptual stages of retail, office and residential planning. He specializes in preparing rezoning and planning approvals for complex urban sites across the globe. Implemented projects range from Fortune 500 world headquarters to waterfront master plans to detailed urban streetscape designs. He has prepared numerous rezoning and planning approvals for complex urban sites in the U.S. and abroad.

Mr. Ault's recent project experience includes the planning and design of a mixed-use development adjacent to a rapid transit station in Prince George's County, Maryland; adaptive reuse of a former prison site in Fairfax County; park, plazas and streetscapes and recreation areas for a master planned community in Celebration, Florida; as well as the design and planning of a neighborhood center for a 1,000 acre residential community in Anne Arundel County, MD.

Mr. Ault received a Bachelor of Science degree in landscape architecture from Purdue University. He has provided expert services to several professional organizations as well as numerous academic speaking engagements. Mr. Ault is an elected official of Harper's Choice Village Board in Columbia, Maryland, representing 10,000 residents; and is a member of the Urban Land Institute.

Nat Bottigheimer
Maryland Department of Transportation
Hanover, MD

Nat Bottigheimer is a planner and policy analyst with the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT). He heads a group that aims to improve coordination between MDOT's highway and transit planning functions and the State's local planning and development agencies.

Before joining MDOT in 2000, Mr. Bottigheimer worked as a consultant on development and planning issues for clients including state and local governments, developers, EPA's "Smart Growth" office, USDOT, and private toll authorities. Mr. Bottigheimer has a Bachelor's degree from Harvard and a Masters in Public Policy from UC Berkeley.

William C. Caldwell
RTKL Associates, Inc.
Alexandria, VA

William C. Caldwell is a Principal in the Washington, DC office of RTKL Associates Inc., a fifty year old full service design firm with offices in Baltimore, Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, Miami, London, Madrid, Tokyo and Shanghai. In this role, he has been responsible for several high profile mixed-use and transit oriented planning projects in major cities around the nation, including: Gateway Village, Charlotte, North Carolina; Coca-Cola Olympic City Master plan, Atlanta, Georgia; 2012 Washington Olympic Village, College Park, Maryland; and the Metro West Station Area Plan, Vienna, Virginia.

A native of Phoenix, Arizona, Mr. Caldwell received his architectural and planning education at Arizona State University and the University of Miami, and is a licensed Architect in Arizona and in Germany, where he practiced for several years. With more than 16 years of experience in master planning, urban design and architecture, his portfolio includes a diverse body of international and domestic work, including mixed-use communities, corporate and academic campuses, and urban and suburban physical master planning. His current work includes several large new mixed-use and urban redevelopment projects for local and national developers. Mr. Caldwell is a member of the American Institute of Architects, Urban Land Institute, Congress for New Urbanism and is a LEED Accredited Professional.

Mr. Caldwell joined the Planning and Urban Design practice group at RTKL in 1996, was named Principal in 2001 and is currently the acting practice group leader in the Washington office.

W. Retta Gilliam
East of the River, CDC
Washington, DC

W. Retta Gilliam was an accomplished executive in the area of community and economic development. She was the President and Executive Director of the East of the River Community Development Corporation (ERCDC). To this position she brought more than fifteen years of relevant experience including a tour of duty in the Peace Corps in Africa, and work with the Bank of Boston and Citicorp.

Ms. Gilliam was the founder and past Managing Director of the Gilliam Group - which provided consulting services in Entrepreneurial Training and Development, Financial Management, and Housing and Real Estate Development. She served in the United States Peace Corps as a Small Business Advisor in Kenya, East Africa. In that capacity, she developed and implemented a financial management system for the government, developed a loan fund, a training program for small business owners, and conducted feasibility studies for housing and infrastructure projects. As an Investment Associate for the Equitable Capital Management Corporation in New York, Ms. Gilliam was responsible for analyzing fixed income investments and leveraged buyout transactions, cash flow and sensitivity studies, modification of loan covenants, and due diligence and investment recommendations. In Chicago, she worked as a Financial Analyst for Citicorp, specializing in financial re-capitalization, tax analysis, stock price and volume history analysis, and discounted cash flow analysis.

Ms. Gilliam's affiliations have included: The Enterprise Foundation Neighborhood Advisory Council, First Union Bank Advisory Council, Far Southeast Family Strengthening Collaborative (Vice-Chair, Finance Committee), DC Building and Industry Association, Coalition for Housing and Economic Development (Board Member), East of the River Committee (Co-Chair), Trenton Park Neighborhood Corporation (Treasurer), and Ward 8 representative for the DC Public Schools 21st Century Initiative. Ms. Gilliam also served on several neighborhood and city Task Forces devoted to housing and economic development initiatives, and was a mayoral appointee to the DC Historic Preservation Board. In addition, Ms. Gilliam was a member of the Urban Land Institute; a member of ULI's Washington District Council Executive Committee and was the Inner City Advisor for ULI Washington.

Ms. Gilliam is a graduate of Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University with a BS in finance. She was fluent in both Kishwahli and French and had traveled extensively in Asia and eastern and southern Africa.

Christopher Lee Gordon
Kishimoto, Gordon & Daylala PC
McLean, VA

Christopher Gordon is a founding principal of Kishimoto, Gordon & Daylala PC and brings experience in all facets of architecture in a variety of project types. His responsibilities include directing the firm's day to day production, management and administrative systems. His extensive knowledge in interior design, facilities design, corporate office development, hotel/hospitality design and major mixed-use projects extend from master plan feasibility to construction administration. Recent projects include the master planning architecture for Tower Oaks Master Plan in Rockville, Maryland; Design development of a 4-story medical office building in Landsdowne, Virginia; master planning and full-service architectural services for a theater/retail/parking structure and office/retail building in Reston, Virginia; as well as

base-building to full-service architecture of a three-story office regional bank headquarters in Germantown, Maryland.

While at Virginia's largest A/E firm, Mr. Gordon was the lead architectural designer on various award-winning and nationally recognized projects including the Nuclear Regulatory Agency Headquarters, Dulles Corner Master Plan '95, The National Reconnaissance Organization Complex master plan, building design, interior design and construction, and Grosvenor Metro Master Plan Competition winning design.

Mr. Gordon obtained a five-year professional architectural degree from the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in 1984, and is a registered architect in the District of Columbia. Mr. Gordon contributes some of his time to the promotion of architectural excellence through education as a teacher/juror at Marymount University School of Interior Design, Catholic University of America School of Architecture and Arlington County Schools Enrichment Programs.

Daniel B. Kohlhepp, Ph.D.
Crescent Resources, LLC
Arlington, VA

As regional vice president for the Mid-Atlantic Region, Dan Kohlhepp is responsible for the acquisition, development and leasing of commercial real estate in Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania and the District of Columbia for Crescent Resources, LLC. He is currently focused on developing Potomac Yard, a 300-acre, mixed-use, urban in-fill project in Northern Virginia.

After serving on the faculties of the University of Oklahoma and Pennsylvania State University where he specialized in real estate investment analysis, Kohlhepp left academia in 1979 to become a developer, broker and appraiser/consultant with R.W. Finley in Oklahoma City. In 1984, Dan moved to Washington, D.C., to enter the real estate investment advisory business, and in 1989 he sold his company, Potomac Realty Advisors, to Baltimore-based USF&G Corporation, where the company was renamed USF&G Realty Advisors. He was responsible for all development activities for a \$1.5 billion portfolio containing office, retail, multifamily, industrial and golf course communities. Kohlhepp left USF&G and started Kohlhepp Realty Advisors in 1992.

Prior to joining Crescent in 2000, Kohlhepp specialized in real estate portfolio valuation and management for institutional and government regulatory clients.

Born and raised in DuBois, Pennsylvania, Dan earned his B.S. and M.B.A. degrees from Pennsylvania State University and earned his Ph.D. with a major in Real Estate and Urban Analysis at the Ohio State University. He has published numerous academic and professional articles in real estate, and continues to teach adult education classes and seminars.

He is a past president of the DuBois Educational Foundation, the advisory board for Pennsylvania State DuBois, and currently serves on the advisory board of the Johns Hopkins University Real Estate Program. He also serves on the board of directors of the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership.

A licensed real estate broker, Dan is a member of the Appraisal Institute (MAI) and the Urban Land Institute. In the DuBois area, Dan operates the Kohlhepp Corporation, a real estate management company, and is on the board of directors of J.A. Kohlhepp Sons, Inc.

Michael Korns
Keener-Squire Properties
Washington, DC

Michael Korns works for Keener-Squire Properties, a privately held real estate development company based in Washington, DC. Since 1984, Keener-Squire Properties has been engaged in the acquisition, renovation, construction and management of residential property in northwest Washington, DC. The company's portfolio contains over 1,400 condominiums and apartments, and the buildings it has developed or substantially renovated range in size from 8 units to 304 units. Mr. Korns works on all aspects of development, including acquisition, financing, design and project management. In addition, Mr. Korns is involved in managing the existing portfolio. Currently, the company is developing residential condominiums in Arlington, Georgetown and Kalorama.

Mr. Korns is a native of Alexandria, Virginia, where he attended T.C. Williams High School. After receiving a B.A. in Political Science from Stanford University, he returned to Washington to work in the U.S. Senate. Prior to joining Keener-Squire Properties, Mr. Korns worked for CapitalSource Finance in the structured finance group, and for KBS Realty Advisors (Boston), a private equity real estate company focused on the acquisition of commercial real estate on the East Coast. Mr. Korns is active in the Urban Land Institute

Jonathan Meyers
Atlantic Realty Companies
Vienna, VA

Mr. Meyers is responsible for development and acquisitions at Atlantic Realty Companies. He has been with Atlantic Realty Companies for five years where he began as an Owner's representative and then moved into the position of Development and Acquisitions. Mr. Meyers assumed the primary oversight of the development and construction of Prosperity Medical Center, a 255,000 SF medical office complex that currently sees over one and half million visitors a year and has won several design, development and conservation awards.

Mr. Meyers works closely with the brokerage community in seeking out new commercial and mixed-use development opportunities for Atlantic Realty Companies and also provides development oversight to several projects in Virginia and Maryland. He has recently guided a mixed-use project of 430,000 SF through approvals in the City of Falls Church. The project consists of some 230 residential condominiums and 100,000+ SF of commercial space. He is currently working on several mixed-use projects throughout the DC metropolitan area.

Mr. Meyers has over 12 years' experience in commercial construction and real estate and has had responsibility for construction and development of over three million square feet, with two million five hundred thousand square feet of commercial space in the Washington metropolitan area alone.

Mr. Meyers attended Brigham Young University under the B.S. program and studied zoology pre-med. He is presently active with the City of Falls Church Chamber of Commerce and works closely in Montgomery County with Mr. Nulsen, a partner of Atlantic Realty Companies who is also Chairman of the downtown Silver Spring Alliance. He is currently working on a substantial mixed-use project in Maryland and is also working with the City of Falls Church on future development programs in the City. He is a member of the Northern Virginia chapter of NAIOP and the International Convention of Shopping Centers. Mr. Meyers and his family reside in Arlington, Virginia.

Anita Morrison
Bay Area Economics
Silver Spring, MD

Anita Morrison manages Bay Area Economics' Silver Spring office, directing BAE assignments for the eastern U.S. She brings 28 years of extensive economic and development consulting experience, specializing in market and financial feasibility analysis, strategic economic development and urban revitalization.

Ms. Morrison has extensive experience directing revitalization strategies, including work for neighborhoods adjacent to downtown Hampton (VA), the Butchertown neighborhood (Louisville, KY) and the Park Place neighborhood (Norfolk, VA). In Hopewell (VA), she led a multi-disciplinary team in preparing a neighborhood and housing strategy for several key neighborhoods.

She directed a market analysis for the U.S. 40 corridor in Howard County (MD) as the basis for a commercial revitalization strategy. In Dayton, Ohio, she evaluated revitalization and redevelopment options for nine obsolete shopping centers. For Arlington (VA) commercial revitalization efforts, Ms. Morrison analyzed the market support for retail development at 10 sites, including five Metro station areas.

Her work in transit-oriented development includes working with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority and the District of Columbia in evaluating the economic development potentials associated with alternative new light-rail transit lines. The District's goal was to ensure that new transit investments reinforced the City's economic development initiatives in revitalizing neighborhoods and attracting new investment. She evaluated opportunities for new development and then estimated the potential fiscal impacts of alternative transit lines. For the Georgia Avenue/Petworth Metro station, she led a market study and participated in a corridor planning effort that culminated in a developer solicitation for District-owned property above the station. At the West Hyattsville Metro station just outside the District in Prince George's County, she evaluated the market and financial feasibility of new mixed-use development as input to the station area plan.

Ms. Morrison earned a Master of Public Policy from the University of Michigan. She served on a ULI Panel to develop guidelines for strip commercial development and redevelopment. In Paterson (NJ) and Little Rock (AS), she was a member of ULI Advisory Panels assisting in revitalization planning.