



Urban Land  
Institute

Washington



## **A Technical Assistance Panel Report**

# **Fort Totten Metro Station: Maximizing Potential for Transit-Oriented Development**

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Washington Metropolitan Area  
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# Fort Totten Metro Station: Maximizing Potential for Transit-Oriented Development

March 11-12, 2009  
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 38,000 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.

## About the Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) Program

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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# Acknowledgments

Both personally and on behalf of the Urban Land Institute Washington District Council, the panel members and project staff would like to thank the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) for inviting ULI Washington to explore the redevelopment opportunities for the two WMATA-owned parcels located directly adjacent to the Fort Totten Metro Station. Specifically, the panel would like to thank Nat Bottigheimer, Assistant General Manager, Planning and Joint Development, Robin McElhenny-Smith, Manager, Station Area Planning Program, Kasondra Johnston, Senior Planner, Station Area Planning Program, and Kristin Haldeman, Transportation Economist, Office of Long-Range Planning, for their work in initiating the panel, preparing the briefing materials, and providing superb onsite support, ensuring that the panel was well-prepared and well-taken care of during the course of their work.

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 Malaika Abernathy, Ward 4 Neighborhood Planner, Deborah Crain, Ward 5 Neighborhood Planner, and Steve Cochran, D.C. Office of Planning, and Tomika Hughey, Transportation Planner, District Department of Transportation. Additionally, D.C. Council Members Harry Thomas, Jr. and Muriel Bowser met with the panel chair and WMATA representatives prior to the panel to express their concerns and goals, which informed and benefitted the panel process. The panel was also grateful to have the benefit of input from the many other stakeholders and neighborhood residents who attended the opening and/or closing sessions of the panel, as listed below:

Camille Alexander	Neighborhood Resident
Belinda Allen	Lamond-Riggs Citizens' Association
Sasha Atkinson	Neighborhood Resident
George Bednar	Food & Friends
Ralph Bennett	Bennett Frank McCarthy Architects
Bob Burns	WMATA
Jane Cafritz	Cafritz Foundation
Anna Chamberlain	DDOT
Gloria Coleman	Neighborhood Resident
Otis and Celestine Dent	Neighborhood Residents
Rosalyn Doggett	WMATA
Rodney Foxworth	Lamond-Riggs Citizens' Association
Marin Hedin	Providence Hospital
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Jerry Junior	Neighborhood Resident
Art Lawson	WMATA
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Ina Slaughter	Neighborhood Resident
Charles O. Smith	PB Placemaking
John Sunter	Clark Realty Capital
Robert Vanzant	Neighborhood Resident
Joel Washington	WMATA
Joanne Waszczak	FTA

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 WMATA and other interested parties as they seek to redevelop the two parcels and improve connections to the station, in order to maximize the potential of this extraordinary asset.



Neighborhood residents and other stakeholders discuss their concerns and goals for the site with panel members.

# ULI Washington Panel and Project Staff

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## Foreword: Overview and Panel Assignment

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) plays an important role in creating and maintaining sustainable communities throughout the Washington region. To further its leadership in this role, WMATA has set a goal to achieve LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) ratings for its joint development program projects. Of particular focus for projects is the provision of parking in a transit-oriented environment. Typical parking requirements tend to favor a more auto-dominated suburban model. However, recent research suggests that transit-oriented developments perform differently than typical suburban models on measures such as traffic impact, transit ridership and vehicle ownership, and thus are capable of supporting lower parking ratios.

WMATA owns two parcels of land, located immediately to the west and east of the Fort Totten Metrorail station platform, consisting respectively of an approximately 3.4-acre surface Park and Ride lot that includes 408 parking spaces, and an approximately 1-acre Kiss-and-Ride lot and bus bay facility, with 49 parking spaces. As WMATA moves forward with a joint development solicitation for these two parcels, they sought assistance from a ULI Washington Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) in evaluating--from a market and lender perspective--the viability of residential projects that do not include parking on a 1:1 basis, but rather offer 'mobility options' and/or reduced unit cost due to savings realized from decreased parking construction costs. WMATA also sought the panel's advice regarding how WMATA can capture the return on investment for implementing this and other 'sustainable' design elements as part of a LEED-designed project, into a long-term lease agreement.

WMATA's Fort Totten station is located a mere 3.5 miles from the U.S. Capitol. It is a transfer station, serving both the Red and Green/Yellow lines. While the confluence of three Metrorail lines makes Fort Totten a primary transfer station, it also is surrounded in four directions by other Metrorail stations located no more than two miles away, indicating that passengers accessing the site facilities outside of the faregates are generally local residents, employees and students. About half of the more than 13,850 passengers that enter and exit this station on a typical weekday arrive by Metrobus. Another 14% drive and park; 13% are dropped off and 22% walk.<sup>1</sup> The majority of those driving to the station and parking are coming from within the station's zipcode, generally within a 2 mile radius of the station.

Though located outside the urban core, the station's proximity to the core of the region and the growing Silver Spring downtown offers the possibility for residents and businesses to conveniently access bustling city life. Further, current plans for the station area will add a significant amount of retail, commercial and residential development within easy walking distance of the rail station and one another. In addition to the two sites WMATA has planned for joint development, other development

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<sup>1</sup> WMATA 2007 Rail Passenger Survey

either underway or on in the planning stage in the station area will fill out the north side of the station into a vibrant walkable station area, provided that good pedestrian connections are made throughout the site, leading to and from the station and the commercial focal point at Riggs Road and South Dakota Avenue. Two of the planned developments support parking ratios under 100%. In addition, the District also is working industriously on constructing the Metropolitan Branch Trail, which will connect to the Fort Totten station.

In all, there are a number of factors and opportunities to decrease the need for automobiles for those living and working in this station area and make it a model for sustainable design.

### **Statement of the Problem:**

Outside major urban cores like Manhattan and San Francisco, parking ratios for current development tend to favor a more auto-dominated suburban model. In a mixed-use, transit-oriented development (TOD) environment, such ratios likely overstate the need for parking rather than addressing the notion of mobility. Recent Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) sponsored research suggests that trip-making in TODs functions differently than in suburban development counterparts and point toward an opportunity to redefine the amenities a developer might offer its prospective clients in terms of mobility rather than parking. The question is, will the market respond to a development that offers parking with only half, or even none of its units, and instead offers a) a lower housing cost, and b) 'mobility' options? If so, what is the appropriate mix of options – cost and mobility - and design elements that enhance the marketability of such a project? Additionally, will lenders view this type of project as stable enough to support? On the implementation side, how can WMATA recoup savings from lowered operating costs resulting from up front expenditures for energy efficiency and other LEED elements?

### **Questions to be Addressed by the Panel:**

#### **Market Potential**

- What is the market viability of a project with reduced parking?
- How much can WMATA reduce parking if other mobility options are offered and costs to owners and/or renters are reduced?
- What is the proper mix of these options?
- What are lender concerns with a reduced parking project and how should WMATA address them?

#### **Planning & Design**

- Comment on and review of current design for two remaining WMATA parcels; specifically on WMATA parking replacement scenarios.
- Comment on design for station area.

- What connecting design elements must be in place in the station area to enhance attractiveness of development with limited parking?

### **Implementation**

- Can the panel provide a recommendation for structuring a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) that will attract qualified developers willing to “think outside the car”?
- Recommend a methodology for incorporating the value of lower long-term operating costs resulting from higher up front capital costs for LEED design into the long-term lease.

# Executive Summary: The Panel's Recommendations

In order to evaluate the redevelopment prospects for the two WMATA-owned parcels immediately west and east of the Metrorail station, the panel first spent a significant amount of time touring the surrounding area, taking note of the existing neighborhoods, streetscape, parklands, adjacent uses, and other characteristics, and studying the several redevelopment projects—both proposed and underway—in the vicinity. From this process, the panel identified a number of strengths and challenges for both the WMATA sites and the surrounding area, as outlined below.

## Market Potential

### Strengths

- Multi-modal transfer point for bus and three Metrorail lines;
- Proximate to regional activity centers;
- Stable residential community with higher than average homeownership rates;
- Consolidated ownership of redevelopment parcels;
- Extensive tree canopy and greenery;
- Recently updated DC Area Development Plan, based upon extensive community input;
- Key node of future Metropolitan Branch Trail (MBT);
- Active interest in area by development community; and,
- Attractively-priced residential opportunities.

### Challenges

- Need for improved neighborhood services and retail;
- Disjointed street and pedestrian network; lack of accessibility and connectivity;
- National Park Service lands inhibit connectivity, without providing community benefit;
- Surrounding industrial uses are not highest and best use for Metro site; form barriers to redevelopment and encroach upon residential;

- Metro station largely hidden; and
- Identity of neighborhood not clearly defined.

In specifically addressing the questions presented to the panel regarding the ability to finance and market viability of projects with reduced parking, the panel concluded the following:

Parking ratios of between 0.5 to 0.75 spaces per unit are realistic for this site based on comparable projects. The panel recommends that WMATA conduct more extensive research in this area, but based on its own cursory analysis the panel was able to identify at least 2 comparable projects within the region that succeed with these reduced parking ratios.

Need to focus on smaller, more affordable units. In the panel's estimation, the level of rents that the Fort Totten market will support calls for smaller, more affordable units, and basically allow only for wood-frame construction over a concrete parking podium, or possibly wrapping a free-standing concrete parking deck (a so-called "Texas Doughnut.") In the Planning & Design section of this report, the panel demonstrates what such a project could look like.

Car-sharing, formation of a Parking Management District, and biking are all important mobility options. In order to achieve the reduced parking ratios cited above, the panel stressed, first and foremost, the importance of widespread provision and promotion of car-sharing services throughout the site. The panel also cited the potential benefits of a parking management district, and recognized the benefits of the site's location on the Metropolitan Branch Trail as a means to encourage greater bicycle use.

Creating greater connectivity and access to new retail and other amenities is essential. The area around Fort Totten is fortunate in that the demand for greater retail does exist and is being responded to by the various redevelopment plans; however, without cooperative efforts among the various property owners within the redevelopment areas, the current lack of connectivity and visibility could in fact be worsened, to the detriment of all.

## **Planning & Design**

The panel's recommendations regarding planning and design for the two parcels in question, as well as suggested connectivity improvements for the surrounding area, are best presented and understood via the illustrations included in the Planning and Design section and in the appendix. As depicted in the illustrations, primary recommendations include:

Providing parallel parking throughout the site. According to the panel's calculations, by re-planning the street systems to provide parallel parking, anywhere between 250-325 spaces could be created.

Relocating bus drop-off to western WMATA parcel. Switching the bus drop-off to the western side of the station preserves the same amount of bus bay capacity while correcting several inefficient land uses and opening up additional development opportunities.

Considering additional parking alternatives. The panel explored the possibility of a public, shared parking garage financed by a parking tax district for the entire redevelopment area bounded by South Dakota and Riggs. Because the panel did not recommend that such a garage be placed on either of the WMATA parcels, buy-in for the idea and cooperation among the surrounding landowners would be essential to its implementation.

## **Implementation**

As a threshold issue, the panel recommended an RFQ that combines the west and east sites, as well as the additional connections outlined in the panel's illustrations, such that the same developer would undertake the entire project. The panel also stressed the need for a clear statement of WMATA's and the community's goals for the development, including performance standards for what is expected of developers. The panel noted that although a participating ground lease could further limit the universe of respondents, it would allow for a greater sharing of risk and for everyone working together to maximize returns.

# Market Potential

As discussed throughout this report, the panel determined that capitalizing upon the strengths and avoiding an exacerbation of the challenges listed below will require all interested parties and stakeholders to work together with a common vision, thereby creating a whole that can truly be greater than the sum of its parts, and fostering a distinctive identity for Fort Totten. The necessary stakeholders include, but are not limited to: WMATA, surrounding neighborhoods and large landowners (including the Cafritz Foundation, Clark Realty Capital, Lowe Enterprises, and K. Hovnanian), the District of Columbia Office of Planning (DCOP), District Department of Transportation (DDOT), and the U.S. National Park Service (NPS). Given the confluence of characteristics listed below, there is a truly remarkable opportunity to create a cohesive whole that fulfills the objectives of all the stakeholders and provides important benefits to the entire D.C. metropolitan region. However, this opportunity comes with a heavy responsibility as well, as a merely mediocre result will be judged harshly by both current residents and future generations.

## Strengths

Multi-modal transfer point for bus and three Metrorail lines. Among the assumptions upon which the panel based its recommendations is that demand for an urban, transit-oriented lifestyle will continue to increase, particularly in areas such as the D.C. region that are well-served by transit. Moreover, those seeking lower housing costs in the D.C. region who move farther out often find that added transportation costs to and from far-flung housing and employment areas erode any housing savings, further increasing the incentive to live and work near transit.<sup>2</sup> As such, Fort Totten's importance as a transfer station, with easy access to Downtown—and, perhaps even more importantly, to other regional activity centers, as discussed next—cannot be overstated.

Proximate to regional activity centers. As the only WMATA transfer station serving three Metrorail lines outside of Downtown, Fort Totten offers a unique opportunity as a feeder to *outbound* regional activity centers, including Silver Spring and College Park. This is especially relevant given the fact that an important goal of WMATA's Joint Development Program is to “attract new riders to the transit system—particularly riders who will use underutilized transit capacity in outbound directions and in off-peak time periods—by fostering commercial development projects on WMATA-owned or controlled land and on

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<sup>2</sup> TERWILLIGER CENTER FOR WORKFORCE HOUSING, URBAN LAND INSTITUTE, BELTWAY BURDEN: THE COMBINED COST OF HOUSING AND TRANSPORTATION IN THE GREATER WASHINGTON, DC, METROPOLITAN AREA (2009) , available at <http://commerce.uli.org/misc/BeltwayBurden.pdf>

private properties adjacent to Metro stations.”<sup>3</sup>

Stable residential community with higher than average homeownership rates. As demonstrated by the participation of neighboring community members in the panel process, and in prior planning processes conducted by WMATA, DCOP and other entities, Fort Totten is surrounded by active, engaged, and invested citizens. As long-time residents, they are more likely to view matters with the long-term perspective and patience that is needed, and can provide important and informed input into the area’s redevelopment.

Consolidated ownership of redevelopment parcels. Unlike many situations, where numerous owners make it far more difficult to assemble the large land parcels necessary for quality redevelopment projects, the redevelopment parcels surrounding the station are largely consolidated in a small number of ownership groups. The fact that these groups are well-respected, experienced developers with deep local ties promises a far greater likelihood that they will be willing to look beyond their own property lines to see the big picture, and thus work together with each other, WMATA, the surrounding community, and other stakeholders to ensure a mutually beneficial outcome. A critical assumption is that the governmental entities responsible for approving development here will foster the flexibility and cooperation needed, through transfers of development rights (TDRs), reduced setbacks, and other similar tools.

Extensive tree canopy and greenery. The presence of parkland and extensive green space should serve as a highly beneficial amenity, although as is detailed in other sections of the report, that is not currently the case due to the underutilization and inaccessibility of these assets.

Recently updated DC Area Development Plan, based upon extensive community input. DCOP has recently released their draft Area Development Plan for the area surrounding the Riggs Road/South Dakota Avenue intersection, establishing a comprehensive vision for the area, identifying numerous redevelopment opportunity sites, and detailing much-needed public actions and investments for improving the public realm and promoting connectivity. Most importantly, this plan culminated through a lengthy community engagement process, ensuring that the plan responds to the needs of both existing and future residents.

Key node of future Metropolitan Branch Trail (MBT). The MBT, once completed, will include 8 miles of bicycle and pedestrian paths, connecting Silver Spring to Downtown DC through Fort Totten, and will also provide access to the Capital Crescent Trail and the East Coast Greenway. As such, it will further improve Fort Totten’s accessibility via

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<sup>3</sup> OFFICE OF PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT , WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY, WMATA JOINT DEVELOPMENT POLICIES AND GUIDELINES (*revised* Nov. 20, 2008), *available at* <http://www.wmata.com/pdfs/business/Guidelines%20Revision11-20-08.pdf>

multiple modes of transportation, and thus its desirability as a destination for living, working, and recreating.

Active interest in area by development community. As noted previously, several large-scale redevelopment projects are currently proposed or underway, evidencing the market potential seen in the area by sophisticated developers.

Attractively-priced residential opportunities. Both in terms of the for-sale and rental market, this area and its residents find themselves in a relatively unique situation, where a close-in neighborhood that is well-served by transit is nonetheless relatively affordable. Maintaining this healthy diversity of housing options was an important consideration for the panel.

## **Challenges**

While the area offers a significant number of opportunities for revitalization, it is also currently constrained by a lack of existing neighborhood retail and services, poor connectivity and limited walkability, incompatible adjacent land uses, and a failure to capitalize on what should be some of the area's strongest assets- to such an extent that they actually function as detriments. Many of these issues have already been identified and well-documented by others, including the community, WMATA, DDOT and DCOP, in both the draft Station Area Planning Study and draft Area Development Plan, respectively; in those instances, the issue is only briefly discussed below, with the panel adding yet another voice to the call for remediation.

Need for improved neighborhood services and retail. As has been voiced by community members and was immediately apparent to the panel, there is a severe lack of neighborhood services and retail, both at the station itself and in the surrounding area. Given the identification of this unmet demand by the numerous redevelopment projects proposed and underway, however, it would appear that this issue is being addressed, at least in the surrounding area. In order to ensure that these retail projects are accessible and complementary, and in order to facilitate successful retail near the station itself, additional steps must be taken, as outlined in the planning and design section of this report.

Disjointed street and pedestrian network; lack of accessibility and connectivity. The lack of connectivity within the entire area and the disincentive this provides to anyone seeking to make a safe and efficient walking trip can be perceived immediately. This is not a merely aesthetic issue, as the lack of connectivity throughout the area inhibits access to the Metro station, especially by walking, thereby preventing the station from achieving its maximum ridership and encouraging those who do use the station to drive there and park, as demonstrated by WMATA survey data showing that the majority of those driving to the station are coming from within a 2 mile radius.

National Park Service lands inhibit connectivity, without providing community benefit. An important corollary to the disjointed street and sidewalk network is fact that NPS lands

near the station, which one would assume would serve as a welcome amenity to any neighborhood, instead currently act as a detriment, forming an almost impenetrable barrier to the station due to their lack of organized, easily-identifiable, maintained, and well-lighted pathways, or any other form of activation. “Desire paths” formed by residents seeking to access the station were apparent throughout the parks, clearly demonstrating the need for proper pathways. Rather than forming an intimidating barrier to the station, these parklands should provide a welcoming gateway to it and readily accessible greenspace for residents.

Surrounding industrial uses are not highest and best use for Metro site; form barriers to redevelopment and encroach upon residential. Although the panel respectfully noted the August 2006 District of Columbia Industrial Land Use Study, citing the importance of industrial areas to the District’s economy, the panel disagreed that such uses are the highest and best uses for areas in such close proximity to the Fort Totten Metro station, and would recommend an eventual land use change, particularly for the areas to the south of the station, currently occupied by the cement plant and the salt dome.

Metro station largely hidden. Due to the two factors cited above, and despite the fact that Fort Totten is indeed an elevated station, it is difficult to find the station unless one arrives there via Metrorail or Metrobus.

Identity of neighborhood not clearly defined. As noted by residents who spoke with the panel, the area surrounding the Fort Totten Metro Station does not currently have a clearly-defined identity. The redevelopment of large parts of the area provides a unique opportunity to create a more coherent identity that would inure to the benefit of all, but doing so will require significant cooperation.

It is only within the context of the larger area’s characteristics, as discussed above, that the market potential for the two WMATA-owned parcels can truly be considered; more importantly, it is only by taking a holistic approach to all the redevelopment sites that the full market potential for the WMATA-owned sites, as well as the potential of the other sites, can be fully realized.

### **Ability to finance, and market viability of, projects with reduced parking**

Parking ratios of between 0.5 to 0.75 spaces per unit are realistic for this site based on comparable projects. One of the primary charges of the panel was to determine what the financibility and market viability would be—within the context detailed above—of joint development projects on the WMATA-owned parcels that would provide reduced parking ratios. It is important to note that in addressing these questions, the panel took a long-term view, assuming a normalized financing climate and a fifteen-year development horizon.

Working within these assumptions, the panel pointed to data from other urban, Metro-accessible sites indicating a need for between only 0.5 and .75 parking spaces/dwelling unit. In order to attract lenders to finance a multi-family project that is parked at 0.5,

solid data from comparable projects would need to be provided demonstrating that occupancy wouldn't be impacted due to lack of parking. The panel recommends that WMATA conduct more extensive research in this area, but based on its own cursory analysis, the panel was able to identify at least 2 comparable projects, including the Bennington in Silver Spring, which provides for 0.6 spaces per unit—but which is currently evidencing an actual use of only 0.5 spaces per unit—and Park Triangle in Columbia Heights, which has a parking ratio of 0.5 spaces per unit. Granted, the two projects cited above are located in areas that provide greater access to retail and other amenities within walking distance than what is currently available at Fort Totten. At the time of the panel, the recently-completed Fort Totten Station joint-development project between WMATA and Clark Realty Capital appeared to be leasing up at a figure closer to 0.5 spaces per unit, despite the project's provision of parking on a 1:1 basis; Clark Realty Capital has since informed the panel that this was due to the leasing-up of the one-bedroom units first, and that the leasing-up of the two-bedroom units has resulted in the use of spaces on a 1:1 basis.

Focusing on smaller, more affordable units. Another interesting lesson learned from the Fort Totten Station leasing record thus far is that the studios and 1-bedroom units are significantly out-performing the larger units; this comports with the panel's findings regarding the market potential of the area: despite some market analyses calling for multi-family projects with Floor Area Ratios (FAR) of up to 5.0 and units ranging from 1,000-1,500 sq. ft., the panel found these to be unrealistic, as FARs in that range would require steel and concrete construction, currently necessitating rents between \$2.80-\$3.00/ sq. ft. in order to be viable. In the panel's estimation, the Fort Totten market will only support rents within the range of \$1.60/ sq. ft., which would require wood-frame construction over a concrete parking podium, or possibly wrapping a free-standing concrete parking deck (a so-called "Texas Doughnut.") In the Planning & Design section of this report, the panel demonstrates what such a project could look like.

### **Providing additional mobility options to further reduce parking demand**

Car-sharing, formation of a Parking Management District, and biking. The panel heavily stressed the importance of widespread provision and promotion of car-sharing services throughout the site. Although WMATA inquired about the possibility of a multifamily building's management owning and maintaining a certain number of cars for residents' use, the panel concluded that few if any management companies would wish to take on this expense and responsibility, particularly when several private companies have already developed such an efficient model for providing this service. The panel recommends using multiple car-sharing companies, including Zipcar and Connect by Hertz, and providing highly-visible, reserved on-street parking for them.

As discussed in greater detail in the Planning & Design section of the report, the panel also recommends the formation of a parking management district, as such a district would enable the hiring of a parking manager who could work to promote maximum use of alternative mobility options by: organizing carpools, ensuring sufficient availability of shared cars, seeking out and publicizing other activities that reduce car and parking

space needs, and ensuring the protection of the surrounding neighborhoods from potential intrusion.

As cited in the section on the area's strengths, the panel also believes that the connection to the Metropolitan Branch Trail at Fort Totten will provide an important additional mobility option for those wishing to live near the station without a car. The panel recommends locating a SmartBike facility at the site to further encourage use of the trail.

Creating greater connectivity and access to new retail and other amenities. To the extent that a well-connected, walkable, amenity-rich community can be developed around the Fort Totten Metro Station, required parking ratios can be driven down for all the projects in the redevelopment area; moreover, since fewer parking lots and structures can also improve walkability and connectivity, a virtuous cycle of sorts can be created as a result. The area around Fort Totten is fortunate in that the demand for greater retail does exist and is being responded to by the various redevelopment plans; however, without cooperative efforts among the various property owners within the redevelopment areas, the current lack of connectivity and visibility could in fact be worsened, to the detriment of all. The panel therefore spent a considerable amount of time exploring means to provide greater connectivity throughout the site, including alternative scenarios for implementing a comprehensive parking strategy, as detailed later in the next section.

# Planning & Design

In looking at the larger area of redevelopment around the Metro station, the panel demarcated both the current opportunity area and those areas showing future potential for more growth. The panel noted several challenges, including an immense amount of grade and the fact that the park is a connectivity barrier; the park has heretofore been treated as a monolith, when in actuality there are parts of park that should have a more urban character and be part of the neighborhood, with other parts that should segue into a more rural feel.

Another site challenge is that some of the landowners, due to the size of their parcels, could end up further inhibiting connectivity if they do not work together. Thus, the panel looked at ways to better connect both north to south and east to west.

Current plans indicate that some of the developers have considered how connectivity can be improved to the east, but connections to the north and south remain limited. To address this issue, the panel strongly feels that the NPS needs to be brought to the table to provide pedestrian connections to the current neighborhood to the south and to potentially new neighborhoods, as well as new vehicular connections, so everyone won't have to go out on South Dakota Avenue to access the



site and enjoy the amenities that will come later. As evidenced by the current desire paths, a landscape plan that recognizes the true function of this kind of park and where it sits amidst the urbanity of DC needs to be implemented. The panel also delineated where an additional connection to the north could provide a new access point and greater visibility to both the station and the entire redevelopment area. Members of the panel cited the advantages of imposing a grid framework of internal streets over the entire site, as a grid would disperse traffic by providing choices, while also creating walkable pedestrian streets and non-auto-oriented retail opportunities.



Zooming in to the redevelopment area immediately surrounding the station provides a clearer depiction of some of the panel’s primary recommendations. Among these are:

Providing parallel parking throughout the site. If all the street systems were re-planned to provide parallel parking, anywhere between 250-325 spaces could be created. This would not only account for the majority of the spaces currently provided in the existing WMATA lots, but would also provide convenient and highly-visible additional parking for projects throughout the redevelopment area. A sophisticated metering system could be

used, by which those spaces closest to the station could charge the highest rates and allow the shortest amount of time for kiss-and-ride and other users, while spaces farther away could allow for all-day parking. The use of parallel parking is also good urban design, in that it allows for pedestrians to feel safer walking along the sidewalk with a row of cars serving as protection between them and the street.

Relocating bus drop-off to western WMATA parcel.

Relocating the bus drop-off area to the west of the station preserves the same amount of bus bay capacity while correcting several inefficient land uses, such as the wide—and unpleasant to walk across—area currently necessitated for bus traffic underneath the metrorail tracks. This would also open up a sufficient amount of land to add in an 18,000 sq. ft. building for office/retail at the station, as well as four plazas, and makes the eastern WMATA site far easier to configure a building on.



The current location of the bus drop-off area necessitates a wide—and unpleasant to walk across—area underneath the tracks

Encouraging the Cafritz Foundation to reconsider several aspects of their proposal.

While being careful to not alter the program of the submitted Cafritz Planned Unit Development (PUD) plan, the panel did feel that the current plan is overparked, especially with the added provision of parallel parking, and that both their project and the area as a whole could benefit from several revisions depicted in the illustration on the previous page, perhaps the most important of which being the additional street connection tying in to Riggs on the north.



Taking an even closer look at the two WMATA parcels themselves, the panel sees the potential program for three new buildings, including a four-story wood-frame multifamily building to the west with 356 units over a podium for 178 parking spaces; the previously-mentioned 18,000 sq. ft office/retail building; and, to the east, either a five-story, wood-frame 244-unit multifamily building over 1 floor of podium parking, parked at a .75 space per unit ratio with 183 parking spaces, or a four-story, 195-unit building over 2 floors of podium parking, allowing for residential parking as well as upwards of 200 additional parking spaces for WMATA.

Included in the eastern building would be space for almost 20,000 sq. ft. of retail, for which the panel both saw sufficient demand and a possible benefit to the currently-existing—and vacant—retail space across the street, due to the fact that retail prefers to be across the street from other retail and to have a sense of enclosure.

Finally, the illustration above depicts new connections, both pedestrian and vehicular, to the station from the south, providing a new route to both the existing neighborhood there and to the area of potential new development discussed previously.

Additional parking alternatives. The panel carefully considered the many parking objectives: ensuring sufficient parking for new projects to attract financing and be viable; providing spaces for commuters; and protecting the surrounding neighborhoods from intrusion; while at the same time preventing an over-parking situation which would

needlessly hinder walkability and raise costs, siphoning resources away that could be used for far more worthwhile goals, such as keeping rental costs down and providing additional amenities. Indeed, the folly of over-parking in transit-oriented developments has been witnessed in projects such as Columbia Heights, where parking capacity far exceeds demand. The panel believes that these objectives are accomplished through the parking management strategies detailed above, and through the introduction of a parking permit system for the surrounding neighborhoods which would prevent any encroachment of parking in to their streets.

However, in order to further allay any concerns about sufficient parking and to possibly “prime the pump” for the redevelopment projects, the panel also explored the possibility of a public, shared parking garage financed by a parking tax district for the entire redevelopment area bounded by South Dakota and Riggs, as has been so successful in Silver Spring and Bethesda. In addition to these two examples, there is ample precedent in urban settings for shared parking; the key is to demonstrate that parking is available for residents via an easement right to use it and placement of the facility within a reasonable walk. Because the panel did not recommend that such a garage be placed on either of the WMATA parcels, buy-in for the idea and cooperation among the surrounding landowners would be essential to its implementation.

Significant benefits could accrue to all from cooperating in such a manner, including the reduced financing costs for construction provided by bond financing and the ability to maximize parking efficiency due to the different peak periods of use for the different product types, thereby allowing for shared-use parking, reducing the necessary parking overages that would otherwise need to be factored in for each individual project. A cursory analysis of such a parking tax district, including costs, benefits, and participants, is sketched out below.

As can be seen from the following analysis, close to 90% of costs could be recovered from the operation of the garage, providing revenues that could partially subsidize other mobility options and creative techniques to reduce the amount of parking needed at sites, while at the same time keeping the net costs to property owners very low.

**ULI Technical Assistance Panel**  
**WMATA Fort Totten Sites**

**Analysis of Parking Tax District**

Hypothetical shared garage size		1,000 spaces
Cost to build		<u>\$20,000</u> per space
Cost of shared garage		\$20,000,000
Municipal bond proceeds to finance garage construction		\$20,000,000
Annual debt service for bonds:		
Interest rate	3.50%	
Amortization	1.89% (30 year)	
Pay rate on bonds	5.39%	\$1,078,000
	Annual Cost per Space	\$1,078

**Total acreage of participating development opportunities:**

- Clark - Fort Totten Station
- Cafritz - Art Place & Market
- WMATA - Fort Totten West

Approximate Acreage 24 acres  
 Note: In the event that the Food & Friends site is developed  
 in the future, this acreage could be included in the tax district

Annual Assessed Tax Per Acre	\$44,917
Annual Assessed Tax Per Square Foot of Development Potential (approx. 2.425 million sf)	\$0.44

**Garage Operating Revenue:**

Assumed Daily Rate	\$4.00
5 Days a week/52 weeks per year	<u>260</u> days per year
Annual Gross Revenue	\$1,040
Assumed Annual Operating Expenses	<u>(\$156)</u> (@ 15%)
Net Income from Garage Operations	\$884

This net garage operating income would be available to subsidize other mobility options implemented in the study area and reduce the Special Tax to the affected property owners.

## Implementation

As a culmination of the above, the panel was asked to provide a recommendation for structuring an RFQ that will attract qualified developers willing to “think outside the car,” and to recommend a methodology for incorporating the value of lower long-term operating costs resulting from higher up-front capital costs for LEED-design—an important component of which is to provide mobility options—into the long-term lease.

The first and most basic recommendation by the panel is that any WMATA RFQ should combine both the west and east sites, as well as the additional connections outlined in the panel’s illustrations, such that the same developer undertakes the entire project, allowing for a unity of vision and for greater flexibility to accomplish it. Underlying the process also needs to be a clear statement of WMATA’s and the community’s goals for the development, including performance standards for what is expected of developers. The panel cautioned that a balancing act is involved: if the RFQ is overly-prescriptive, it can limit creativity and the universe of those interested in responding. Nonetheless, the scoring process should favor proposals with more creative or efficient parking solutions, including lower ratios, more advanced parking systems, and those which would create a sense of place around a station that currently does not have one. As increasing ridership is a primary goal for WMATA, developers who would maximize project density within the constraints of the market should also be favored. Finally, developers with experience in these types of projects should be also given greater credit.

Regarding how WMATA could share in savings of reduced parking requirements and LEED building, the panel noted that an outright sale or ground-lease would require “guesstimation” of this upfront; quantifying all of these factors at a project’s inception would be difficult and require protracted negotiations, with the developer wanting to err on side of being conservative in figuring these savings. A participating ground lease, meanwhile, could further limit the universe of respondents, but would allow for a greater sharing of risk and everyone working together to maximize returns.

# Appendix







## About the Panel

**Andrew K. Brown (Panel Chair)**  
**Stanford Properties, LC**  
**Bethesda, MD**

Mr. Brown directs all activities of Stanford Properties, LC, a real estate investment and development company based in Bethesda, Maryland. Mr. Brown has acquired and developed over twenty-five residential and commercial projects with an aggregate value in excess of \$250 million since the company's founding in 1992. His recent projects include conversion of an underperforming retail big-box center into a high density residential condominium project; development of a traditional grocery anchored retail center; and development of a 50 acre mixed-use residential and retail town center. Mr. Brown directs site selection, acquisition, governmental entitlements, financing, construction, leasing, and ongoing asset management of completed projects.

Prior to founding Stanford Properties, Mr. Brown was the Director of Retail Development for Baier Properties, Inc. where he oversaw development of numerous retail and residential land development projects, and prior to that held positions in acquisition and project management with two Washington based real estate firms.

Mr. Brown received his B.A. in Economics from Stanford University in 1983. He is an active member of the Urban Land Institute where he is an Officer of the Washington District Council's Executive Committee and Co-Chair of the TAP Committee. Mr. Brown is a founding member of Greater D.C. Cares, Inc.; a founding member of the Stanford Real Estate Association, and the President and Founder of New Community Foundation, Inc. He lives in Bethesda, MD with his wife, Robyn, and his three children.

**Gus Bauman**  
**Beveridge & Diamond**  
**Washington, DC**

Gus Bauman is an attorney at Beveridge & Diamond, P.C., and focuses on land use and environmental issues, advising clients on such matters as comprehensive planning, project development and natural resource regulation. His recent matters have included zoning, historic preservation, wetlands, NEPA, TMDL, and Clean Air Act transportation conformity issues, as well as writing amici curiae briefs to the U.S. Supreme Court on regulatory takings of private property and wetlands regulation. From 1989 to 1993, Mr. Bauman was full-time Chairman of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, the regional land use and parks authority for Montgomery and Prince George's Counties. He was a partner at Beveridge & Diamond, P.C. during 1988-89, representing public and private clients.

Before joining Beveridge & Diamond, Mr. Bauman was Litigation Counsel and legal department director for the National Association of Home Builders. He has been deeply involved as co-counsel or amici counsel in Supreme Court land use and wetlands cases since 1980, including landmark decisions on regulatory takings of property and development exactions. From 1974 through 1978, he was legal counsel for the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

Mr. Bauman served as a member of the Maryland Greenways Commission and a reviewer of the Growing Smart model code project led by the American Planning Association. In 2004, he was appointed to the D.C. region's blue ribbon commission charged with recommending a funding solution for Metro, the regional transit agency. In 2006-07, Mr. Bauman chaired Metro's Joint Development Task Force to reform development of the region's Metrorail stations. He is a faculty member of the annual Land Use Institute for the American Law Institute-American Bar Association. Mr. Bauman lives near downtown Silver Spring.

**Laura A. Cole**  
**RCLCO/Robert Charles Lesser & Co., LLC**  
**Bethesda, MD**

Laura Cole is based in the Washington, D.C., office of RCLCO and is responsible for expanding RCLCO's core advisory business and strengthening new practice areas and geographic targets.

Laura draws upon 16 years of experience leading real estate and economic development initiatives for private and not-for-profit concerns in the U.S. and abroad. Prior to joining RCLCO, she served as the Executive Director of the Urban Land Institute (ULI)'s Washington District Council-recognized nationally for its leadership role in advancing sustainable land use practices in the Washington, D.C., region. Laura has worked with an array of organizations and clients interested in evaluating real estate investment opportunities in Latin America and Europe; redevelopment strategies for urban and suburban centers and corridors; regional visioning and growth strategies for rapidly growing metropolitan areas; and biotechnology cluster analyses for institutions and regions. She has consulted on urban infill, smart growth, and workforce-housing projects, contributing to ULI publications on each of these topics.

Laura earned a Bachelor's in Regional Development from the University of Arizona. She is a member of the ULI and serves on the Inner City Task Force as well as on the Executive Committee of the Washington, D.C., District Council. Laura also serves on the Steering Committee for Envision Greater Washington.

**Robert Eisenberg**  
**Heritage Property Company LLC**  
**Chevy Chase, MD**

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.

**Faroll Hamer**  
**City of Alexandria Department of Planning and Zoning**  
**Alexandria, VA**

Faroll Hamer has been the Director of the Department of Planning and Zoning for the City of Alexandria since 2007. She leads a staff of 53 to plan and implement major redevelopment at Metro stations and other smart growth locations totaling approximately 7 million square feet per year. The Department develops policies and strategies and leads implementation efforts to achieve the City's goals in housing, historic preservation, transportation, economic sustainability and environmental sustainability. Recent projects include the adoption of infill regulations, small area plans for redevelopment at the Braddock Metro Station, conversion of the Braddock East public housing projects into mixed-income and mixed-use housing, and the de-malling of Landmark Mall and vicinity into a major mixed-use center. Current planning efforts include exploration of a new metro station at Potomac Yard and the revitalization of the Waterfront.

Ms. Hamer was Acting Director for the Montgomery County Planning Department (Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission) from 2005 to 2007. She

identified and implemented reforms to improve overall management practices, instituted a program budget, and addressed quality of development and design standards.

She worked in the Planning Department of Prince George's County (Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission) from 1987 until she left in 2005, as the Chief of Development Review, where she led and managed staff of 45 responsible for timely and accurate reviews of special exceptions, subdivisions, site plans, planned developments, and overall urban design for the department. Before that she was employed in the private sector for four years, working on a variety of urban parks, office parks, plazas and streetscapes.

Ms. Hamer is a registered Landscape Architect and graduated from Smith College with a BA in English, and from Morgan State University with a Master's Degree in landscape architecture.

**Christian J. Lessard**  
**Lessard Group Inc.**  
**Vienna, VA**

Christian Lessard, Chief Executive Officer, is the founding principal of the international firm of Lessard Group Inc. Throughout the national market, Lessard is recognized as a design innovator and a market trends oriented designer. Mr. Lessard is highly conversant in land planning and rezoning, high, mid and low-density developments, large-scale multi-family mixed-use and urban infill projects. Additionally, he has a thorough knowledge of both construction and development criteria. Mr. Lessard works with clients in the early stages of the development process. Frequently, he helps developers to formulate a game plan based on sound economic and marketing principles. His ability to bring a financial dimension to his work enables the firm to deliver value-driven design to its clients. As a result, Lessard has been honored with over 200 national and local awards in the past five years, including ULI, NAHB, Aurora, Monument and Best in American Living.

Mr. Lessard is a registered architect in eighteen states and is NCARB certified. His articles have been published in Builder Magazine, Urban Land Institute and Professional Builder. As a featured speaker, his expertise is sought in several seminars, at national conventions and trade shows including ULI, AIA, International Builders' and Multi-Family Housing. He actively participates in the Urban Land Institute and National Association of Home Builders, Northern Virginia Builders Industry Association and numerous land development and code committees. Formerly, he was Chairman of the Housing Committee for the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and Trustee for the Multi-Family Council. Recently, Mr. Lessard was listed in the Wall Street Journal as one of the United States' most proficient designers with over 300,000 units.

**Brian O'Looney**  
**Torti Gallas and Partners - CHK, Inc.**  
**Silver Spring, MD**

Brian O'Looney, A.I.A. LEED-AP is a design architect, planner, and an Associate Principal at Torti Gallas and Partners. He lectures around the nation on topics including urban infill, sustainability, and infrastructure management for dense pedestrian-oriented places. He has co-written the chapter on parking for the 2009 edition of the *New Urbanism: Best Practices Guide*.

He guided the design of Torti Gallas' work at Columbia Heights and Poplar Point in Washington, DC; White Flint Crossing, North Bethesda, MD; Clarendon Center, Arlington, VA, and The Greene in Beavercreek (Dayton), OH.

He serves as principal-in-charge for a number of the firm's current design and planning projects, including mixed-use work for Safeway in Washington, DC; Peninsula Town Center in Hampton, VA; and East Village in Philadelphia, PA.

Brian is a graduate of Yale University and the School of Architecture and Urban Planning at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

**Kevin R. Wayer**  
**Jones Lang LaSalle**  
**Washington, DC**

Mr. Wayer is an International Director and Co-President of Jones Lang LaSalle's Public Institutions group in Washington, DC. He co-founded and built Jones Lang LaSalle's Government Specialty that provides strategy, financing and negotiating services to public sector clients. He is responsible for leading a team of over 120 individuals in the delivery of real estate services that total over \$30 million in annual revenues. Mr. Wayer also sits on the Jones Lang LaSalle Americas Management Committee with responsibility for the successful implementation of strategic goals of the firm.

Mr. Wayer has served in a variety of capacities over his 15 years with the firm, including public-private partnership deals, development underwriting, transaction financing, asset acquisitions/dispositions and portfolio management. He served as the client relationship manager to the U.S. Air Force for their housing privatization and portfolio management programs. He also assisted in the development of the Army's Residential Community Initiative. In addition to the military privatization program, Mr. Wayer oversaw the firm's higher education practice focused on delivering financial and development advisory services.

Mr. Wayer has served public institution clients such as the Departments of the Army and Air Force, United States Postal Service, Departments of Defense, State and Veterans Affairs, General Services Administration, City of Chicago, District of Columbia, Port of Oakland, National Capital Revitalization Corporation, Washington Metropolitan

Area Transit Authority and Chicago Transit Authority. He has managed higher education client activities for the University of Pennsylvania, The Ohio State University, Georgia Tech University, University of Missouri, Kansas City and Southampton College. Mr. Wayer earned an M.B.A. with a concentration in finance from DePaul University and a B.S. in accounting from the University of Illinois. He passed the Certified Public Accountant exam in the State of Illinois.

Mr. Wayer serves on the Public-Private Partnership (Blue) Council for the Urban Land Institute (ULI) and has participated on ULI Advisory Panels in the U.S. He is a Senior Representative to the Association of Defense Communities (ADC), an association focused on development issues involving local military communities across the U.S. Mr. Wayer has been featured as a speaker and contributing source to Public-Private Partnership forums focused on housing, mixed-use and historic redevelopment issues. He represents the firm on Washington, DC's Federal City Council.

**Douglas A. Westfall**  
**Wells Fargo Multifamily Capital**  
**McLean, VA**

Douglas Westfall has more than 28 years experience in commercial mortgage finance, with 15 of those years in affordable housing lending. Before joining Wells Fargo he served as Senior Vice President for Bulls Capital Partners where he was responsible for overall production and was responsible for organizing marketing efforts and managing the affordable housing pipeline originating from GMAC Commercial Mortgage's national branch office system. Prior to that he was Director of Multifamily Affordable Housing for Freddie Mac where he managed all multifamily affordable housing lending activities and supervised Freddie Mac's initial involvement in multifamily affordable housing. Douglas moved to Freddie Mac after holding the position of southeast regional director for affordable housing at Fannie Mae where he was responsible for managing the multifamily affordable housing activities for the Fannie Mae's southeast region and was instrumental in helping to create Fannie's basic affordable housing products.

Douglas received his BS in Marketing from Metropolitan State College in Denver, Colorado and has taken numerous industry related courses including Real Estate Appraisal Principles, and Basic Valuation Procedures. He is a past member of the NAHB Housing Credit Group Steering Committee, is a member of the Mortgage Bankers Association, Georgia Affordable Housing Coalition, and National Housing Conference. Douglas also serves as a speaker at industry conferences and is active as a consultant on affordable housing issues.

**Robert M. Wulff**  
**B.F. Saul Company**  
**Bethesda, MD**

Robert M. Wulff is currently Senior Vice President at B.F. Saul Company where he is responsible for acquisition and development of projects for the firm's \$6 billion real estate portfolio. Prior to joining B.F. Saul, Mr. Wulff spent over 18 years with the Hazel and Peterson Companies where he directed all stages of greenfield and infill developments from site planning and architectural design through construction budgeting to marketing and sales. In this role he assembled a regional portfolio of over 5,000 single family lots and multifamily units and created high-density mixed-use projects encompassing over 30 million square feet in the National Capital Region. These projects earned over 20 national and regional awards for excellence in architecture, landscape design, and smart growth.

Prior to his private sector real estate career, Mr. Wulff was an investment banker with Smith Barney Harris Upham Company in NYC in their corporate finance division; and served as Deputy Director of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in the UDAG program where he was responsible for underwriting over \$1 billion of debt/equity investment for a variety of residential and commercial real estate projects in urban markets throughout the U.S. – all structured as public-private partnerships.

Prior to his real estate and banking career, Mr. Wulff held academic appointments at UCLA's School of Architecture and Urban Planning (adjunct faculty) and as an Assistant Professor in the University of South Florida's Anthropology Department. He has also taught a variety of planning and real estate courses at the University of Maryland and the Urban Land Institute.

Mr. Wulff holds undergraduate and graduate degrees from the University of Chicago and UCLA.