

## DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

## Internal Revenue Service

**Proposed Extension of Information Collection Request Submitted for Public Comment; Comment Request Relating to the Guidance on Cost Recovery Under the Income Forecast Method**

**AGENCY:** Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Treasury.

**ACTION:** Notice and request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** The Internal Revenue Service, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995. The IRS is soliciting comments concerning the guidance on cost recovery under the income forecast method. More specifically, the burden associated with filing Form 8866, *Interest Computation Under the Look-Back Method for Property Depreciated Under the Income Forecast Method*.

**DATES:** Written comments should be received on or before October 23, 2023 to be assured of consideration.

**ADDRESSES:** Direct all written comments to Andres Garcia, Internal Revenue Service, Room 6526, 1111 Constitution Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20224 or by email to [pra.comments@irs.gov](mailto:pra.comments@irs.gov). Please reference the information collection's "OMB number 1545-1622" in the subject line of the message.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Requests for additional information or copies of the form and instructions should be directed to Sara Covington, at (202)-317-5744 or Internal Revenue Service, Room 6526, 1111 Constitution Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20224, or through the internet, at [sara.l.covington@irs.gov](mailto:sara.l.covington@irs.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

*Title:* Interest Computation under the look-back Method for Property Depreciated Under the Income Forecast Method.

*OMB Number:* 1545-1622.

*Form Number:* 8866.

*Abstract:* Taxpayers depreciating property under the income forecast method and placed in service after September 13, 1995, must use Form 8866 to compute and report interest due or to be refunded under Internal Revenue Code 167(g)(2). The Internal Revenue Service uses the information on Form 8866 to determine if the interest has been figured correctly.

*Current Actions:* There is no change to the form at this time. This request is being submitted for renewal purposes only.

*Type of Review:* Extension of a currently approved collection.

*Affected Public:* Individuals or households, and business or other for-profit organizations.

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* 50.

*Estimated Time per Respondent:* 13 hours, 51 min.

*Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours:* 693.

The following paragraph applies to all the collections of information covered by this notice:

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless the collection of information displays a valid OMB control number.

Books or records relating to a collection of information must be retained if their contents may become material in the administration of any internal revenue law. Generally, tax returns and tax return information are confidential, as required by 26 U.S.C. 6103.

*Desired Focus of Comments:* The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is particularly interested in comments that:

- Evaluate whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility;
- Evaluate the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;
- Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and
- Minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including using appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., by permitting electronic submissions of responses.

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the ICR for OMB approval of the extension of the information collection; they will also become a matter of public record.

Approved: August 17, 2023.

**Sara L. Covington,**

*IRS Tax Analyst.*

[FR Doc. 2023-18074 Filed 8-22-23; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4830-01-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

**Veterans and Community Oversight and Engagement Board, Notice of Meeting**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) gives notice under the Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. ch. 10, that the Veterans and Community Oversight and Engagement Board (Board) will meet on **September 28–29, 2023, at Veterans Administration Central Office (VACO), 810 Vermont Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20429.** The meeting sessions will begin, and end as follows:

Date	Time
September 28, 2023.	8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.—Eastern Daylight Time (EDT).
September 29, 2023.	8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.—EDT.

The meetings are open to the public and will be recorded.

The Board was established by the West Los Angeles Leasing Act of 2016 on September 29, 2016. The purpose of the Board is to provide advice and make recommendations to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on identifying the goals of the community and Veteran partnership; improving services and outcomes for Veterans, members of the Armed Forces, and the families of such **Veterans and members; and on the implementation of the Draft Master Plan approved by VA Secretary on January 28, 2016,** and on the creation and implementation of any successor master plans.

On Thursday, September 28, 2023, the Board will meet in open session with key staff of the VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System, (VAGLAHS), and Department of Veteran Affairs Leadership. The agenda will include opening remarks from the Board Chair, Executive Sponsor, and other VA officials. There will be an overview provided by the Veterans Experience Office (VEO) highlighting VEO Organization and Operations. The Director of VAGLAHS will provide opening remarks and provide an overview of ongoing progress associated with the GLA campus. The Board will receive presentations on the status of the hiring process and VHA hiring fairs, and an **in-depth presentation of the Town Center Concept final report generated by the ULI Technical Assistance Panel.** The Board will receive a comprehensive presentation on Barriers to existing Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Voucher use

followed by a **presentation from HUD leadership** on HUD strategies to reduce administrative burdens and the potential for Area Median Income policy modifications. The Community Engagement and Reintegration Service Office will provide an overview of the Coordinated Entry System, and a comprehensive trend analysis of the data reflected on the VAGLAHS Dashboard. The Community Engagement and Reintegration Service Office will also provide an overview of the Housing Navigating Contracts, and an **update on plans for future use of the CTRS site. The Office of Asset and Enterprises Management will present detailed information on the VA Greater Los Angeles Medical Center campus parcel release plan.**

On Friday September 29, 2023, the Board will reconvene in open session from 8:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. Each Enhanced Use Lease developer is scheduled to provide an updated status of ongoing construction to include projected completion date, proposed move in plan, current selected service provider and funding commitment levels. The VAGLAHS Community Engagement and Reintegration Service Office will provide an overview of the **One Team** efforts since the last meeting to include data on reductions in the "interest list" as well as changes in the By Name List (BNL) and placement rates. The Board's subcommittees on Outreach and Community Engagement with Services and Outcomes, and Master Plan with Services and Outcomes will provide an out brief to the full Board and update on draft

recommendations to be considered for forwarding to the Secretary.

Time will be allocated for receiving public comments on September 28, 2023, at 4:00 p.m. EDT. Individuals wishing to make public comments should contact Chihung Szeto at 562-708-9959 or at [Chihung.Szeto@va.gov](mailto:Chihung.Szeto@va.gov) and are requested to submit a 1-2-page summary of their comments for inclusion in the official meeting record. Only those members of the public (first 12 public comment registrants) who have confirmed registrations to provide public comment will be allowed to provide public comment. In the interest of time, **each speaker will be held to 3-5 minutes time limit.** The Board will accept written comments from interested parties on issues outlined in the meeting agenda, from September 20 through October 6, 2023. Members of the public not able to attend in person can attend the meeting via WEBEX by joining from the meeting link below. The link will be active from 8:00 a.m.-5:45 p.m. EDT, September 28, 2023 and 8:00 a.m.-5:45 p.m. EDT, September 29, 2023.

#### Day 1: September 28, 2023

Veteran Community Oversight and Engagement Board (VCOEB) 21st Meeting  
Hosted by Walsh, Margaret K. (ERPI)  
<https://veteransaffairs.webex.com/veteransaffairs/j.php?MTID=ma78e82a155d0ec78e0599f8acb932cd7>  
Thursday, September 28, 2023, 8:00 a.m. | 9 hours | (UTC-04:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)  
Meeting number: 2762 163 7715  
Password: sdRppp3P\*65

Join by video system:

Dial 27621637715@

[veteransaffairs.webex.com](https://veteransaffairs.webex.com)

You can also dial 207.182.190.20 and enter your meeting number.

Join by phone:

14043971596 USA Toll Number

Access code: 276 216 37715

#### Day 2: September 29, 2023

Veteran Community Oversight and Engagement Board (VCOEB) 21st Meeting  
Hosted by Walsh, Margaret K. (ERPI)  
<https://veteransaffairs.webex.com/veteransaffairs/j.php?MTID=me46251dfcb4b4cc246c3eed70f06330f>  
Friday, September 29, 2023, 8:00 a.m. | 9 hours | (UTC-04:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)  
Meeting number: 2761 269 5365  
Password: FJqx7Jb5X@5  
Join by video system:  
Dial 27612695365@  
[veteransaffairs.webex.com](https://veteransaffairs.webex.com)  
You can also dial 207.182.190.20 and enter your meeting number.

Join by phone:

14043971596 USA Toll Number

Access code: 276 126 95365

Any member of the public seeking additional information should contact Mr. Eugene W. Skinner Jr. at 202-631-7645 or at [Eugene.Skinner@va.gov](mailto:Eugene.Skinner@va.gov).

Dated: August 18, 2023.

**Jelessa M. Burney,**

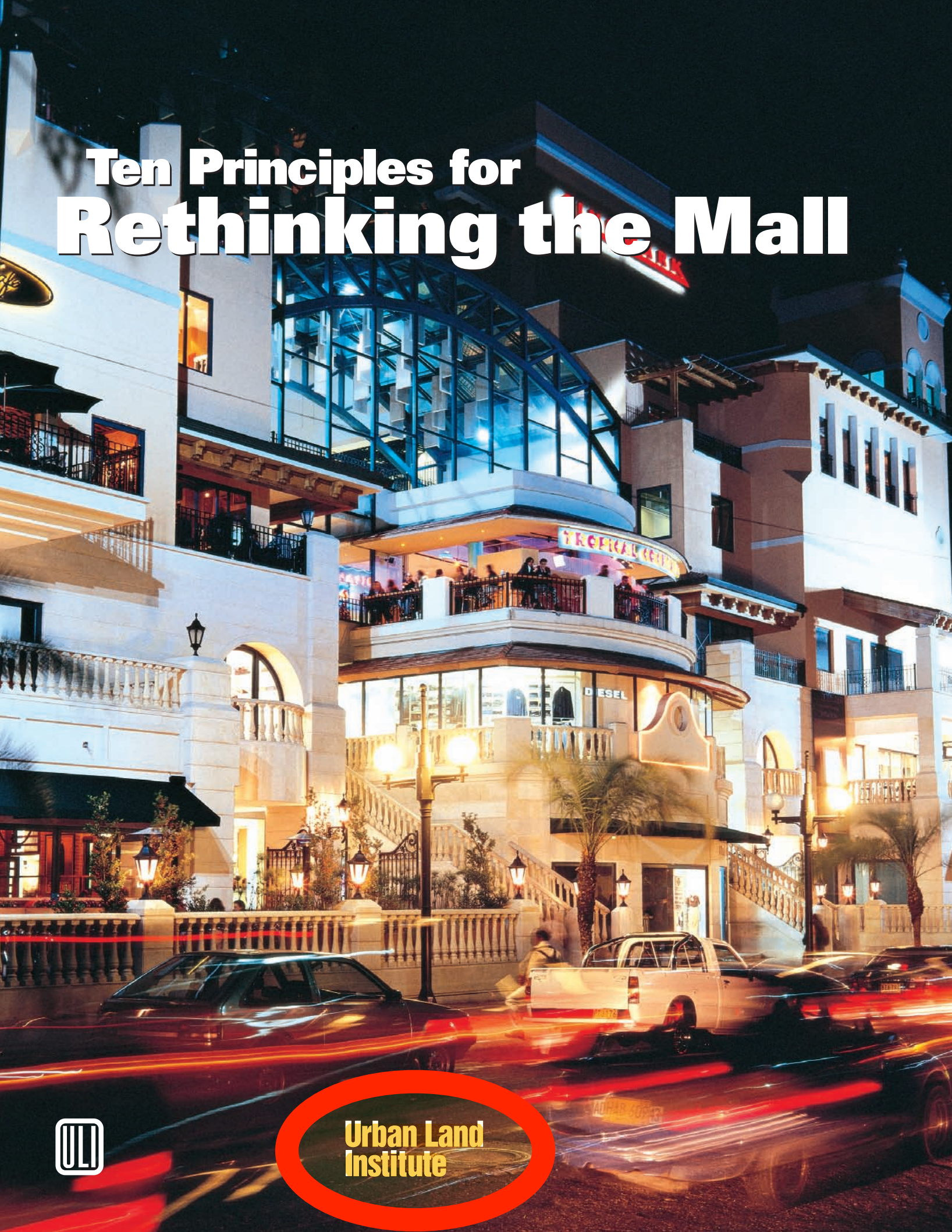
*Federal Advisory Committee Management Officer.*

[FR Doc. 2023-18126 Filed 8-22-23; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE P**



# Ten Principles for Rethinking the Mall



Urban Land  
Institute



# Introduction



Flatiron Crossing, in Broomfield, Colorado.

The shopping mall is the quintessential American contribution to the world's consumer culture. It has been praised by the millions who find an unmatched selection of fashion and specialty merchandise in its climate-controlled splendor, and it has been vilified for promoting both suburban sprawl and the decline of downtown shopping districts and mom-and-pop stores. But regardless of the differing opinions they evoke, malls are a unique and inescapable part of everyday life in America—and, increasingly, around the world. In many places, the mall is the community's de facto downtown—the main public gathering spot—as well as a highly valued shopping location. As a result, what happens to the mall may ultimately define what happens to the community.

Today there are more than 1,500 shopping malls in America, ranging in size from several hundred thousand to more than 3 million square feet (278,700 square meters). Malls are found in every city and town, and dozens surround major metropolitan areas. Most malls are enclosed, dominated by well-known chain stores, and anchored by iconic department stores. They offer many shopping advantages, and their success has depended on their unique position within the metropolitan marketplace: they are typically centered amid the vast middle-class suburbs

that fueled their rise; they are sited at the most accessible and visible locations along major arterials and freeways; they are under single management and provide controlled shopping environments that are perceived as clean, safe, and predictable; they have the largest concentration of the most desirable brand-name stores in their trade areas; they are part of customers' established shopping patterns; and, perhaps most importantly, they offer plentiful and convenient parking.

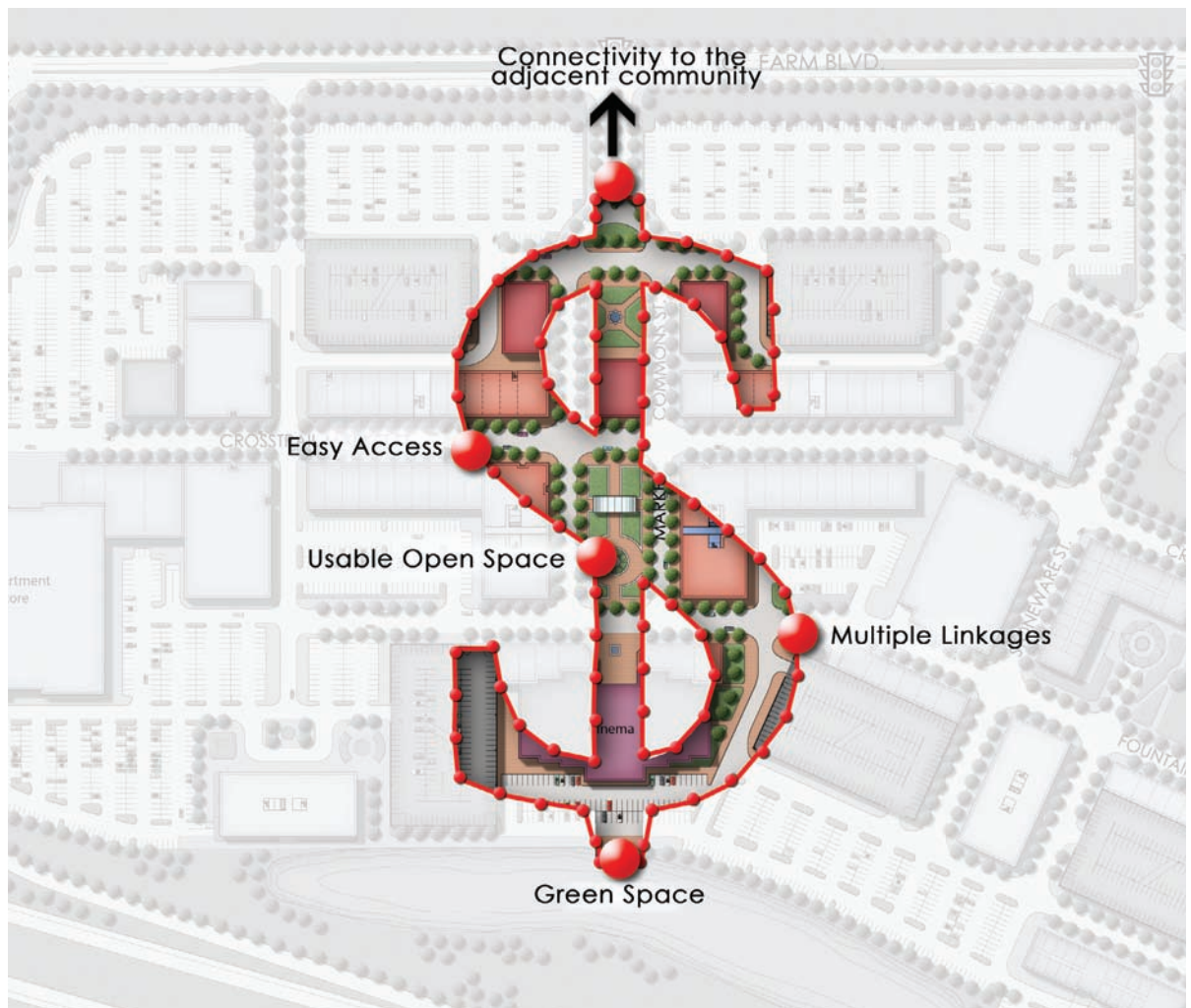
But the conditions that led to the creation of shopping malls and sustained them for decades are changing rapidly:

- The market for malls is now mature; and because most markets are saturated, only a handful of new malls are under construction at any one time. Large sites that are suitable for mall construction are difficult to secure, if they can be found at all; public approvals are increasingly difficult to get; and, except in certain very high growth exurban areas, new markets are limited.

- Because most malls are now decades old, the stock of centers is aging rapidly. Built at what were then metropolitan edges, aging malls are now deeply imbedded

- Ensure the long-term ecological sustainability of the site; and, in partnership with the community, create an antisprawl, antipollution environment. Work with, and link to, the natural systems that are found on the mall site, and use them to attract and retain customers. Consider creating leisure and dining areas alongside an uncovered stream (which may also double as site drainage); extending local trail systems through the mall site; adding linkages to local transit so that customers don't have to drive; using architecture that reflects the local culture, climate, and environment; developing parks and gathering places that enhance the mall's public function; and providing top-notch infrastructure within the public realm.
- Grab opportunities to create physical and functional connections between the mall site and the residential and commercial properties beyond its borders. Just as a department store serves as a mall anchor, think of the mall site as a potential

Breaking away from the "island" syndrome can increase a mall's market draw, expand its trade area, and create a more compelling destination.





# 5

## Create Consensus



It is much easier to move forward with a program if the key players all agree on the chosen direction. While it is impossible to make everyone happy all the time, agreement on how to move forward is necessary to get a project done. The interaction may initially be characterized by disagreement and contention, but these characteristics are the very ones that can make the process creative. In an effective consensus-building process, all the stakeholders—including the developer, the local government, citizens, and tenants—help each other succeed and share the fruits of their success.

Creating consensus can be difficult. It takes a lot of work upfront and is one of the critical first steps in rethinking how mall sites will be redeveloped. But this part of the process cannot be overlooked: if the effort is not made to find common ground, the project will become a source of suspicion, disappointment, and confrontation, and the development process will be slowed down.

The task of building consensus is often undertaken by a leader who acts as a champion for the project. The leader may be a public official, the developer, or a key person in the community. Having a champion who believes that the outcome will benefit the community helps with the creation of the vision as well as with project implementation.

Consensus starts with realistic goals that match the needs of the community with the realities of development. The goals are expressed in a vision for the site that everyone understands and agrees to. The more effort is put into creating this vision,

**Community workshops and meetings that involve all the stakeholders from the earliest planning stages will help ensure project success.**





the more smoothly the rest of the process will go. A variety of processes can be used to create this vision: community charrettes, working teams that meet on a regular basis, and community advisory groups are just a few of the possible approaches. One way to facilitate communication and help find common ground among all the parties is to create forums to educate stakeholders about each other's needs and desires. Whether the issue is the types of stores, the color of the buildings, or how traffic will flow, everyone has different views of what is needed in the community and how to achieve it. The more opportunities people have to share their views, the better.

The need for consensus does not stop once the plans are drawn for the site. Ongoing education is an important element of building and maintaining consensus: stakeholders need to be educated about the development process, the role of the public sector in the project, the realities of the market, planning and zoning requirements, and phasing for the project.

**SouthSide Works, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, replaced an industrial relic with a lifestyle-oriented town center that reconnected the community with the riverfront—an important goal of the local community.**



**Southlake Town Square, in Southlake, Texas, includes the community's city hall and a grand park that fulfills the residents' desire for a real downtown.**



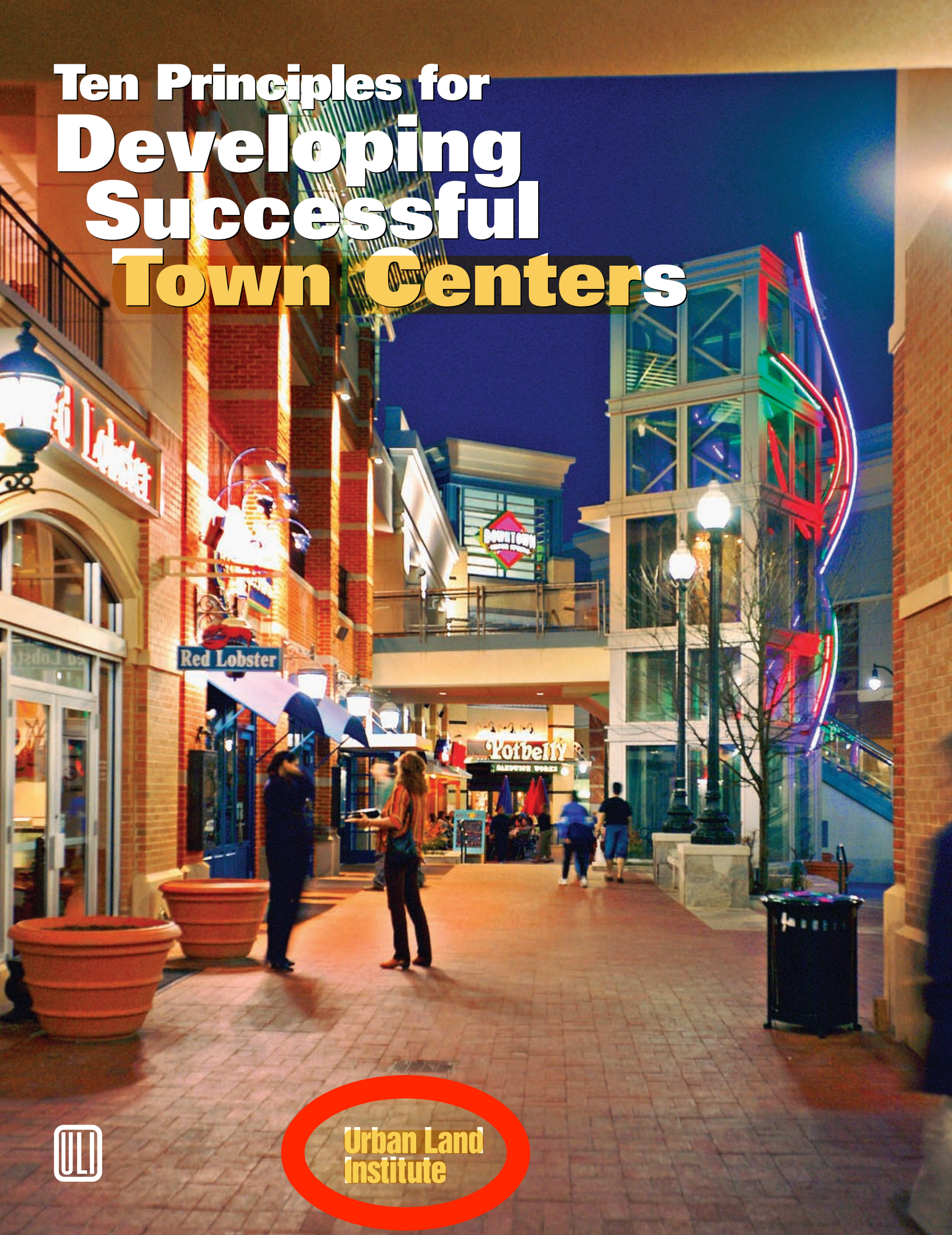
# Conclusion

**A**n obsolete or declining mall will undoubtedly be viewed as a serious problem for both the owner and the community, but it should also be seen as a long-term, once-in-a-generation opportunity. Through creative visioning, planning, and development, it may be possible to find an ingenious and comprehensive community-building solution that will have an impact far beyond the mall's parking lots. When a mall falters, the question that needs to be asked is not "How can we save the mall?" but "How can we use this opportunity to create a higher-value, more sustainable real estate development that helps build a more livable community?"

The decline of a mall should thus spark an evaluation of how the community has changed and matured since the mall was first built, and lead to a debate about approaches to redevelopment that will better serve the community's current needs. The goal is to create a plan for growth that (1) reflects the community's vision of its future and (2) meets the financial and operational requirements of the owners. When they work in partnership to rethink the mall, the public and private sectors have a tremendous opportunity to optimize long-term real estate returns, augment the image and appeal of the community, strengthen the community's economic vitality, and enhance the surrounding residential neighborhoods.



# Ten Principles for Developing Successful Town Centers



Urban Land  
Institute



# Ten Principles for Developing Successful Town Centers

Michael D. Beyard

Anita Kramer

Bruce Leonard

Michael Pawlukiewicz

Dean Schwanke

Nora Yoo





lete shopping malls, an aging monoculture of single-family homes, and environmental degradation. These problems are all evidence of the lack of a strong civic presence.

One consequence of the development patterns of the past 50 years is that **there are few public places in suburbia where all segments of society can get together** to interact, to celebrate, to stroll, to protest, to sit and watch the world go by, or just to enjoy day-to-day living. **The reason: these types of places are typically found in and around downtowns, and downtowns were never part of the suburban dream.**

From the beginning, suburbs revolved around such private pleasures as backyard barbecues, football practice, country clubs, and stay-at-home moms. Downtowns were considered anachronisms at best. **At worst, they were considered to be filled with crime, deterioration, poverty, and people to avoid.** As a result, suburban downtowns never got built.

**Shopping was also designed to be different in the suburbs. Gone were the street-front stores that were intimately connected with the life of the community in cities.**

**Construction began on the Reston Town Center in Reston, Virginia, in 1990. Today, it continues to grow.**

4. There is a powerful desire in suburbia to recreate the sense of community and connectedness that was lost as metropolitan areas grew so quickly in the past few decades.
5. Suburbanites, like all people, harbor a simple desire for more convenience in their busy lives.
6. Smart growth movements are gaining popularity as voters begin to realize the hidden costs of current suburban development practices.
7. Although suburbanites now actively seek a downtown environment, most do not want to live downtown. But that does not mean that they do not want the amenities of a sophisticated urban lifestyle.

As suburbs age and take on many of the characteristics of cities, they need to evolve as cities have evolved for millennia: creating walkable environments, broadening housing choices, offering mobility options, mixing land uses, selectively increasing densities, enhancing their civic and cultural presence, increasing diversity, and redeveloping obsolete and underused properties to provide more cosmopolitan environments and amenities. This is already beginning to happen. Downtowns, those places that many suburbanites have avoided for decades, are among the last missing pieces of the suburban development puzzle. Now being fit in place from coast to coast, they are called town centers.

### **What Is a Town Center?**

**A town center is an enduring, walkable, and integrated open-air, multiuse development that is organized around a clearly identifiable and energized public realm where citizens can gather and strengthen their community bonds. It is anchored by retail, dining, and leisure uses, as well as by vertical or horizontal residential uses. At least one other type of development is included in a town center, such as office, hospitality, civic, and cultural uses. Over time, a town center should evolve into the densest, most compact, and most diverse part of a community, with strong connections to its surroundings.**

Numerous obstacles can retard the natural evolution of suburbs into more livable and sustainable communities that include town centers with urban amenities: NIMBYism is at the forefront of actions to short-circuit suburban evolution. Assembling and developing land parcels that are suitable for town centers sometimes requires complex and sophisticated partnerships between the community and private landowners. Zoning and subdivision regulations must often be modernized. Mixing commercial, residential, civic, and cultural uses raises unusual development challenges and adds costs to the development process. And integrating contemporary,



# 2

## Respect Market Realities

**A** thriving town center is well tuned to the level and nature of the market that supports it. Understanding the market entails understanding not only population counts and income levels but also growth, competition, access, and aspirations. Each planned component in a town center should be evaluated separately to determine its basic strengths and the scope of its potential. But then all components must be evaluated together to determine their compatibility and the mix that works best for each component while offering an integrated, lasting environment. The goal is to provide a town center that is greater than the sum of its parts.

**A merchandising plan considers the retail mix for target markets and the necessary balance of demographic and lifestyle groups.**

**In a mixed-use setting, retail uses drive residential and office uses. The retail component sets the tone of the general environment in two ways, through the tenant**

**mix and through the nature of retail.** First, through the tenant mix it makes a statement about the nature of the experience in the town center. Is entertainment offered through restaurants, bookstores, and cinemas? Performing arts or fine arts facilities also provide entertainment but generally do not keep people in the area if these retail components are not also present. Does the tenant mix include specialty stores? Are the tenants







Washingtonian Center, in Gaithersburg, Maryland, was one of the first town centers to mix big-box discount stores with full-price and neighborhood convenience stores in a pedestrian environment.

upscale, middle-of-the road, or discount stores? Each provides different levels of browsing appeal, convenience, and customer traffic. Is there a supermarket? Supermarkets provide a convenience for nearby existing and future neighborhoods, and the type of supermarket—upscale or mainstream—is often one of the determinants of ambiance.

Second, through the very nature of retail—trips to a variety of retail spaces by hundreds or thousands of customers per day, almost all on street level—a high level of pedestrian activity is sustained. Although office workers and residents generate additional pedestrian activity, they do not provide the ongoing volume of activity generated by the retail component. Further, proximity to stores and restaurants is a selling point for residential units and office space in town centers, whereas on-site residential and office activity is a small factor in most stores' locational decisions.

A retail market analysis answers two “big picture” questions:

- What type of retail project can be supported by the market? Types include traditional neighborhood or community centers, more upscale centers commonly referred to as “lifestyle centers,” power centers, regional and super regional centers, or hybrids consisting of elements of any or all of these. Hybrids are becoming increasingly common.



GREGG LOGAN/WFLCO

High-density residential provides a good market base for retail at Atlantic Station, in Atlanta, Georgia.





Zona Rosa, in Kansas City, Missouri, creates a focus for a low-density suburban market.

- What size could the retail component be? Size refers to built space and can range from less than 100,000 square feet to more than 1 million square feet.

A retail market analysis follows six basic steps:

- Determine the spending patterns of the surrounding population—where people shop, how much they spend.
- Document the type, size, and location of existing and planned competitive retail facilities and districts, both nearby and in the region.
- Identify the likely new trade area on the basis of the analyses of those spending patterns and competing facilities.
- Calculate total buying power in the trade area and the amount expected to be captured by the new project.

- Translate captured buying power into supportable square footage.
- Conduct a site and traffic analysis to ensure that the projected development can be accommodated.

Office activity in a town center can range from second-story office space above retail to a freestanding class A high rise. An office market analysis evaluates existing

The market in Boca Raton, Florida, expects amenities such as valet parking at Mizner Park.



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office space in the region, including tenant types, building age, building size, and concentrations and occupancy rates, as well as planned developments, transportation improvements, and industry trends.

Residential units in a town center can include apartments over retail, loft units, apartment or condominium buildings, townhomes, and live/work units. Residential market analysis always looks at population growth projections and at market segments of the population that may be at a point in their life cycles when density and convenience are most attractive. Such segments include young professionals and empty nesters.

**Victoria Gardens in Rancho Cucamonga, California, provides many retail environments to serve different shopping needs.**




[Urban Land](#) >> [Town Centers: Walkable Urbanism in Suburbia](#)

## Town Centers: Walkable Urbanism in Suburbia

By [Archana Pyati](#)  
February 22, 2017

Text Size: [A](#) [A](#) [A](#)



Avalon in Alpharetta, Georgia

Just as cities have continuously evolved over the past half century, so, too, have suburbs. Though many suburbs in the post-World War era were built as bedroom communities where private spaces—single-family homes, expansive backyards, and members-only pools and clubs—took precedence over public ones, the desire for common gathering places never went away. Walkability, too, has become a community attribute increasingly valued but rarely achieved in many single-use suburban developments where owning a car is a necessity.

More than ever, **consumers** want to experience the look, feel, and convenience of **downtown**—even if they live miles away from the city. Newer suburban developments have embraced the idea of a vibrant

and inviting public realm and mixed-use environments to go with it. Though the town center concept is not new, **it is being reinvented and adapted to a variety of contexts.**

Two recent **ULI case studies** illustrate the appeal of town centers, **particularly in affluent, highly developed suburban submarkets** where **consumers** are seeking **urban amenities in a single place that is a short drive from home or easily accessible from the interstate.** Developers from **Avalon** in Alpharetta, Georgia, and **North Hills** outside Raleigh, North Carolina, reflected on their experiences with town center development during a ULI members-only webinar held in early February.

[Learn more about ULI Case Studies](#)

### Placemaking and a Strong Street-Level Experience

Make no mistake: town centers are not malls. “Mall’ is a four-letter word to us,” observed John Kane, president of Kane Realty, developer of North Hills. Whereas malls define success as getting people into stores, **town centers depend on the interplay of indoor and outdoor spaces and a mix of uses to create the bustle and energy of an urban downtown.**

Indeed, what makes town centers greater than the sum of their parts is a sense of place, achieved through specific urban design elements—pedestrian-friendly streets, signage, walkways, storefronts, plazas, fountains, and green spaces—that culminate in creation of a distinctive public realm. “A well-designed public realm functions as anchor, amenity, and defining element of a town center,” notes **Ten Principles for Developing Successful Town Centers, published by ULI in 2007.**

Avalon and North Hills elevate the public realm in unique ways.

At Avalon, the first phase of the 2.3 million-square-foot (214,000 sq m) development **anchors its retail, restaurant, office, and multifamily buildings on a main street.** Avalon Boulevard, with 20-foot-wide (6 m) sidewalks, plus offers a variety of green open spaces designed for programmed events and activities, as well as simply hanging out. The central plaza has a 60-foot-wide (18 m) fountain, expansive green turf that is converted to serve as a skating rink during winter, and power sources at the perimeter for entertainers and kiosk tenants.

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# About the Urban Land Institute

**THE MISSION OF THE URBAN LAND INSTITUTE** is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. ULI is committed to

- **Bringing together leaders from across the fields of real estate and land use policy** to exchange best practices and serve community needs;
- Fostering collaboration within and beyond ULI's membership through mentoring, dialogue, and problem solving;
- **Exploring issues of urbanization**, conservation, regeneration, land use, capital formation, and sustainable development;
- Advancing land use policies and design practices that respect the uniqueness of both the built and natural environments;
- Sharing knowledge through education, applied research, publishing, and electronic media; and
- Sustaining a diverse global network of local practice and advisory efforts that address current and future challenges.

Established in 1936, the Institute today has more than 38,000 members worldwide, representing the entire spectrum of the land use and development disciplines. **Professionals represented include developers, builders, property owners, investors, architects, public officials, planners, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, academics, students, and librarians.**

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

Cover photo: Elvert Barnes, flickr

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Washington, DC 20036-4948

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# Background and the Panel's Assignment

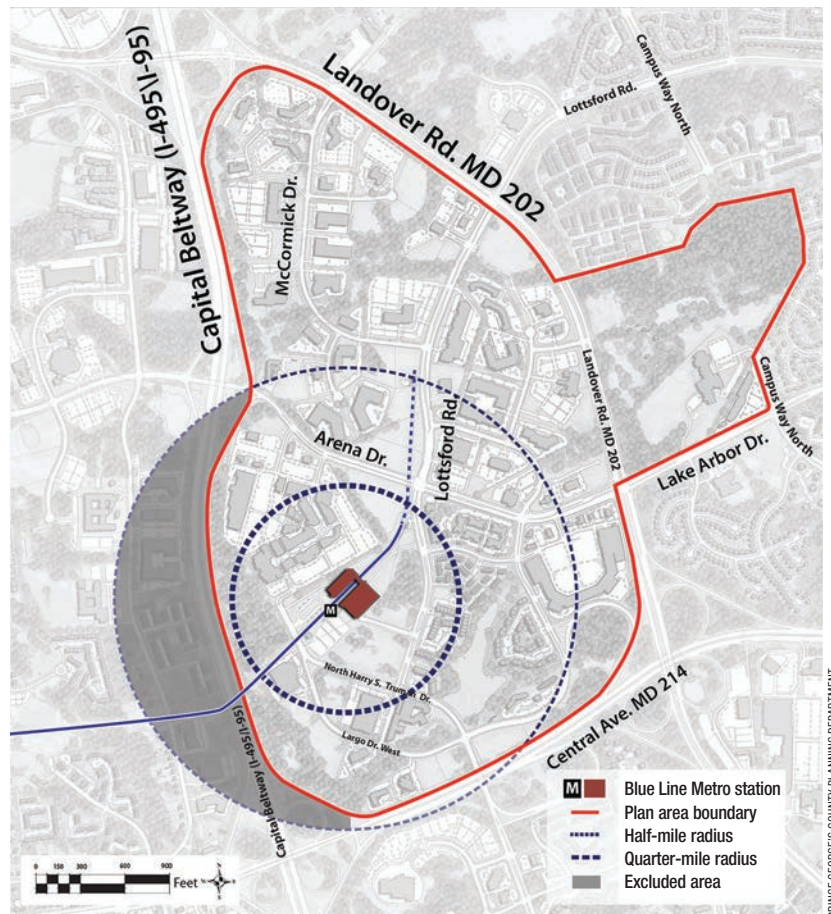
**FIVE MILES EAST OF WASHINGTON, D.C.**, Largo Town Center is a mixed-use hub located at the intersection of several regionally important highways and roadways in Prince George's County. Anchored by the Largo Town Center Metro station, the center contains about 800 acres of land, of which more than 200 acres are vacant or undeveloped. The Metro station is the terminal station for the Blue and Silver lines in Prince George's County and offers direct rapid transit access to the rest of the Washington metropolitan region.

Beyond its transit advantages, the core area features a mixed-use retail district along an extended Harry S Truman Drive. In addition, Largo Town Center serves as one of Prince George's County's two primary local government centers, offering a variety of services for county residents and businesses.

Because of the area's underused strengths, several county plans have made efforts to reevaluate the area's potential. At the countywide level, both the *Strategic Plan for Economic Development* and *Plan Prince George's 2035 Approved General Plan* (Plan 2035) call for targeting a small number of emerging economic hubs that exhibit the highest potential for sustained job generation. In particular, the *2013 Approved Largo Town Center Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment* envisions the transformation of the Largo Town Center Metro station area into one of Prince George's County's premier mixed-use "downtowns" and centers of 24-hour activity by 2035. These plans outline a vision for a range of large and small businesses to serve the needs of both citizens who reside within walking distance of the Metro station and visitors from the greater Washington metropolitan region.

## The Panel's Assignment

Prince George's County leaders have shown an interest in the expedited development of Largo Town Center. The



The Largo Town Center study area.

area is experiencing momentum as an employment center with the county's purchase of property and the approval by the Planning Board of the detailed site plan (DSP-14028) for the Prince George's County Regional Hospital on June 23, 2015. The county is interested in taking advantage of the recent activities by continuing this momentum for the expedited development of the center.

The panel was asked to provide unbiased input and offer recommendations to help Prince George's County stimulate private sector investments at Largo Town Center.

Following are questions the panel was asked to address:

- **Examining the core area, what is the market potential for office and retail?** Is the market at the density envisioned by the sector plan and Plan 2035?
- Given the current and projected short-range market conditions and the regional medical center's construction timeline, which land use elements should be the highest priority for immediate redevelopment?

**Outside the urban core**, other questions around the greater Largo Town Center area are raised:

- What actions or strategies does the county need to implement to provide the best opportunity for the employment and commercial markets to succeed in the various time frames (zero to five years and six to ten years)?
- Which elements of the sector plan can serve as short-term catalysts to influence future development?
- What is the feasibility of thematically clustering predominant uses, such as health care tenants and government services?
- **What infrastructure investments will be needed for the area, and should it be funded by the public sector, private developers, or both?**
- What tools, programs, and financing options does the county currently have or need to create to effectively stimulate the growth envisioned by the sector plan and Plan 2035? How and where should these funding sources and programs be applied?
- **What kind of impacts should be anticipated in the commercial and office markets if the county administration (county executive's office and county council offices) or other government agencies relocate** from Upper Marlboro to Largo Town Center?
- How should the **county** ensure the successful implementation of the sector plan and Plan 2035 and how should this relate to the Largo Town Center Development Board?

- The approved sector plan makes recommendations to encourage developers to rebrand the area and develop a marketing strategy for complementary uses. **Should this be an action undertaken by the county?**

## Summary of Recommendations

Based on the briefing material, the study area tour, and stakeholder interviews, the panel has made the following recommendations for the Largo Town Center area:

- **Relocate the county government.** For this move, the panel ultimately suggests the development of a purpose-built county office complex located in or near the Metro station. This building should also include a one-stop services center. The consolidation of employees can be both cost-effective and more efficient in operation.
- *Address the opportunities and challenges of achieving highest and best use in Inglewood Business Park.* To achieve this goal, the panel recommends a comprehensive asset management procedure for the study area.
- *Direct attention to placemaking.* This can come in the form of rebranding the central business district or other community enhancement elements such as an event center and an active urban park.
- *Improve access of different modes of transportation and road connections.* Ranging from implementing a road diet to improving parking facilities, Largo Town Center has great potential of becoming a key transportation hub in the county. The panel recommends capitalizing on this strength and expanding on it through various projects.
- *Implement effective housing principles and policies for current stock and future development.*
- *Use available management tools.* Work through the implications and choices associated with catalytic versus organic development strategy adoption.

The remainder of this report elaborates on these recommendations.



# Largo Town Center: Context and Market Analysis

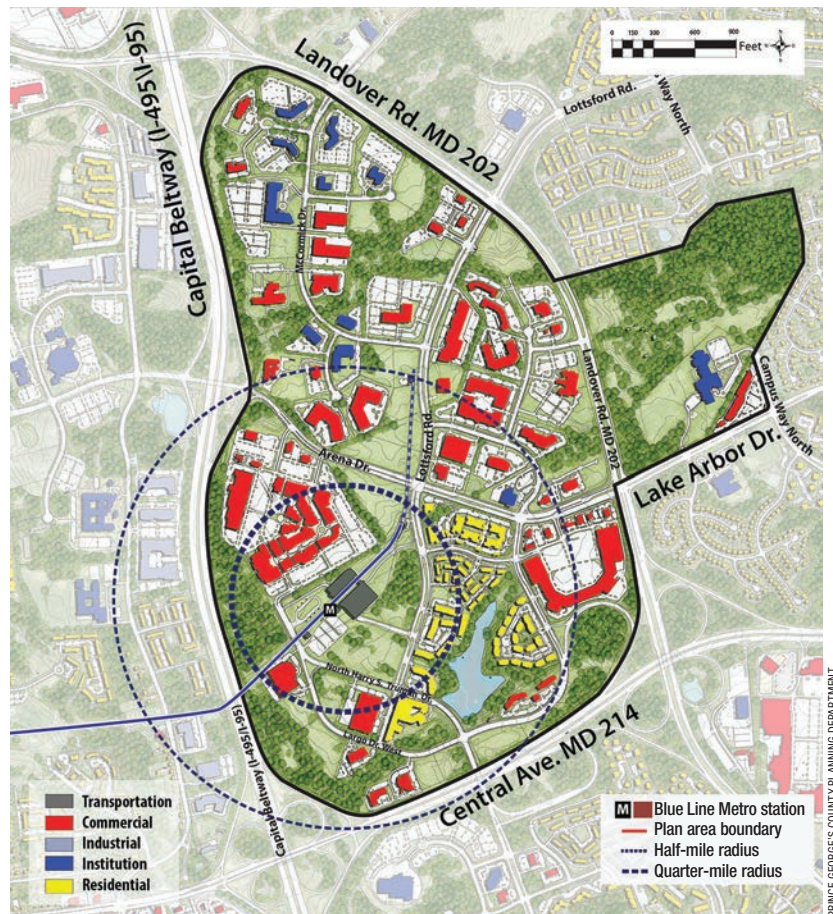
**TO ANALYZE THE MARKET OPPORTUNITY** for development around the study area, the panel undertook a comprehensive review of market conditions in Upper Marlboro and Prince George's County relative to the broader metropolitan area, as well as state and national averages. This analysis identifies structural factors as well as strengths and weaknesses that may affect the market's competitive opportunities and liabilities.

Population, employment, and income provide insight into the capacity of a market to attract quality and growth. The size and role of a marketplace, its civic leadership, proximity to other metropolitan areas, transportation concentrations, and the location of competing or complementary attractions directly influence the scale and quality of facilities that can be supported within a particular market.

## Site Context

Largo Town Center lies in the geographic center of Prince George's County, Maryland. Prince George's County is strategically located 18 miles from downtown Washington, D.C.; 37 miles from Baltimore, Maryland; 107 miles from Richmond, Virginia; 133 miles from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and 222 miles from New York, New York.

Because of the large size of Prince George's County, it has been divided into seven geographic areas. These distinct regions allow the county administrators and Planning Department to develop and provide more relevant public services targeted to the specific needs of the business and residents in these different areas. Each planning area is typically bounded by a major highway, political boundary, or natural border. These area master plans are used as the basis for comprehensive rezoning, resulting in a new zoning map for the subject area, which is called a sectional map amendment. The figure provides a pictorial view of



Land use map of the study area.

the area analyzed in this report, along with the area surrounding it and division of land uses.

The area surrounding the Largo Metrorail station (sub-region 4) is characterized by a mature neighborhood development pattern combined with numerous large sites that are intermittent or community-centric uses. Within approximately a one-mile radius, the following large sites are found in the Largo area:

- FedEx Field (while outside the town center, this venue greatly affects the Largo area);

county. The average household size in the area is smallest among the neighboring jurisdictions being compared.

Although the percentage of black or African American population in the area (40.4 percent) is significantly lower than that of the whole county (65.8 percent), those who are some other race are 24.6 percent compared with 8 percent for the county. Asians, who make up 4.8 percent in the county, are completely absent in the area, and the percentage of population that is white alone (22.8 percent) is similar to that of the whole county.

More than 43 percent of the population 25 years and older has a bachelor's degree or higher educational achievement, compared with 29 percent for the county. In addition, a lower percentage (5.8 percent) has some high school with no diploma or less, compared with 14 percent for the whole county.

The largest percentage of workers from the Largo Town Center area (48.7 percent) is employed in for-profit private companies. That percentage is lower, however, than that for employees countywide who have jobs with for-profit private companies, which is 56.9 percent. At the same time, a high 47.9 percent of employees from the Largo Town Center area is employed with nonprofit private companies and local, state, and federal governments. This is 10.6 percentage points higher than those in that category countywide. The current rate of unemployment for residents in the Largo Town Center area (8.3 percent) is lower than the countywide rate, which is 9.9 percent.

## Market Overview

Housing occupancy in the Largo Town Center area is unique in the sense that, in contrast to the whole county, a substantial proportion of the existing units (68.6 percent) is renter occupied. This percentage is higher than in the rest of the county, where 39.6 percent of units is renter occupied, as well as all the jurisdictions being compared. Even Washington, D.C., has a lower percentage of renter-occupied units (59.4 percent) than the Largo Town Center area.

The preponderance of renters in the Largo Town Center area is no surprise, considering that the area is dominated by multifamily housing, with 34 percent of existing projects having 50 or more units, 41 percent having 20 units or more, and 44 percent having five to 19 units. In contrast, more than 66 percent of the housing units in the county as a whole are single-unit attached or detached. Prominent multifamily housing complexes include Camden Largo Town Center, Mosaic at Largo Station, Largo Center Apartments, and the recently constructed Tapestry Largo Station.

The housing stock in the Largo Town Center area is relatively new overall with a median age of 19 years, compared with 42 years for the county. Arlington County, Virginia, is the only jurisdiction among those being compared with a lower median age of housing stock.

The commercial real estate market in the Largo Town Center area is fairly active with 43 existing buildings totaling more than 2 million square feet of space. A majority of the existing buildings (27) are retail, eight are office, and four each are flex and industrial buildings. The current overall vacancy rate for the area is 7.1 percent, and the asking rent is \$20.62. The vacancy rate is highest for flex space (10.6 percent) and lowest for retail and office (6.3 percent). The highest asking rent (\$21.08) is for office space, and the lowest (\$18.00) is for industrial space. The area within a half-mile radius of Largo Town Center has 1.74 percent of the total commercial real estate square footage in Prince George's County.

The statistics for vacancies, rents, and days on the market show that the commercial real estate market in the Largo Town Center area is more robust overall than in the county as a whole. The current vacancy rate in Largo is 6.9 percent, lower than the countywide rate of 10.3 percent. The vacancy rate is also almost 4 percentage points lower than in the Washington metropolitan area. The current rent per square foot in the Largo Town Center area is \$5.51 higher than that of the whole county, which is currently \$13.62. When compared with the metropolitan area, the rent per square foot for the Largo Town Center area is rather low,



focusing on the Largo Town Center Metrorail station as a transfer hub. The coverage area of Metrobus is limited to higher-density areas in Prince George's County and does not serve the broader marketshed around the site.

The Metrorail station is served by very frequent service on the Blue and Silver lines, which extend across the District of Columbia into two distinct parts of the northern Virginia suburbs. Within a 25-minute Metrorail trip, users embarking at the Largo Town Center station can travel directly to the L'Enfant Plaza station, central city, employment, and tourist stations within the District of Columbia, or transfer and return in an easterly direction to other lines servicing Washington, D.C., and northern Virginia.

Although Metrorail service at the station is similar to that of other stations in the system, the design of the Largo Town Center station reflects its regional role as an end-of-line station. Whereas many stations are designed to accommodate park-and-ride, kiss-and-ride, and bus transfers, end-of-line stations have the distinct role of serving a much larger and more automobile-oriented catchment area. They are generally designed to accommodate significantly more automobile access than typical stations. This is certainly reflected in the large parking facilities at the Largo Town Center station. End-of-line stations often have considerable space dedicated to bus-transfer facilities and kiss-and-ride facilities that accommodate additional forms of access from the same large catchment area. These facilities occupy several acres at Largo Town Center.

Overall, the resulting character of Largo Town Center station, and most end-of-line stations, is extremely oriented to the automobile and scaled for regional rather than local demand. This detracts from the walkability and livability of the area around the station relative to other stations in the system.

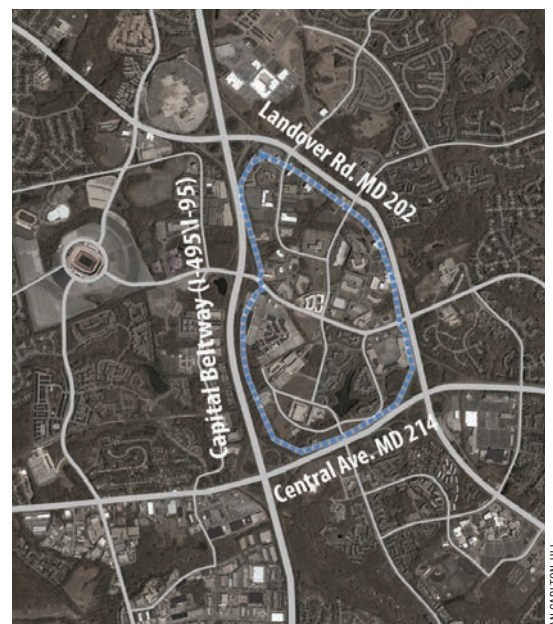
## Panel Observations

The Largo Town Center area is physically defined by several factors, including highways, large land users, massive nearby redevelopment sites, large block and parcel sizes, generous street sizes, and a regional transit facility.

The study area is clearly bound by Interstate 495 on the west, Maryland Route 202 on the east, and Route 214 on the south. Seven major intersections and access points from these roadways offer considerable automobile access in this location. These highways have been attractive assets for large, regional land users such as FedEx Field and PGCC. Adjacent to the core area, these land users have transformed Largo Town Center into a major destination for thousands of regional residents.

Many of the large parcels in the study area and its surroundings are presently vacant or underused with potential for major redevelopment. Outside the study area, the former Landover Mall is currently a potential site for the relocation of the FBI's headquarters. The Boulevard at the Capital Centre, which lies within the study area's boundaries, is another large site that presents opportunities for redevelopment. Rather than focus on land within the arbitrary one-quarter and one-half-mile circles around Largo Town Center station, the panel contends that the broad Largo Town Center Sector Plan community boundaries are a more realistic and appropriate area in which to focus the efforts of Prince George's County.

The panel's expanded study area.



# Site-Specific and County Recommendations

**THE PANEL RECOMMENDS THE FOLLOWING** for the county to both achieve its sector plans and develop the Largo Town Center study area:

- *Relocate the county government.* For this move, the panel suggests the development of a purpose built county office complex located in or near the Metro station will eventually be needed. This building should also include a one-stop service center. The consolidation of employees can be both cost-effective and more efficient in operation.
- *Address the opportunities and challenges of achieving highest and best use in the Inglewood Business Park.* To achieve this goal, the panel recommends a comprehensive asset management procedure for the study area.
- *Direct attention to placemaking.* This can come in the form of rebranding the central business district or other community enhancement elements such as an event center and an active urban park.
- *Improve access via different modes of transportation and road connections.* Largo Town Center has great potential for becoming a key transportation hub in the county. The panel recommends capitalizing on this strength and expanding on it through various projects ranging from implementing a road diet to improving parking facilities.
- *Implement effective housing principles and policies for current stock and future development.*
- *Use available management tools.* Work through the implications and choices associated with adopting a catalytic versus organic development strategy.

## Relocation of the County Government

Although the current county center is in Upper Marlboro, the county already houses a surprisingly larger number of its employees in seven buildings in Inglewood Business Park. Functions already located there include Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Economic Development Corporation, Licenses and Permitting services, Department of Environment, the Health Department, the Department of Public Works and Transportation, and the Fire and Emergency Services Department.

Beginning in 1991, the Prince George's County administration has operated in a sensible, opportunistic manner to acquire available suburban office buildings located in Inglewood Business Park. At this point, the county must decide about the practical, logistical considerations of locating government offices near communities and citizens served, proximity to other county offices, and the future development goals established by Plan 2035 and the Largo Town Center Sector Plan.

The panel identified the current properties owned by the county within the study area and, more specifically, Inglewood Business Park. The logic of relocating the remaining administrative offices, Planning Board, and Planning Department offices to the business park is compelling merely on the face of these facts.

Identifying the departments and associated staff that would be candidates for relocation from the Upper Marlboro building complex is clearly important. The County Administrative Building (CAB) at 14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive houses a workforce that is an important economic contributor to the local community. However, the



## Prince George's County Assets in the Inglewood Business Park

Map ID	Name/address	Building square footage	Year built	Acres	Assessed value
61	1400 McCormick Drive	64,585	1990	5.21	\$9,596,433
66	9201 Basil Court	74,788	1984	7.09	\$15,348,433
69	9200 Basil Court	103,936	1982	7.73	\$10,858,733
70	1801 McCormick Drive	113,709	1986	7.76	\$9,216,000
71	1701 McCormick Drive	31,860	1986	3.55	\$4,803,733
72	9400 Peppercorn Place	131,338	1989	7.95	\$21,980,600
73	9450 Peppercorn Place	—	—	5.11	\$1,179,967
74	9441 Peppercorn Place	—	—	2.96	\$661,700
75	9401 Peppercorn Place	—	—	5.52	\$1,120,800
80	1315 McCormick Drive	—	—	5.13	\$1,691,200
81	1301 McCormick Drive	181,000	2000	3.62	\$14,050,500
82	9550 Lottsford Road	—	—	7.68	\$1,963,400
<b>Totals</b>		<b>701,216</b>		<b>69.32</b>	<b>\$92,471,499</b>

Sources: Prince George's County Planning Department; assessed value data are from the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation.

panel understands that replacement candidates exist that can occupy the building, and the local community should be reassured about this concern.

The relocation of administrative uses associated with the executive offices and the Prince George's County Park and Planning group from the CAB would still leave a large concentration of county employees in Upper Marlboro, associated with the courthouse, judicial, and public safety functions. Departure from the CAB of the administrative uses would reportedly free up space to be repurposed to support these functions.

In addition, significant effort and funding have already been expended in anticipation of the eventual relocation of these uses. Nothing that has been presented to the panel members would argue against the presumption of relocating the administrative functions. Because the discussion of this subject seems to continue, the panel fully supports relocation of the administrative offices to the Largo area.

## Considerations for Asset Building and Relocating County Employees to Largo

The agreement to relocate county offices shifts the analysis from "go/no-go" to addressing the program and business operational requirements associated with the uses moving to the Largo area, such as building type and layout needs, employee and public parking options, and ownership preference (i.e., build to suit or as built).

Prince George's County government has the opportunity to provide a positive experience for residents and for current and prospective employees through how it provides the physical space, tools, and technology to support the organization. Considering locational attributes as they relate to all constituents—customers and employees—is important.

The recently acquired property at 1301 McCormick Drive is the presumed destination of the relocated administra-

tive functions. Although relocation at 1301 McCormick Drive may be the appropriate decision, the panel posits whether considering the relocation as an interim move would be useful, with a permanent move subsequently to a purpose-built public complex constructed as part of a large-scale mixed-use project near the Largo Town Center Metro station.

In addition, the panel sees the relocation as an opportunity for the county to incorporate more contemporary workspace designs that are considerably different from the space plans of earlier decades. The application of contemporary design standards may result in a determination that consolidation of uses could create a net reduction in overall square footage and result in lower operating costs associated with modern and efficient building mechanical

systems. An accurate assessment of the total occupancy costs and the various cost scenarios associated with possible consolidation of all uses into a purpose-built facility requires a separate evaluation by a team familiar with this type of comparative analysis.

From law firms to corporate headquarters, a major shift is taking place to open space arrangements with only one or two office sizes and one or two cubical sizes. These arrangements include gathering areas in lieu of break rooms, “huddle rooms” for small meetings, more conference rooms, fitness facilities, and other amenities deemed important by younger workforce members. Brightly lit work areas and direct access to daylight have increased in importance. Employees also frequently express a strong

## Case Study: Dallas Area Rapid Transit

Contemporary design standards significantly reduce the total square footage required to house the workforce while achieving lower operating costs.

Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) recently completed an analysis of its space requirements and the effect of introducing an open-space plan (see table).

The option chosen, called “Lift + Shift,” achieved a 20 percent reduction in total space requirements through adoption of an open-space concept. Other options studied included combinations of build-to-suit space, and having multiple or single office and work stations sizes.

### Scenario Comparisons for Open-Space Plan Economies

	Current state	Lift + Shift	Multiple standard	Multiple standard, BTS	Single standard	Single-standard, BTS
Total GSF	271,000	221,500	190,500	175,200	178,800	164,500
Total RSF	251,000	203,800	175,300	161,200	164,500	151,300
RSF/person	481	408	351	322	329	303
Collaboration seats: individual seats	0.87:1.0	0.97:1.0	0.97:1.0	0.97:1.0	0.97:1.0	0.97:1.0
Open % : closed %	58:42	52:48	85:15	85:15	85:15	85:15

Source: Dallas Area Rapid Transit.

Note: GSF = gross square feet, RSF = rentable square feet, BTS = build to suit.



## Asset Management and Consolidation Recommendation

Office and complementary space uses total 701,216 square feet on 69.32 acres. Seven of the 12 property parcels have buildings, while the balance is either undeveloped or used for parking.

The panel members were struck by the number of office buildings the county occupies and the relative age of those buildings. Although they are in relatively close proximity, the buildings owned and occupied by the county within Inglewood Business Park are still distributed on a mile-long corridor. Easy and regular interaction among staff members is not available, and the relative isolation of the groups within the various buildings creates workforce silos. The buildings are circa 1980s construction coming to the end of their useful life.

Thus, the county has substantial existing assets that can be managed and leveraged to accomplish both internal objectives (related to its own space occupancy and land use needs) and larger external goals (to stimulate

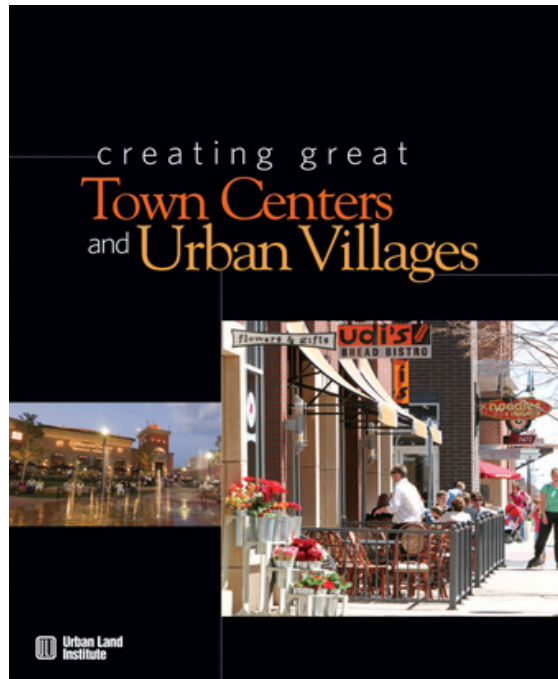
the private sector investment in Largo Town Center). The panel recommends that the county reevaluate its real estate asset program and consider the potential of selling the county cluster of suburban office buildings and consolidating those uses into a larger, purpose-built building complex.

- Perform an accurate review of long-term space needs for county government.
- Analyze the complete range of market options for county government, and develop these into economic scenarios for comparative evaluation.
- Assess how the county's workforce would be best served by adopting new workplace strategies.
- Perform a financial analysis to identify the cost savings of relocation.

preference for locations that permit them to walk to restaurants and retail stores.

The panel agrees that the county is well positioned to leverage its assets and prepare for the transition in a timely fashion. With relocation and consolidation, the county is poised to transform the Largo Town Center market using its own real estate assets and land and to create the compelling destination that signals a downtown and urban core.

In a separate section of this report, the panel speaks to the issues and opportunities associated with the ownership of the various office buildings in the business park. The county may be able to create two significant development opportunities in the future.



## Creating Great Town Centers and Urban Villages

By *Prema Katari Gupta*

ARCHITECTURE

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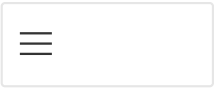
PUBLICATION DATE: JUNE 2008

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### OVERVIEW

Describes the hottest trends and innovations in design and development: creating a memorable public space, [dealing with market realities](#), [partnering with the public/private sectors](#), planning for development and financial complexity, capturing the benefits of density, sustainability initiatives, connecting to the community, and managing and programming the town center. Packed with color photographs, site plans, and case studies of both new projects and classics that have stood the test of time, this book reveals the inside story of how they were developed and what makes them special, [offering vital facts about costs, rents](#), land uses, and more.





# Los Angeles Times

OPINION

## Editorial: Vets deserve a thriving town center on revamped West L.A. VA campus

PUBLISHED ON VETERANS DAY 2023



A rendering in the 2022 master plan of Building 13 on the VA campus that would anchor a town center with a restaurant and other services for all veterans along with some housing units for homeless veterans. (Gensler architectural firm/Courtesy of U.S. Vets)

BY THE ~~TIMES EDITORIAL BOARD~~ BY ANTHONY ALLMAN OF VCOEB, LACVAB, LAVC & VETS ADVOCACY

MAY 29, 2023 5 AM PT

The **reimagining** of the sprawling West L.A. campus of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is primarily focused on building housing for homeless vets. But **that's not all it's about.**

The 2015 **settlement** of a lawsuit against the VA led to a pledge to provide at least 1,200 units of housing to homeless veterans. It also spurred the creation of a 2016 master plan to transform the north end of the campus into a community for veterans, with residential buildings **surrounding a town center** where they can gather, partake in a variety of services, participate in activities or just relax. (The south end of the campus is dominated by the VA medical facilities.)

The **housing** effort, led by three developers, has finally gained momentum with 237 units opened and most occupied and another 380 under construction or about to break ground. That's good progress on a daunting task. Now, **VA officials must figure out what the town center should look like.**

There are conflicts about what that should be. There have already been two versions and much debate over which (**if either**) of the town center plans **better serves veterans** who have already started to move into permanent homes on the VA campus as well as **veterans throughout the region** seeking a place to gather. And although the town center is probably years away from being completed, it's important for VA officials to get it right by maximizing housing and creating a welcoming communal space that will make it feel **more like a hometown** than a government facility.

The **2016 master plan** featured an oval space that would include a town center with a

green space, a town hall, and an array of services, which could include a fitness center, media center, coffee house, **shops** and legal aid. The idea was to provide the central gathering space — a place that beckoned all vets whether they lived there or not.

## OPINION

**Editorial: Finally, more housing for homeless veterans opens on the VA campus. Still problems? Of course**

March 13, 2023

The master plan was [updated](#) in 2022 with **input from architects**, VA officials and the **principal developers (who came onboard after the first master plan)**. The town center was reconfigured into a more **horizontal space that spreads west** from a huge historic building (known as Building 13) **anchoring the center** with a town hall, **restaurant and other uses**.

The biggest change to the plan was the addition of four residential buildings to the town center. **The amenities and services that had their own buildings in the 2016 plan are now located on the ground floors of residences** that provide a total of 316 units. An additional 25 units occupy the second floor of the town hall. Some veterans and advocates are critical of the changes, believing they subjugate the purpose of the town center to the mandate to create housing.

**“People don’t heal in housing. They heal in community,”** says [Jonathan Sherin](#), the former director of the L.A. County Department of Mental Health who was also an advisor during the 2015 settlement of the lawsuit against the VA.



Anthony Allman, executive director of Vets Advocacy, says the 2022 plan maximizes housing density without looking carefully at what would create the most effective town center.

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CALIFORNIA

**‘Challenging’ Westside homeless camp drew complaints. Now its residents are getting housing**

May 13, 2023

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ADVERTISEMENT

Of course, veterans don't want the town center to be an afterthought and neither do we. But the updated version of a town center isn't an appendage shoehorned into the plan. Quite the opposite. The developers wanted to mix the residential units with other uses on the ground floors to make the town center a hub of activity, said Steve Peck, the chief executive of U.S. VETS, part of the principal developer team, which will develop the town hall. No building would be empty at any time.

For vets, it will feel like a vibrant area. "This is the plan we felt was most conducive to creating that welcoming town center we all wanted," he said. And the developers were

looking for a place to add housing units. “Everyone said the desperate need is housing — build as many units as you can,” Peck said, adding that the number of units now planned is 1,694.

Meanwhile, the VA is taking another look at the town center plans, according to a VA spokesperson. A federal advisory committee that monitors the implementation of the master plan had a number of concerns and recommended the agency get outside assistance defining what a vibrant town center should be. So the VA has hired the Los Angeles chapter of the Urban Land Institute, a nonprofit land use research center, to evaluate the town center. It’s also unclear whether the VA has the authority to let its housing developers build housing along with services for more than just the veterans living there.

It’s smart to get more input from experts. While housing is the most important part of the VA overhaul, turning the campus into a community is something all veterans want, according to advocates for vets and the developers building out the campus.

The town center should be a magnet not just for homeless veterans entering new housing and seeking friendship and the stability of a community, but for all veterans across the region who want to gather, find places to eat, exercise, get legal advice or just stroll through a grassy square.

Housing may be the primary goal of the VA project, but meeting the needs of veterans who long for a community space is the goal. They deserve nothing less.

~~The Times Editorial Board~~

BY ANTHONY ALLMAN & THE CRIMINAL RACKET CAUSING VETERAN HOMELESSNESS IN OUR NATION'S CAPITAL OF IT SINCE THE DAY IT BEGAN STEALING A NATIONAL SOLDIERS HOME ON PERPETUALLY DEED-RESTRICTED FEDERAL LAND.

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