

AN ADVISORY SERVICES PANEL REPORT

# Potomac Communities Prince William County, Virginia



Urban Land  
Institute

# Potomac Communities Prince William County, Virginia

**A Strategy for the Rebirth of the Historic U.S. Route 1 Corridor**

February 17-22, 2002  
An Advisory Services Panel Report

ULI—the Urban Land Institute  
1025 Thomas Jefferson Street, N.W.  
Suite 500 West  
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# About ULI—the Urban Land Institute

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**U**LI—the Urban Land Institute is a non-profit research and education organization that promotes responsible leadership in the use of land in order to enhance the total environment.

The Institute maintains a membership representing a broad spectrum of interests and sponsors a wide variety of educational programs and forums to encourage an open exchange of ideas and sharing of experience. ULI initiates research that anticipates emerging land use trends and issues and proposes creative solutions based on that research; provides advisory services; and publishes a wide variety of materials to disseminate information on land use and development.

Established in 1936, the Institute today has more than 17,000 members and associates from 60 countries, representing the entire spectrum of the land use and development disciplines. Professionals rep-

resented 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 America's most respected and widely quoted sources of objective information on urban planning, growth, and development.

This Advisory Services panel report is intended to further the objectives of the Institute and to make authoritative information generally available to those seeking knowledge in the field of urban land use.

Richard M. Rosan  
*President*

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# About ULI Advisory Services

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The goal of ULI's Advisory Services Program is to bring the finest expertise in the real estate field to bear on complex land use planning and development projects, programs, and policies. Since 1947, this program has assembled well over 400 ULI-member teams to help sponsors find creative, practical solutions for issues such as downtown redevelopment, land management strategies, evaluation of development potential, growth management, community revitalization, brownfields redevelopment, military base reuse, provision of low-cost and affordable housing, and asset management strategies, among other matters. A wide variety of public, private, and nonprofit organizations have contracted for ULI's Advisory Services.

Each panel team is composed of highly qualified professionals who volunteer their time to ULI. They are chosen for their knowledge of the panel topic and screened to ensure their objectivity. ULI panel teams are interdisciplinary and typically include several developers, a landscape architect, a planner, a market analyst, a finance expert, and others with the niche expertise needed to address a given project. ULI teams provide a holistic look at development problems. Each panel is chaired by a respected ULI member with previous panel experience.

The agenda for a five-day panel assignment is intensive. It includes an in-depth briefing day composed of a tour of the site and meetings with sponsor representatives; a day and a half of hour-long interviews of typically 80 to 100 key community representatives; and a day and a half of formulating recommendations. Many long nights of discussion precede the panel's conclusions. On the final day on site, the panel makes an oral presentation of its findings and conclusions to the sponsor. At the request of the sponsor, a written report is prepared and published.

Because the sponsoring entities are responsible for significant preparation before the panel's visit, including sending extensive briefing materials to each member and arranging for the panel to meet with key local community members and stake-

holders in the project under consideration, participants in ULI's five-day panel assignments are able to make accurate assessments of a sponsor's issues and to provide recommendations in a compressed amount of time.

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

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# Acknowledgments

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**B**oth personally and on behalf of the ULI—the Urban Land Institute, the panel members and staff wish to express their deep appreciation to the Prince William County Board of Supervisors and its staff for their leadership and support during this assignment.

Specifically, the panel acknowledges the leadership and contributions of Sean Connaughton, chair of the Prince William County Board of Supervisors; Hilda Barg, Maureen Caddigan, John Jenkins, and Ruth Griggs, county supervisors; Craig Gerhart, county executive; Melissa Peacor, assistant county executive; Richard Lawson, planning director; Nimet El Alaily, deputy planning director; Thomas Eitler; John White; and

Elaine Pugh, in organizing and managing the panel’s on-site activities.

The panel members also wish to thank the private citizens, public officials, military personnel, business leaders, and representatives of nongovernment organizations and interest groups who participated in the interview process and offered information and perspectives from their experience on issues before the panel.

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# Foreword: The Study Area and the Panel's Assignment

ULI Panel Chair David Leland summed up the problem facing the US Route 1 corridor in Prince William County when he said that the drivers of “approximately 50,000 cars pass along this section of U.S. Route 1 each day in ignorance of the potential of the Potomac Communities because they are not invited in and because the road is perceived as little more than an unattractive retail strip instead of the gateway to the surrounding communities.”

The current invitation to ULI to convene an Advisory Services Panel resulted from the successful 1996 ULI Advisory Services panel report, *Innovation Prince William County, Virginia*, which presented a development strategy—subsequently adopted and implemented by the county—to create a technology park surrounding the Prince William Institute of George Mason University. The current assignment, as set by Prince William County leaders, required the ULI panel to:

- Examine and give direction to what uses might be included within the U.S. Route 1 corridor, in light of the future widening of Route 1;
- Recommend new development patterns that would improve the economic viability of the Route 1 corridor;
- Propose ways to stop and to counter the increasing visual blight and the general overall decline of the corridor; and
- Provide both a strategy and an action plan for the future.

The panel reviewed a substantial briefing book provided by the county staff, made numerous study tours through and around the corridor, and interviewed in confidence more than 40 citizen leaders from the corridor and the county.

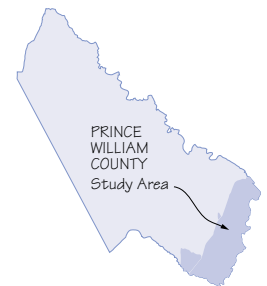
On the basis of this analysis, the panel concluded that this strategic planning effort was not too



late. Unless immediate action is taken, however, the pattern of development and the rapid purchase of remaining vacant land are nearing a point at which the revitalization of the Route 1 corridor could well be lost if immediate action is not taken. Lack of action will result in further and probably permanent loss of both the quality of life and the environment within the corridor.

To address these problems fully, the panel concluded that the key to the revitalization of the Route 1 corridor within Prince William County is to reintegrate the road and its frontage parcels with the surrounding communities, which include Woodbridge, Dumfries, and Triangle (and within which are found neighborhoods such as Belmont, Marumsco, Featherstone, Rippon Landing, Newport, and Graham Park). The longer Route 1 is allowed to continue turning its back on these communities, the more intractable current problems will become.

To develop a strong, workable strategy for the corridor, the panel believes that the corridor must encompass all of the land between I-95 and the



Location map, top; study area, above.





County Long-Range Planning Chief Thomas Eitler (pointing) explains to panel members the extent of the town center development under construction at Belmont.

Potomac River, including all such land within Prince William County from the Occoquan River at the north to the southern boundary of the Quantico Marine Corps Base.

The panel sets its recommendations in the context of new beginnings for the area, which will require a significant shift in the corridor's identity and in the way it is perceived.

# Overview and Summary of Recommendations

**H**aving defined its study area, the panel applied the principles outlined in ULI's 2001 publication *Ten Principles for Reinventing America's Suburban Strips* to the briefing material, interviews, and information on the local area. Using this as a foundation, the panel developed a new vision for Prince William County's U.S. Route 1 corridor. This vision is considered to be the essential foundation for an integrated development strategy and action plan—the Potomac Communities Initiative—that will dramatically transform community perception and create pride in the Potomac Communities and, in so doing, unlock the economic, social, and environmental potential of the Route 1 corridor.

The panel's recommendations seek to arrest the corridor's spiraling decline into an obsolete and unattractive commercial blur of highway strip development. The panel believes that this current image is not just undermining investment in the corridor but also creates a negative perception of Prince William County. The panel feels that if Prince William County acts boldly and expeditiously to adopt the panel's development strategy and implement its recommended action plan, the Route 1 corridor can be transformed.

## A New Vision for the U.S. Route 1 Corridor

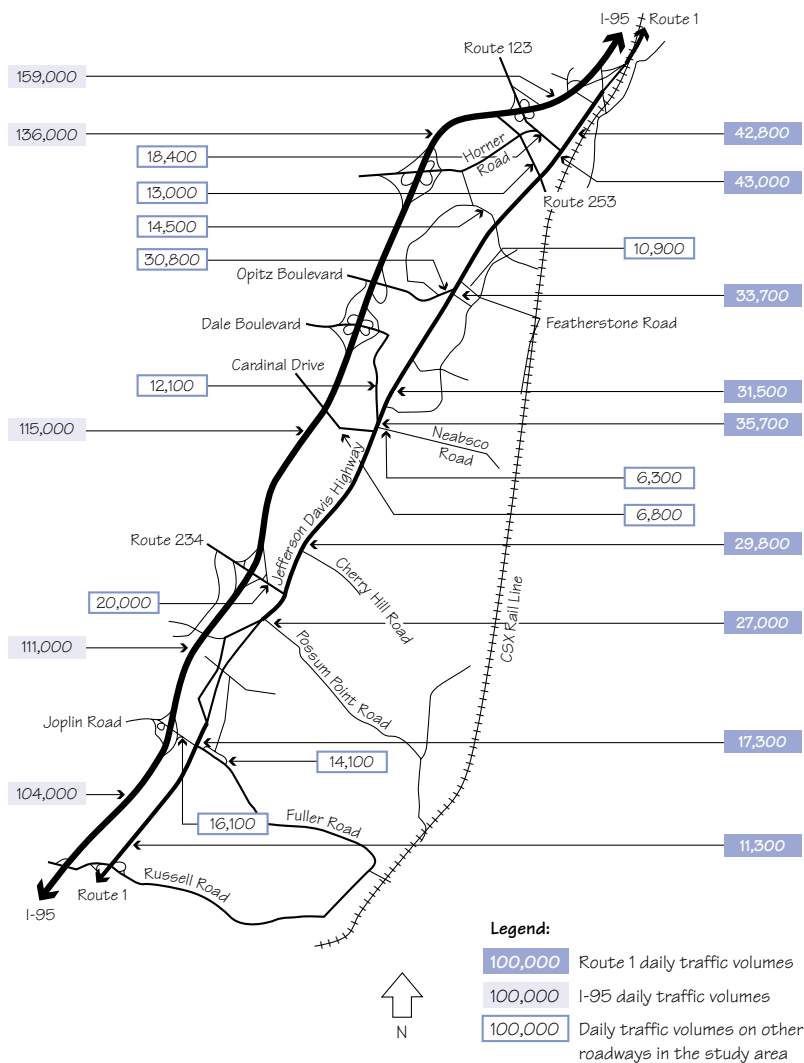
Too often, a major road becomes a transport canyon lined with vision-obscuring noise barriers or highway strip development through which motorists pass, but which they do not explore. The road and its edges fail to respect, enhance, and showcase the personality and character of the communities and places through which it slices. In time, the road and its frontage parcels decay. It becomes a clogged artery condemned by tunnel vision, neither a scenic gateway nor an enticing path, but rather something less than pleasant that must be endured to get somewhere else.

Many motorists and passengers traveling along Route 1 are oblivious to the community assets and scenic beauty nearby. The blur of competing signs, utility poles, used car lots, and declining strip centers hides what lies beyond. Rather than providing its users with reasons to stop, explore, and enjoy the place, Route 1 has the opposite effect. It gives travelers the impression that this is space through which they must pass, preferably as quickly as possible. It is not, nor do most desire it to be, their residential, retail, educational, cultural, work, or recreational destination of choice.

As traffic congestion continues to increase on I-95, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is looking to upgrade Route 1, which often serves as a reliever or alternative route to I-95. In the absence of a wider vision, planners are likely to seize this as an opportunity just to remove obsolete highway strip development. The panel believes that there is a real danger that this opportunity will be reduced to little more

Development along Route 1 currently fails to respect, enhance, and showcase the personality and character of the communities through which the highway slices.





Daily traffic volumes within the study area (1995).

than a road capacity upgrade at worst, or a cosmetic civic beautification exercise at best.

A real opportunity exists to harness this road improvement program. The panel believes that the county, by acting decisively to make Route 1 the road that provides access and interest in eastern Prince William County, can convert it from a significant liability into a strategic asset for the Potomac Communities. By integrating all of the communities' transportation assets—I-95, Route 1, east/west road connections, the railway and other transit routes, and local networks of bicycle and pedestrian paths—with an improved built environment and land use mix, the Route 1 corridor can be reborn.

If the panel's vision is realized, Prince William County's U.S. Route 1 corridor will no longer be a fragmented collection of dormitory suburbs and discount shopping centers. It will become a destination rich in opportunities to incubate and grow

businesses, to educate children, and to enjoy a secure, affordable, and inclusive quality of life as well as a wide range of recreational and cultural experiences. A diverse housing stock will serve all income and demographic groups. The corridor will boast a critical mass of new places where people can live, work, shop, play, and stay in well-planned communities that promote repeat visitation, reduce commuter-generated traffic congestion, and create the desire to enjoy to the fullest extent all the interconnected residential, environmental, cultural, educational, recreational, and employment experiences this locality can offer. All paths will lead to the newly branded Potomac Communities, Prince William County, Virginia.

### Recommended Development Strategies and Implementation Initiatives

Having carefully evaluated the market potential of the study area and recommended a planning and design approach that can be teamed with this market potential, the panel concludes that there are ten development strategies and nine implementation initiatives that together will work to crystallize its vision for the Potomac Communities.

The development strategies are summarized as follows:

- Develop east/west, not north/south.
- Emphasize the connection to the Potomac River.
- Concentrate commercial growth in three activity centers.
- Plan smaller retail nodes.
- Develop mixed-use centers in well-designed nodes.
- Diversify housing stock.
- Reduce the amount of retail-zoned land.
- Amend the comprehensive plan and reform zoning regulations.
- Revitalize both ends of the corridor and control what happens in the middle.

- Act now to ensure transportation choices.

The panel's recommended implementation initiatives are as follows:

- Change the role, character, and perception of Route 1.
- Implement the South Gateway Initiative.
- Activate the North Gateway Project.
- Focus community development on the Potomac River waterfront and its relationship to tourism.
- Initiate right-of-way acquisitions immediately.
- Fund the action plan innovatively.
- Rely on place making rather than zoning.
- Create a development agency and a citizens committee.
- Adopt new ideas on community engagement.

# Market Potential

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**T**he last thing likely to strike people entering Prince William County after crossing the Occoquan River on U.S. Route 1 is that the Potomac Communities are proud of their history. One's first impression is dominated by a concrete batching plant and a burned-out cement silo, followed in rapid succession by obsolete commercial strip development—a vista so visually unattractive that *National Geographic* magazine used it as a jarring image of roadside signs and uncoordinated strip development along Route 1 in Prince William County to highlight the problems of highway development in America in the 1960s.

Since then, Route 1 has continued to age and decline in a way that provides a major disincentive to new investment and frustrates the corridor's reconnection to the surrounding Potomac Communities. If Prince William County wishes to take advantage of the U.S. population's migration to the eastern coastline, it will have to act urgently and decisively to transform the image of its Route 1 corridor.

## Defining the Problem Focuses the Solution

Having read a briefing book prior to its arrival on site, the panel concluded that the current specific problems facing Route 1 in Prince William County are as follows:

- Jobs are located elsewhere.
- The jobs/housing imbalance heavily favors housing, thereby increasing commuter traffic.
- Inexpensive land, a significant resource in the area, is being developed quickly and at low densities.
- The Potomac River is disconnected from the people.

- Strip commercial development and infrastructure along Route 1 are deteriorating rapidly.

In the course of its site inspections, on-site briefings by area experts, and confidential interviews with business, civic, and community leaders, the panel confirmed the veracity of its initial assessment of these problems.

## Condemnation Blight

Plans to widen Route 1 are approximately ten years old. Given the time required for road improvements and the current fiscal stringency at the state level in Virginia, it likely will be at least another ten years before implementation of the widening program commences.

Meanwhile, property owners and tenants along Route 1, who face a potential land taking, have a “condemned man” mentality; they feel like they are “on death row.” The result of their plight is “condemnation blight.” These property owners and tenants live for the present, not the future, and their real estate and business presentation consequently suffer. The public sector likewise has done nothing to improve this situation, reinforcing the private sector's perception that Route 1 is a very risky location for real estate investment.

The community suffers as the blight persists. The development of approximately 5 million square feet of retail space in the Potomac Mills Mall area just west of I-95 has had a major negative impact on the retail space located along Route 1. Coupled with condemnation blight, the new focus of retail horsepower at Potomac Mills overshadows and drives investor perception of the Potomac Communities. Prince William County feels the negative impact of this circumstance not only east of I-95, but also along the entire Route 1 corridor, from the Occoquan River south to Quantico. Much of the commercial development along Route 1



dates from the 1930s through 1950s and thus is well past its economic life.

Prospective users and investors see the lack of outward community commitment and low levels of existing private sector reinvestment and write the area off. As the corridor's physical assets decline, so do their market size and penetration.

The panel believes that Prince William County must act now to redress this perception. It must arrest the decline in the Route 1 corridor by attracting an increasing share of the Washington, D.C., metropolitan region's population and job growth to the Potomac Communities.

### Tackling the Four Key Markets

The panel believes that Prince William County and its economic development program must focus on the following four key markets within the Potomac Communities: employment (particularly the office market), retail, tourism/recreation, and residential.

#### Employment

The Potomac Communities has a negligible inventory of office space, with limited demand generators, other than the Potomac Hospital. The little office space that does exist outside of the hospital complex primarily is limited to aged, small, functionally obsolete buildings.

Before the events of September 11, 2001, there were no other major demand generators for office space. No visible, ready-to-move-in Class A office buildings exist east of I-95, although there is a recently serviced parcel suitable for office development north of Potomac Mills and on the west side of I-95.

Route 1 does not present itself, at this time, as an attractive location for Class A office space. The panel understands that General Dynamics, when it sought to locate a defense-related facility reasonably proximate to the Quantico Marine Corps Base, found a lack of suitable accommodations and was forced to lease a vacant retail warehouse in the Potomac Mills area. The lack of suitable space is a significant disincentive to any corporations seeking to locate in the Potomac communities.



#### Retail

With the emergence of Potomac Mills as a mega-regional retailing center, retail demand along Route 1 dropped dramatically, leaving only the neighborhoods east of I-95 and commuter traffic as demand generators. The panel believes that Route 1 cannot at present—nor will it likely in the future be able to—compete with the Potomac Mills area for regional and national tenants. Route 1 occupancy has begun to rebound only recently, as a new generation of local retailers lease inexpensive space to start new businesses.

The uncertain nature of pending condemnations significantly increases the investment risk for potential retailers and developers. Local brokers told the panel that the present vacancy rate for

The buffering of this cement batching plant near the Occoquan River crossing would be an integral component of the North Gateway project, as proposed by the ULI panel.



Potomac Mills Mall and the surrounding area on the west side of I-95 have created a dominant alternative location to Route 1 for big-box and national brand retail tenants.



the approximately 1.5 million square feet of retail strip development along Route 1 is about 15 percent, while rents are about 50 percent or less of the levels required to warrant construction of replacement buildings. Not all existing retailers along Route 1 are worth retaining, and virtually all would benefit from relocation to better-mixed and better-configured retail nodes.

### **Tourism/Recreation**

The Potomac Communities have numerous historical, ecotourism, and recreational venues, and soon will be home to the Marine Corps Heritage Center and the Belmont Bay Science Center (a division of the Science Museum of Virginia), both of which are scheduled to open in 2005. Quantico is proposed as one of the venues for the Washington/Baltimore area's bid for the 2012 Summer Olympic Games. There is little to no existing synergy among these facilities or with Potomac Mills.

Other than Potomac Mills, no single area attraction is powerful enough to capture a significant market share. The obsolete and declining image of Route 1 constitutes an impediment to any synergy and creates a disincentive to its use as a tourist route to the area's attractions. The Potomac River, while a recreational amenity, largely has been ignored as a tourism opportunity.

### **Residential**

The Potomac Communities residential market has been strong, but not because it has focused on the area's competitive advantages. Except in the new Belmont development, where the standard of housing is designed to appeal to business owners and managers, product offerings are homogeneous, consisting of plain single-family houses, townhomes, and garden apartments. In the south end of the study area, both Southbridge and River Oaks subdivisions have seen only moderate growth over the past five years, despite the metropolitan region's robust housing market and the significant price increases it has triggered. The panel believes that the relative lack of choice in executive housing stock within the Potomac Communities has constrained significantly the area's office market potential.

## **Making One Plus One Equal Three (or More)**

Once the panel had penetrated the unattractive facade of Route 1, it found a rich bounty of economic, social, and environmental offerings in the Potomac Communities. However, like the many reports and studies that comprised the panel's briefing book, all the individual elements failed to integrate and build on each other to create a stronger whole. Sadly, the parts became separated over time. The panel believes that the sum of the parts—both of the existing offerings of the Potomac Communities and the potential described in all the reports, proposals, and studies it reviewed—can be leveraged and bonded into an integrated whole, the aggregate value of which will exceed significantly the individual value of its parts.

### **Heritage as an Asset**

As the U.S. population ages, travels internationally, and becomes more affluent, the value of its history and the sense of satisfaction, security, and belonging this history provides also has begun to appreciate. History constitutes a major element of the character and attraction of a locality and can strongly brand the local community. The panel found that Rippon Middle School, built on the historic Rippon Lodge Estate within the Potomac Communities, proudly draws on its heritage on its Web site, [http://www.pwcs.edu/pwc/schools/rippon\\_ms/history.htm](http://www.pwcs.edu/pwc/schools/rippon_ms/history.htm):

In 1725, Richard Blackburn left his home in Rippon (now Ripon) in Yorkshire, England, and settled in northern Virginia. He built his home, which he named "Rippon Lodge," on a high knoll overlooking the mouth of Neabsco Creek and the Potomac River. Crossing the property was King's Highway [which later became Route 1], once known as the Potomac Path, which was the main post road between the northern and southern colonies. This historic road was often traveled by George Washington, General Lafayette, and French and American troops during the Revolutionary War.

Rippon Lodge, the oldest home in Prince William County, was acquired by the county government

in 1999 and currently is being restored with a mix of public funds, private donations, and the help of community volunteer organizations like Historic Prince William. With the assistance of an excellent publication prepared by the Prince William County Historical Commission, *Prince William County Historical Marker Guide*, the panel found many of the 18 historical markers that are lost in the clutter along the historic Route 1 corridor. These markers record the rich history of the Potomac Communities and the contribution these areas made to the building of the nation. As demonstrated by the school Web site, these heritage elements can be powerful community rallying points and significant place-making assets if they are linked and marketed as a Potomac Communities offering.

### Know and Meet Your Market

In a detailed report published in July 2000, *USA Today* found that an estimated 41 million people—more than one in seven Americans—now reside in a county that abuts the eastern or southern seaboard of the United States. In a migration story equal to the last generation’s exodus from the Frostbelt to the Sunbelt, Americans are moving to the eastern seaboard. As Edward Hill, professor of urban studies at Cleveland State University in Ohio, concludes, “Improved technology, greater wealth, and better transportation are giving people more choices about where to live. They are choosing the coast.”

Not surprisingly, booming metropolitan regions like the Washington, D.C., area are feeding this migration. The panel notes that despite the current recession, the Washington metropolitan region largely has been insulated from the economic slowdown, as a result of increased government spending on defense and homeland security in the post-September 11 environment. The panel also notes that the Quantico Marine Corps Base is home to the U.S. Marine Corps and has a major Federal Bureau of Investigation and U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency presence. Both of these federal agencies play a prominent role in ensuring homeland security and in the war on terrorism.



Historical markers can become powerful community rallying points and significant place-making assets.

Another major driver of the growing trend in population migration to the East Coast is the quest for a better life with less congestion, crime, and pollution, as well as better weather and scenery. The 78 million baby boomers in the United States who are entering their preretirement years are looking for more pleasant surroundings in which to spend their postworking years. Accordingly, the growth dynamic along the East Coast likely will continue for at least another ten to 20 years.

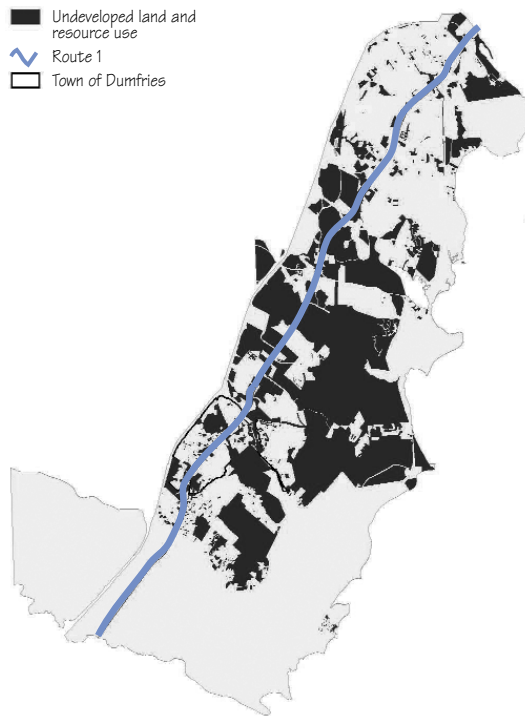
### Regional and Local Demographics

In its year 2000 report, *Growth Trends in the Washington Region*, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments found that the 1990 ratio of population to jobs was 1.57 persons per job across the region, but 3.1 persons per job in Prince William County. By 2025, the persons per job figure was projected to fall to 1.52 across the region but to only 2.7 in Prince William County, suggesting that the county’s significant population/employment imbalance will improve only marginally by then. The panel concludes from

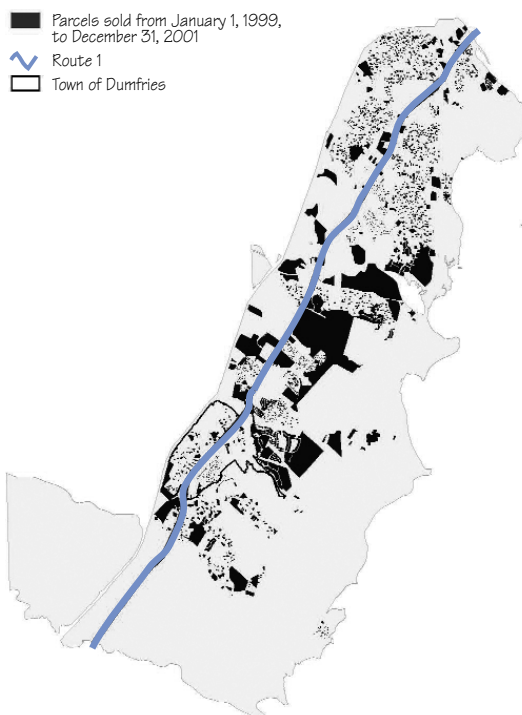


County Executive Craig Gerhart (left) and County Planning Director Richard Lawson brief panel members on development within the Route 1 corridor.

Route 1 study area:  
undeveloped land and  
resource use.



Route 1 study area:  
parcels sold from  
January 1, 1999, to  
December 31, 2001.



these figures that pressure will mount to create more jobs in Prince William County, or else traffic congestion will worsen significantly as residents are forced to leave the county each day to go to work.

According to the county's demographic briefing, the Potomac Communities population has grown from 41,040 in 1990 to 55,216 in 2000. This growth is in line with the rest of Prince William County. The Potomac Communities are home to approximately 20 percent of the county's population. The county projects that the Potomac Communities population will grow to 75,497 by 2020.

The panel noted that the ethnicity of the Potomac Communities recorded in Census 2000 is 55 percent white, 28 percent African American, and 15 percent Hispanic. Only 57 percent of the Potomac Communities dwellings are owner occupied (compared with 72 percent countywide); 43 percent are renter occupied (compared with 28 percent countywide). The Potomac Communities have a significantly higher percentage of nonfamily households (23 percent) than the county figure of 6 percent. The median household income in the Potomac Communities is about \$8,000 per annum lower than the \$62,892 median for Prince William County.

The panel concluded that the current workforce profile of the Potomac Communities provides a significant employment resource for the retail, hospitality, and service trades necessary to support the growth of the communities' tourism and ecotourism offerings. Broadening this employment base to include office and other tertiary employment will require the future provision of higher-end executive housing within the Potomac Communities.

### Transportation Choice, Affordable Living, and Real Estate Sales

At present, most trips within the Potomac Communities are by car. An OmniLink weekday-only local bus service is proving popular; the Virginia Railway Express also operates on a weekday-only fixed schedule. The panel supports a proposed ferry service that would link Prince William County with downtown Washington, D.C. The

provision of transportation choices is becoming a major consideration in residential and employer location. To justify the addition of new transportation infrastructure, the Potomac Communities will have to increase residential densities and link all of their educational, recreational, environmental, cultural, and tourist assets to maximize visitation and transit patronage.

The Potomac Communities have a large supply of undeveloped land, but many parcels were sold between January 1, 1999, and December 31, 2001, suggesting that this land supply is being taken up at a rapid rate. (See the maps on the preceding pages.) Significantly, statistics provided by the county show that the cost of living in Prince William County is 10 percent lower than in metropolitan Washington, D.C., and the cost of housing is 20 percent lower. If Route 1 is revitalized and more transportation choices are provided, the quality-of-life advantages of the Potomac Communities should prove to be a powerful attraction to homebuyers.

### Sound County Government and a Strong School System

Prince William County stands like a beacon of fiscal strength and responsibility among the metropolitan region's cash-strapped and tax-challenged state and county governments. Its school board enjoys an excellent relationship with the county, in contrast to the turmoil and decline in local education being experienced in some other jurisdictions. In its current budget, the county provided for a 15 percent—\$33.6 million—increase for its 57,800-student school system, which is the second largest in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Three out of every five of its students earn a bachelor's degree within five years of graduation. In May 2001, *Time* magazine named Stonewall Jackson High School its High School of the Year. Significantly, 90 percent of all homes in Prince William County have a computer and 70 percent of the county's residents access the Internet at least once a week. These factors are very attractive to employers and real estate investors.



A major competitive advantage of the Potomac Communities is the high-quality school system and the partnership between the county and the school board.

### Harnessing the Market Potential

Given the enduring strength of the population, employment, and housing growth pushing out from Washington, D.C., Prince William County, with its strong fiscal position, can provide strong leadership to encourage private sector investment in the Potomac Communities. The panel recommends the following actions:

- To encourage job growth, move to zone sewer and watered Class A office sites ready for development in target areas close to I-95. Meet with staff from the Quantico Marine Corps Base and the U.S. General Services Administration to identify and qualify these demand generators. Undertake a sophisticated market study to determine the competitive advantages of the Potomac Communities as an office location. Match these competitive advantages with target companies ripe for relocation or expansion into the Potomac Communities. Organize a series of brokers' tours to put the word out and liaise with residential developers' marketing teams to ensure that their advertising spreads the word about the lifestyle assets for those who choose to live, work, shop, play, and stay in the Potomac Communities.
- To consolidate retail facilities and services, recognize and promote the natural attrition of retail real estate on Route 1 between distinct development nodes. Plan, through overlays, for the reuse and redevelopment of this real estate. Create multiuse zoning districts. Establish and promote an automobile dealership zone (an auto park) and stringently enforce county regulations to ensure that all Route 1 frontage



Wildlife refuges and state parks help to make the Potomac Communities a more livable area and attract tourists to this part of the Washington, D.C., metropolitan region.



is developed, maintained, and operated in an aesthetically pleasing manner.

- To enrich the range of housing options offered and significantly increase residential density, promote new housing types with higher price points and greater densities. Intermix these with some high-end development of lots with water views. Differentiate the housing products available in the Potomac Communities from those found in competing areas.
- To capture tourist dollars and multiplier effects—and to leverage the value of repeat visitation and its lifestyle effect—create a critical mass of activity and tourist attractions by packaging existing facilities and new assets to develop an overnight-stay market built around shopping, history, ecotourism, and recreation. Implement an ecotourism plan that includes an ecology education center adjacent to the Rippon rail station with greenways (biking, walking, trams) that connect all major facilities, including the planned Belmont Bay Science Center, the Ospreys Golf Club at Belmont Bay, the Potomac River marinas, Prince William

Forest National Park, Leesylvania State Park, area wildlife refuges, Rippon Lodge, the planned Marine Corps Heritage Center, historic Quantico Township, the Quantico National Cemetery, and the historic markers located throughout the Potomac Communities. The county should implement the *Potomac River Public Access Plan* expeditiously.

## Summary

The market potential exists to:

- Build communities as the focus of Route 1 rebirth;
- Reverse the job/housing imbalance;
- Enhance the environment as the centerpiece of community building;
- Use the principles of place making and smart growth to guide development decisions;
- Better connect western Prince William County with the Potomac River and its communities;
- Create family-wage jobs as well as housing choices and diversity;
- Strengthen and brand the critical mass of educational, historical, and ecotourism assets; and
- Lay the foundations for transportation choices and land use excellence that will make Prince William County a preferred destination in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan region.

# Planning and Design

**C**ommunities form and consequently are recognized where individuals come together and connect with each other. The problem with the Route 1 corridor is that the development of each frontage parcel has been designed as a standalone piece of rentable space, not as a community-building element that creates a special place.

The jarring competition of tired, once functional, but now largely obsolete retail developments must go. The area is overretailed and competing for markets that have been usurped by the approximately 5 million square feet at Potomac Mills and its surrounding retail development.

The individual retail properties along Route 1 have turned their back on the surrounding communities. Their sole reason for existence is to jockey for position in capturing the passing trade generated by vehicular traffic along Route 1. The result is an indistinguishable blur of development, much of which is now obsolete and of declining economic, social, and environmental value. Visually, it conveys to potential investors the message that the Potomac Communities are not a prime investment location in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan region. The challenge is to transform disconnected rentable space into a valued place and, in so doing, deliver a place-making dividend.

## Reinvent Regulations to Deliver a Place-Making Dividend

The panel believes that a place-making dividend is the pride and satisfaction that accrues to a community when districts possess a strong sense of place that, in turn, results in high levels of repeat visitation and increasing rents, retail sales, leasing demand, and real estate capital value. A place-making dividend occurs when individual real estate projects are so well designed and interconnected that they create one integrated place. For

the community, the place-making dividend means a special place that the community adopts as its own and from which it reaps the benefits of repeat visitation. For government, the place-making dividend takes the form of secure tax streams; for real estate developers and investors, it means repeat patronage and tenant or buyer demand, higher rents, increased sales, and enduring real estate values. Place making is the essence of best-practice real estate development, community building, and county government.

Establishing new places for people to live, work, shop, play, and stay in discrete, accessible, and transit- and pedestrian-friendly nodes along Route 1 that create a sense of place constitutes a community need as well as an aspiration. Places that are desirable appeal to all the senses—sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. They offer a rich mix of local activities, aesthetic design, quality, and price. All of these elements currently are concealed from view on Route 1.

The panel believes that people's senses are constantly assessing a place, deciding whether it is welcoming, engaging, stimulating, exciting. The perception of how one fits into a place relates to how well individual real estate developments integrate into a cohesive whole and to that place's



County Board of Supervisors Chairman Sean Connaughton (center), County Executive Craig Gerhart (right), and ULI panel member Donald Bauer discuss options available to reinvent Route 1.





Making the enforcement of county regulations a priority is necessary to ensure that all development along Route 1 is constructed, maintained, and operated in an aesthetically pleasing manner.

form, configuration, balance, synergy, proportion, and symmetry.

Successful place making lies in configuring spaces, structures, and the interconnections between and among them in a way that facilitates and encourages human activity and interaction—an environment of which people want to be a part because it has been designed, built, and maintained with the goal of satisfying the full spectrum of human needs and aspirations, from the mundane to the inspirational. A successful place appeals to all the senses, engaging visitors and inhabitants alike in a voyage of discovery of enticing sights, sounds, and scents. On all these criteria, the Route 1 corridor currently achieves a very poor rating. Not surprisingly, many real estate rents are below those that justify replacement cost, property tax returns are at risk, and the community is not rewarding many obsolete and poorly designed areas with repeat visitation and community pride.

The panel believes that the county's zoning ordinance and comprehensive plan both have proven to be inadequate place-making tools and that the county must reinvent both its land use regulations and its government and intergovernmental programs to better deliver and encourage the creation of place in the Potomac Communities. The panel believes the county's visual model of the Route 1 corridor should be transformed into an interactive digital planning instrument and place-making code for the Potomac Communities.

This instrument and code—which should use both visual and auditory media and techniques currently used in the motion picture and computer simulation industries—must evoke all five senses.

Such a model would allow the county to assess the true quality of the proposed places that might result from future private and public investments in the Route 1 corridor. Each county regulation and budgetary program should be assessed, refocused, and integrated to achieve community building in the Potomac Communities.

The panel recommends that the county progressively move from black letter zoning law to sensory law, as an integral part of its strategy to transform the Route 1 corridor into the Potomac Communities, Prince William County, Virginia. Residents, developers, and public officials will understand readily this innovative and evocative digitally based planning instrument, which can be used for community consultation, development impact analysis, community visioning, and marketing and implementation of the county's economic and community development programs. Its digital form will allow cost-effective transmission through the Internet.

### Link Place-Making Assets to Create a Destination

The panel strongly endorses the Prince William County Park Authority's proposal to complete the Potomac Heritage Trail from the Ocoquan River to the Quantico Marine Corps Base. This hard-surfaced, multiuse trail along the Potomac River would constitute a greenway network of pedestrian linkages among state and county parks, a federal wildlife refuge, wildlife management areas, and wetlands. It also could connect harbors, marinas, schools, commercial areas, and the residential neighborhoods of the Potomac Communities. The benefits of this Potomac Heritage Trail would include:

- Linking new recreational and environmental areas to the waterfront;
- Providing pedestrian access to recreational, community, and commercial facilities;
- Promoting tourism and economic development, as well as community belonging, pride, and identity; and

- Reconnecting people with the Potomac River, a lost historic connection.

The panel endorses the suggestion that the locations of 18 historic markers within the Potomac Communities should become the focus of community way finding and place making. Residents and visitors alike could stop and read the markers, and relate to and celebrate the history of these places. The panel believes this should be an important element in the plan to link and market—as one brand—the rich heritage, ecotourism, educational, and cultural assets of the Potomac Communities.

### Create Density by Design

The panel believes that unless the county embraces an increased density of development it will fail to attract the critical mass of employment, residential, and mixed-use development necessary to support transportation choices and the rebirth of the Route 1 corridor. The misconception that increased density equates only to more garden apartments and increased traffic congestion must be replaced with the clear understanding and endorsement that the achievement of a minimum residential density of six units per gross acre is essential to providing housing choices and creating sustainable growth in the Potomac Communities.

With the current pattern of dispersed development, the primary means of transportation is the car. Denser nodes of development at strategic points on Route 1 will create activity centers with sufficient critical mass to support new transit options and provide the more urban live-work-shop places that many people are now demanding. Developing such higher-density, mixed-use places within the Potomac Communities will be essential for attracting high-tech office employers, who in turn seek to attract a younger and more skilled workforce.

The panel believes that these denser activity centers must be pedestrian friendly in design and developed as interconnected places rather than as a fragmented group of independent developments. Hence their design can ensure that the predominant mode of transport within these nodes will be



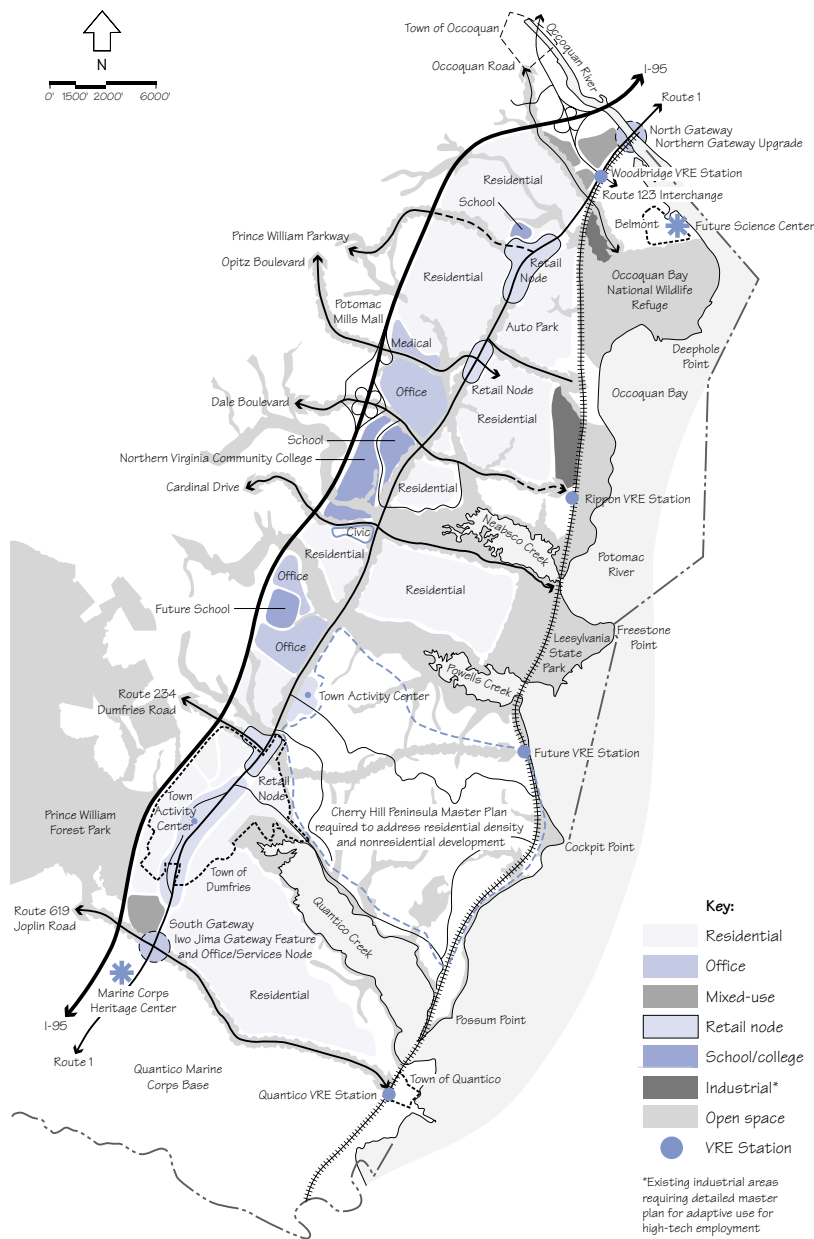
Existing higher-density housing development in Southbridge demonstrates that such development can be very attractive and can provide much-needed residential choices.

by foot rather than by car, thereby reducing vehicle trips and traffic congestion.

The panel believes that a minimum residential density of six units per gross acre still will allow for the development of a full range of housing types. It just means that not all new development will be restricted to only detached houses on large lots or only higher-density apartments. Thus a balance and choice of residential accommodation will ensure the sustainable development of the Potomac Communities in a way that will protect and enhance their environmental assets. The preparation and adoption of a place-making code as recommended by the panel will play a critical role in achieving this density by design.

### Separate the Wheat from the Chaff

The panel believes that many of the commercial and retail uses along Route 1 can be remixed and relocated into the proposed new pedestrian-friendly nodes shown on the land use concept plan on page 22. Failing businesses should be allowed to pass into history as a consequence of the Route 1 upgrade. Obsolete buildings should be demolished as soon as possible. Facilitating the relocation of viable and desirable businesses to these new nodes will create well-mixed activity centers that enhance community access and promote increased sales. The interconnection and synergy of this new land use structure will assist community way finding and focus commercial development at the Potomac Communities' most accessible places, rather than spread out along either side of Route 1. The panel believes that the introduction of land



Land use concept plan.

use order into the current chaotic form also will ensure secure county tax streams.

### Integrate Land Use and Transportation

The panel supports the proposed widening of Route 1 from four to six lanes of traffic, with some significant qualifications. The panel believes that a strategic opportunity will be lost if the land acquired for this upgrading does not include a center median wide enough to include a future transit corridor.

The design of both the vertical and horizontal alignments should enable this transit corridor to be developed as bus rapid transit or light or heavy rail, depending on future demand and need. The

panel also believes that, consistent with its desire to move the emphasis of the current Route 1 corridor from north/south to east/west, most major intersections should be at grade, thereby de-emphasizing Route 1's role as a high-speed commuter route and allowing its users to both respect and appreciate the offerings of the Potomac Communities as they pass through them.

As the panel's land use concept plan shows, key north/south and east/west intersections should be developed as retail and mixed-use nodes, into which viable businesses that are acquired as part of the road-widening land acquisition program can be relocated. Pilot projects at these nodes will need to be developed early in the road alignment acquisition program to ensure minimal business disruption and reduce the cost of acquisition by relocating viable existing tenants rather than just putting them out of business. This will be critical to maintaining newly incubated businesses and the employment they provide, and to enhancing the retail offerings and places to be created on Route 1.

These nodes must be developed at higher densities, with the proper mix of uses, and in a pedestrian-friendly form to achieve a critical mass of activity and attraction. The panel's intersection node concept plan on the following page shows a potential layout for these developments. They should be designed to create a distinctive image and identity for these nodes that will reinforce community development and stimulate investment along the Route 1 corridor.

The panel feels that a significant element of the future attractiveness of the Potomac Communities will derive from the area's ability to provide a range of places for people to live, work, shop, play, and stay that offer transportation choices in a pedestrian-friendly environment. While initially commuters and other travelers will insist on using their cars, the panel feels that as congestion and residential choice grow, so too will the existing OmniLink transit service—to include bus rapid transit and light- and heavy-rail service along the Route 1 corridor. Feeder transit services will link to the surrounding communities and a system of pedestrian, bicycle, and possibly bridle trails will expand significantly the trans-

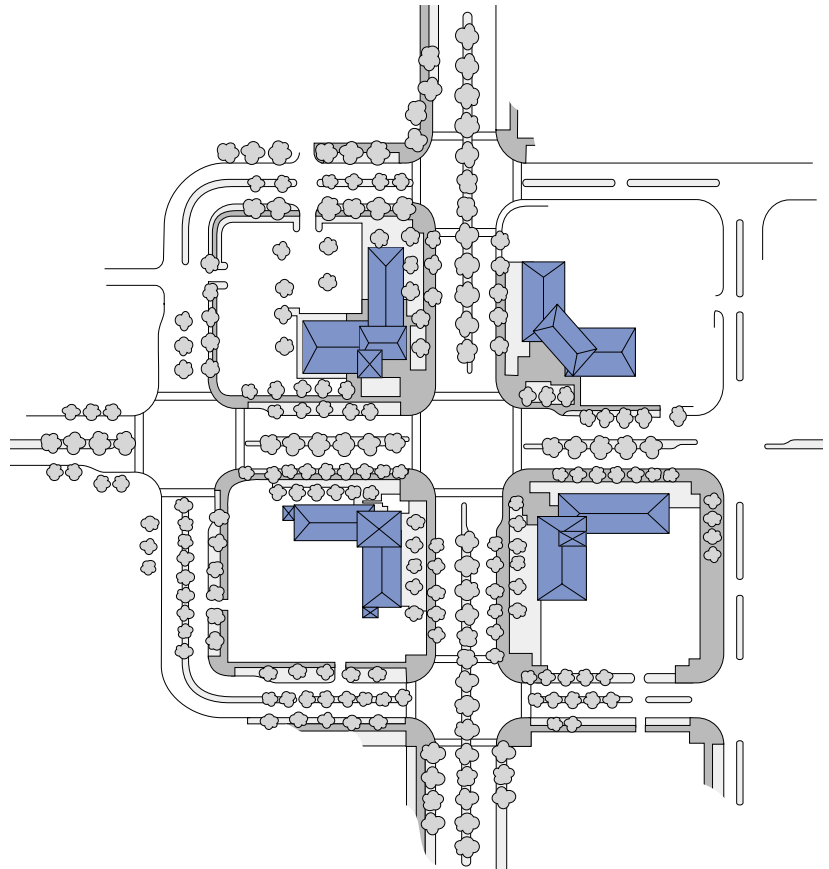
portation choices currently offered in the Potomac Communities.

While the existing rail line is limited in its use for commuter rail service by the density of freight traffic, opportunities do exist to provide a range of transit and pedestrian linkages to existing and future rail stations on this line within the Potomac Communities. Small, planned retail centers at these rail stations could accommodate a limited range of convenience and service retail facilities, but the panel believes there will be insufficient demand to justify town center developments at these locations.

The panel also supports the proposal to develop a high-speed commuter ferry service linking Prince William County's Belmont Town Center, Cherry Hill, and Quantico to downtown Washington, D.C. A benchmark model for such service is the Brisbane [Australia] City Council CityCats, details of which can be found at [http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/getting\\_around/ferries/citycat/index.shtml](http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/getting_around/ferries/citycat/index.shtml).

### Focus on the Communities, Not Just Road Capacity

The panel believes that the initial task in planning and designing the rebirth of Route 1 must be to break the corridor into districts—the North, Central, and South gateways—that then will have the ability to form their own characters and identities—their own sense of place—as a way to identify where one is and how one fits into the Potomac Communities. It is clear that no single community on its own has sufficient strength to revitalize the corridor, but as a vital component of one of its gateway districts, each community can draw on the economies of scale and choice provided in concert with its neighbors to become a strong redevelopment driver. The panel considers it essential that each community's character be enhanced and not lost in the revitalization initiative, and that the east/west connections among these communities—from the western part of the county east to the Potomac River—no longer be severed by the north/south nondescript blur of unattractive strip development that is currently Route 1.



Intersection node concept plan, top. The Woodbridge Virginia Railway Express station and parking garage (left) provide a strong foundation for a future multimodal transit center for the Potomac Communities.

The panel feels that the county, in partnership with each of the Potomac Communities, must develop a place-making code that properly reflects and reinforces—in both the built form and the natural environment—the character and personality of each gateway district. The panel considers the following matters to be crucial to the proper conceptualization of the place-making code. The county's Waterfront Plan and its *Route 1 Corridor*



*Study*, plus the Northern Virginia Planning District Commission's *Potomac River Public Access Plan*, along with the various agency reports submitted to the panel, should provide additional valuable guidance in the preparation of the place-making code. The panel's land use, open space, and area concept plans, while not parcel specific, are designed to guide the county in the development of the new planning instruments considered essential to the transformation of the Route 1 corridor into the Potomac Communities, Prince William County, Virginia.

### Reconstruct the North Gateway

The North Gateway cluster of communities includes the distinctive and very different settlements around the Occoquan River and the Woodbridge area, as well as Belmont, the Marumsco neighborhoods, and other nearby residential subdivisions. These communities are the front door to Prince William County from the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. By virtue of their location, they set the initial impression for visitors and potential investors in Prince William County.

While this district is home to the densest and oldest concentration of commercial development in the Potomac Communities, several of the shopping centers along Route 1 in the North Gateway are obsolete. Their state of distress sets a most undesirable tone. Additional store closings can be expected, which will further fuel the problem.

The panel heard from several long-term residents about how upset they become when they cross the Occoquan River on Route 1 and are faced with what they described as "an eyesore welcome to their home county." This image must be changed

if the county wishes to capitalize on its full vision for the Potomac Communities. The county already has taken significant steps in this direction by driving the creation of the new riverfront community at Belmont and the planned Belmont Bay Science Center, which will be adjacent to the Occoquan Bay National Wildlife Refuge. This new community is setting the tone for the high-quality, amenity-driven type of development that the panel believes will be necessary to revitalize all of the Potomac Communities, from the Occoquan River to Quantico.

Additional opportunities exist in the North Gateway, both for redevelopment of obsolete shopping centers and for the expansion of a zone of high-quality, full-service automobile dealerships that already are beginning to cluster there. The panel believes that the more intense and complex retail development within the Potomac communities should be focused around this section of Route 1, at its junctions with the major intersecting east/west roads. The panel also believes that better linkages between the Potomac Mills area and this part of the county will help draw higher-value uses across the I-95 barrier, thereby transforming the North Gateway into a major economic anchor and job generator. This would provide a major benefit to all of the Potomac Communities. The Hahn property on the east side of I-95 on Opitz Boulevard is large enough to provide this link if it is rezoned for office use rather than for a regional shopping center (which is unlikely ever to be built).

As shown on the panel's land use concept plan on page 22, the immediate priorities in the North Gateway are the following:

- Improve the Route 1/Route 123 interchange and upgrade the entry to Prince William from Fairfax County;
- Continue to encourage the development of the planned Belmont Bay Science Center;
- Establish a retail node at the Prince William Parkway/Route 1 intersection;
- Develop a concentration of automobile dealerships (an auto park) that would attract car buyers from throughout the metropolitan region;



County Supervisor Hilda Barg (right) explains to panel members (from left) Julia Trevarthen, Arun Jain, and Christopher Kurz the critical elements of proposals for the North Gateway.

- Establish a new employment center off Opitz Boulevard (on the Hahn property);
- Develop a multimodal transit center in Woodbridge; and
- Prepare a master plan for the Rippon rail station.

### Focus on the Central Gateway

The area that the panel has dubbed the Central Gateway is the opportunity area for a second cluster of communities. This area is as much a gateway as the northern and southern ends of Route 1, since it is easily accessed from I-95 on the west. It contains many of the corridor's public facilities, including the government center's A.J. Ferlazzo Building, Potomac Hospital, Potomac High School, Potomac Community Library, and the site of a proposed middle school. The Central Gateway also includes a large tract of undeveloped land at Cherry Hill/Southbridge.

The panel believes that these large undeveloped parcels provide a prime opportunity to develop higher-value housing designed to entice job-generating executives to reside and base their businesses in the Potomac Communities. As these undeveloped parcels are converted to housing, the need will arise for additional civic, county government, and private sector office space, which the panel believes would be clustered most appropriately around the existing civic and educational facilities.

The panel suggests that a concentration of mid- and high-density office buildings be developed in this district, primarily between Route 1 and I-95. The county needs to create, adopt, and then enforce a place-making code to ensure that a high-quality built environment is developed and maintained. The Central Gateway, which now is characterized by a comparatively pristine roadside along Route 1, needs to be protected as new communities emerge.

Ecotourism presents another major development opportunity for the Central Gateway, which is home to Leesylvania State Park as well as the Potomac River and its estuaries. Strengthening the linkages among these recreational and environmental assets and the surrounding communi-



Potomac Hospital on Opitz Boulevard provides both an essential medical amenity and the potential for expanded medically related employment activities within the Potomac Communities.

ties will enhance greatly the area's appeal for higher-end housing as well as employment-generating activities.

As shown on the panel's land use concept plan on page 22, the immediate priorities in the Central Gateway are the following:

- Consolidate nonresidential development in nodes at strategic intersections on Route 1 in activity centers that promote an east/west orientation and benefit from a synergy of uses;
- Create residential uses and open space edges on the remaining frontage parcels along Route 1;
- Relocate the town activity center to Route 1 from its proposed location within Cherry Hill; and
- Prepare a master plan to guide the development of the Cherry Hill peninsula that addresses the future of both the existing industrial and required future residential development of this area.

### Reinvent the South Gateway

The South Gateway includes the communities of Dumfries and Triangle, as well as neighboring residential areas. These communities are not only the gateway to Prince William County from the south; they also serve as the principal gateway to the Quantico Marine Corps Base.

The base is expected to increase in importance as a generator of economic development and job growth. The events of September 11, 2001, likely will fuel increased federal government and defense contractor demand for office space in associ-



A renewed vision for Triangle, Virginia.



CENTERBROOK ARCHITECTS AND PLANNERS, LLC

ation with the base. The communities of the South Gateway are best located to capture this growth. The panel believes that the main entry to the base is an ideal location for any federal office development and that the county should actively pursue this prospect. The planned Marine Corps Heritage Center will be a major economic driver in the South Gateway. The panel strongly endorses the partnership that the county has formed with the Marine Corps to ensure that this project is constructed as a matter of priority.

This museum will be a major anchor in the Triangle/Dumfries area and will create a major national tourist attraction in the South Gateway. Together with the office development proposed by the

panel, the museum also could create a market for a range of small specialty shops and lodging and dining establishments such as those that already have begun to appear in the Dumfries area.

The panel endorses the place-making initiative being developed by the county in partnership with the town of Quantico to enhance the town's main street. This could become a delightful lunch or shopping destination for those taking a high-speed ferry ride down the Potomac River to Prince William County.

As shown on the panel's land use concept plan on page 22, the immediate priorities in the South Gateway are the following:

- Implement the South Gateway initiative, focusing on the rebirth of Triangle, the construction of the Marine Corps Heritage Center, the relocation of the Iwo Jima monument, and associated development in partnership with the Quantico base;
- Integrate the Dumfries town activity center into the Potomac Communities; and
- Support the town of Quantico's main street initiative.

ULI Panel Chair David Leland (left) is briefed by County Supervisor Maureen Caddigan (center) and Laurie Wieder, president of the Prince William Regional Chamber of Commerce, on the work required at the South Gateway.



## Summary

The panel's planning and design approach for the Potomac communities is to:

- Reinvent regulations to deliver a place-making dividend;
- Link place-making assets to create a destination;
- Create density by design;
- Separate the wheat from the chaff;
- Integrate land use and transportation;
- Focus on communities, not just road capacity;
- Reconstruct the North Gateway;
- Focus on the Central Gateway; and
- Reinvent the South Gateway.

# Development Strategy

**T**he panel's development strategy for the revitalization of the Route 1 corridor seeks to both integrate and maximize long-term investments and programs with short-term actions and successes. In the broadest sense, it is a strategy that builds and revitalizes communities—the Potomac Communities—because this is the key to revitalizing Route 1.

The panel believes that market forces once again are directing opportunities back toward the Potomac Communities. To seize these opportunities, however, the county must act resolutely and invest its resources in the creation of more livable and sustainable communities.

The panel believes that if the county fails to act in a timely manner, it could be overwhelmed by the kind of disconnected growth that will create a new set of problems to replace those already facing the Route 1 corridor. The current opportunity to create and strengthen the Potomac Communities—and, in so doing, revitalize Route 1—will be

jeopardized or lost if the county fails to take immediate action.

Today, most of the first-generation, standalone, retail strip developments in the Route 1 corridor are obsolete. They are struggling to compete with newer retail space that is better suited to America's changing demographic profile and market demand. While this phenomenon is not unique to the Route 1 corridor, the study area does represent one of the clearest manifestations of this problem in the United States.

While Potomac Mills has drawn away much of the retail horsepower from Route 1, a variety of other factors (as described elsewhere in this report) also have contributed to the development of the current situation. The panel stresses that there is no single “silver bullet” that will lead to the revitalization of the Route 1 corridor, but rather an integrated set of long-term strategies supported by immediate short-term initiatives that Prince William County can implement to better shape the destiny of its Potomac Communities.

The Potomac River is potentially the most important amenity and attraction the Potomac Communities has to offer residents and visitors.



## Develop East/West, Not North/South

The goal of breaking up the commercial highway strip development along Route 1 involves the creation of multidimensional places along the corridor rather than the current north/south, elongated, nondescript, single-purpose, pedestrian-unfriendly environment, which has grown tired and obsolete. The development of the Potomac Communities along several east/west axes should emphasize linking community centers with surrounding residential neighborhoods, employment generators, and environmental and recreational assets along the Potomac River, I-95, and the Virginia Railway Express (VRE) commuter rail stations. This reorientation should recognize, respect, and celebrate the fact that each community

in the corridor is unique and should encourage that uniqueness and community pride to thrive.

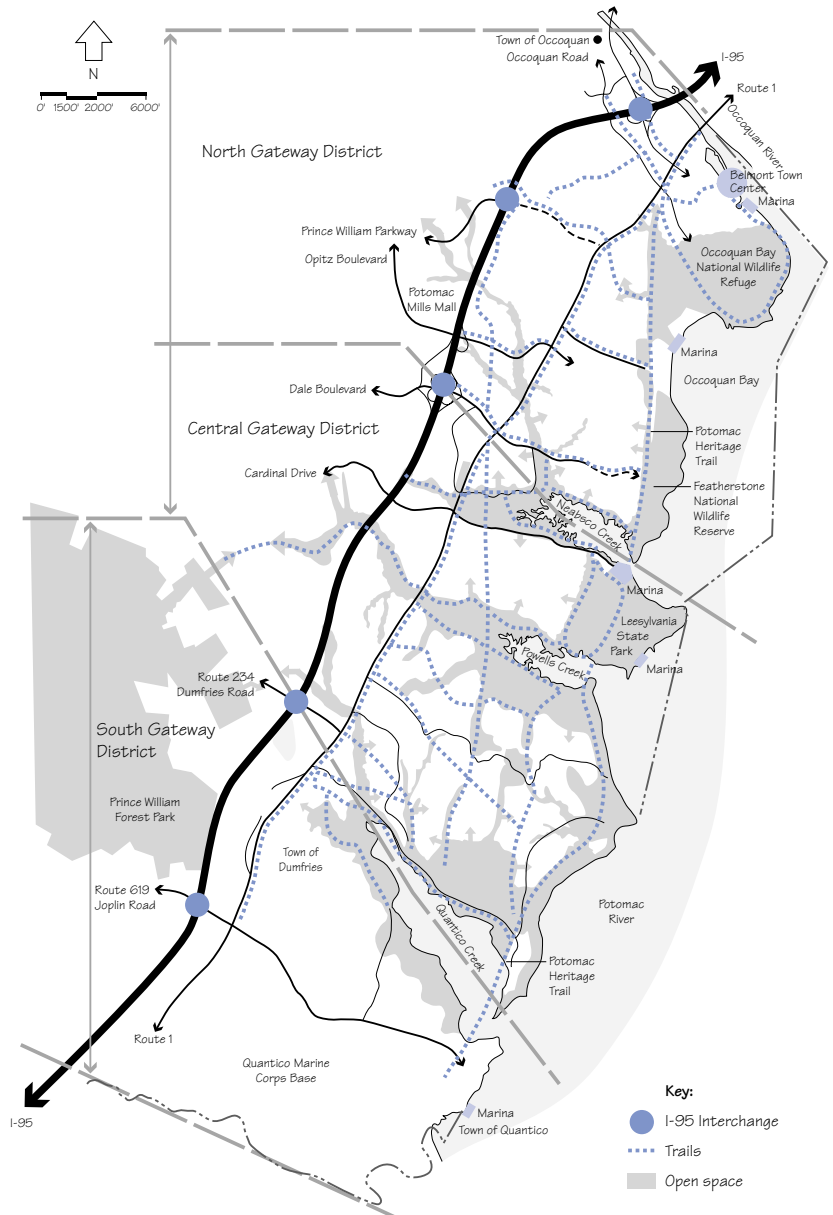
## Emphasize the Connection to the Potomac River and Its Estuaries

The Potomac Communities have an asset that few communities enjoy: the Potomac River and its estuaries. Yet the county has not capitalized on this asset and the competitive advantage it offers. I-95 and Route 1 run closest to the Potomac River in Prince William County; consequently, access to the river in this county could rival or exceed that provided by Fairfax County along the Mount Vernon Parkway.

The panel believes the provision of a high-speed ferry service linking the Belmont Town Center, Cherry Hill, and Quantico with downtown Washington, D.C., would lead to an important rediscovery of the beauty and value of the Potomac River by Prince William County residents and provide a major stimulus for employment attraction. It also would appeal to ecotourists, those visiting the planned Belmont Bay Science Center and the Marine Corps Heritage Center and, with the proper linkages, Potomac Mills shoppers.

Each of the Potomac Communities is connected to the river by estuaries that are underutilized as both environmental and recreational assets. These estuaries could become the focus of community-building and design efforts and could entice both residents and visitors to Prince William County.

Most motorists driving along Route 1 and I-95 fail to appreciate the great recreational resource that they are passing. This perception needs to be changed. The panel proposes that the county integrate its environmental assets and its ecotourism and educational resources to create a focus for the Route 1 revitalization strategy. This strategy should create a unique identity for the Potomac Communities by celebrating and improving access to the Potomac River—Prince William County's potentially most important amenity and attraction for both residents and visitors.



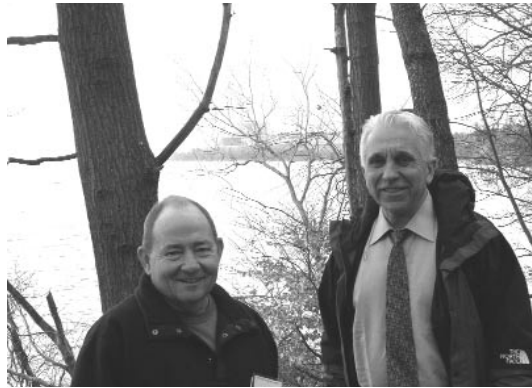
## Concentrate Commercial Growth in Three Activity Centers

As discussed earlier, the panel recommends that the county concentrate retail growth and consolidation at strategic east/west intersections in three activity centers along the Route 1 corridor. In support of this recommendation, the panel notes that public investments already have been made in these areas. These are the places that most need revitalization, that provide the great-

Open space and circulation plan.



Panel members Charles Burge (left) and James Meadows conduct an extensive on-site inspection of the Cherry Hill area and conclude that a detailed master plan is required to secure the area's full potential.



est public accessibility to the Potomac Communities, and that offer the best opportunities for successful implementation. The panel does not support the creation of new community centers in locations away from Route 1, as these would be remote from their markets and would undermine further the timely redevelopment of the existing, first-generation commercial development that requires reinvestment, job growth, physical improvements (including infrastructure upgrading), and a new role to ensure its future integration and success within the Potomac Communities.

While the most intensive new activities should be focused in these three activity centers, public and private initiatives and actions also should be taken to reinforce and strengthen the character of the surrounding communities in ways that reflect the needs and wants of their residents. This is likely to be a lengthy and complex task that will require all the imagination that Potomac Community residents and county leaders can muster.

As in any mature community, these centers should be planned to include a mix of activities that satisfy residents' everyday needs in a convenient, enjoyable, and memorable manner to encourage community ownership and repeat visitation. These pedestrian-friendly mixed-use centers should include the following elements:

- Community services;
- Public amenities;
- Housing options;
- Employment generators;

- Convenience retail and restaurants;
- Specialty retail;
- Civic and cultural facilities; and
- Civic and gathering places.

Pedestrian and vehicular connections from these mixed-use activity centers to the environmental and recreational assets of the Potomac River should form the community backbone of the centers' design and accessibility. The panel sees the three primary activity centers as the focus of economic growth initiatives within the Potomac Communities. The panel encourages Prince William County to be proactive in planning and offering incentives for development in these centers, so that it can lead by example in the proper evolution of these centers over time. Initially, the centers should not be viewed as precisely defined parcels of land, but rather as multiuse, multi-dimensional areas or places that will serve multiple communities. Each one should be planned and zoned to serve the communities that surround it.

### Plan Smaller Retail Nodes

The panel believes that sites adjacent to the rail line at VRE stations within the Potomac Communities but outside the panel's designated activity center areas should be planned for less intensive development in the foreseeable future. The largest town center currently being planned in the Potomac Communities is Southbridge Town Center on the Cherry Hill peninsula. The panel does not believe that this Town Center at Legend is likely to be built. To succeed, retail centers need high visibility and accessibility, and this site has neither. It is a dead-end location, away from the arterial road junctions, with no market on its eastern side. Commuters using the VRE line through Prince William County will never add enough market demand to make the currently proposed scale of development sustainable.

This situation, however, is not a liability for the community. As the residential population on the Cherry Hill peninsula and in surrounding neighborhoods grows, demand for most supporting retail uses should be redirected into the panel's pro-

posed nodes on Route 1, thereby strengthening these developments and adding economic vitality to the corridor. Other sites adjacent to VRE stations, as well as the planned Southbridge Town Center, do provide opportunities for limited service and convenience retail space, together with other uses, such as cafés and restaurants that offer views of the river. The panel believes these sites should be designed and sized to serve primarily residents of the surrounding neighborhoods, ecotourists, and others who come to shop at Potomac Mills and want to add a more fulfilling experience to their shopping expedition.

### Develop Mixed-Use Centers in Well-Designed Nodes

The panel recommends that the three mixed-use/retail centers be developed as pedestrian-oriented community gathering places, augmented with non-retail amenities and activities, which could include cultural facilities that are looking for convenient new locations within the Potomac Communities and might attract visitors from among those already drawn to facilities such as the planned Belmont Bay Science Center and the Marine Corps Heritage Center. Between these denser, mixed-use places, auto-oriented shopping will continue to exist until land values increase and market forces dictate more mature and complex forms of development. When Route 1 is physically upgraded, many smaller tenants likely will be displaced. This displacement will provide an opportunity to relocate viable merchants to more pedestrian-oriented locations, where the synergy of other similar tenants will create a more economically successful environment to which consumers will be drawn and in which these merchants will be able to thrive.

New, full-service automobile dealers represent one of the few segments of the retail market that are thriving along the corridor; as a result, they are major contributors to sales taxes in the community. Many of these dealers are at risk, however, because they occupy space that is too small and too close to Route 1 to allow them to display their products attractively. The panel supports consolidating these automobile dealers into an expanded auto park that meets contemporary effi-



ciency, design, and environmental standards. This type of park likely would draw people across I-95 from Potomac Mills and become another anchor for the corridor's Central Gateway. As this auto park develops, automotive uses should be channeled into the park and should not be permitted elsewhere in the corridor.

### Diversify the Housing Stock, Offering Choices

The housing stock in the Route 1 corridor is beginning to diversify to serve the new upscale markets that are starting to emerge in the Potomac Communities. Many of these new markets are not traditional two-parent, two-child families who want a single-family house on a large lot. The new forms of housing being proposed to meet the needs of these markets are *not* like the garden apartments or townhouses that were built in the 1960s. They are new, upscale housing types that reflect what Americans want now, including zero-lot-line houses, attached housing that offers as much privacy as a single-family home, apartments located above lifestyle-oriented stores and restaurants, homes with in-law/nanny/guest suites or units, and high-end executive housing with water views.

Meeting the demand for these diverse housing types is critical to the economic health and attraction of the Potomac Communities for a variety of reasons. Doing so will raise the communities' image and their competitive position. A diversified economy requires housing for a diversified labor force, and such housing attracts new companies. The availability of executive housing also attracts new businesses. Finally, a jobs/housing bal-

The county should retain within the Potomac Communities existing viable businesses along Route 1 by relocating them as part of the road-widening program rather than putting them out of business.





New development at Belmont provides a wider range of housing choices for Potomac Community residents.

ance reduces travel times and congestion, with resulting livability and environmental benefits.

The panel recommends setting an average minimum housing density in new residential developments in the Potomac Communities at six units per gross acre to achieve the necessary housing supply. The panel further recommends that the target average price point for these units be higher than the average housing price in the county as a whole. The panel believes that the county will not be able to attract the jobs and high quality of development that it wants in the Potomac Communities without these policies.

### Reduce the Amount of Retail-Zoned Land

Route 1 currently is zoned for general retail uses along the entire northern part of the corridor from the Occoquan River to Neabsco Road and along major sections of the central and southern sections of the corridor. This is simply too much retail-zoned land, and there is no longer sufficient



During a working lunch, county staff and ULI panel members discuss strategies to reinvent the Route 1 corridor.

demand to support it. The current “general retail” designation is inhibiting the redevelopment of the corridor, and must be changed.

The panel believes that the general retail zoning should be replaced with more flexible, performance-driven, mixed-use zones that would encourage a mix of retail, office, residential, hotel, and cultural uses. This would permit the replacement of obsolete retail space with newer forms of development that would provide more of the convenience, services, and amenities that community residents need and will enjoy.

### Amend the Comprehensive Plan and Reform Zoning Regulations

The panel recommends that the county create a special development district along Route 1 that runs the entire length of the county. This district would permit mixed-use development in various forms and configurations that would vary from location to location. The most intensive development would be permitted in the three community center areas; allowable uses would vary among locations. Maximum flexibility should be built into the code to allow developers to respond to emerging market demands and provide high-quality environments.

The panel recommends that this new overlay district be designed to tighten controls—rather than loosen them—on features such as setbacks, landscaping, sidewalks, lighting, and design. The panel believes that the way to encourage development is to raise standards, not to lower them, because doing so will show the county’s commitment to a new image, approach, and dedication to quality in the Potomac Communities. The county’s planning and development efforts must focus increasingly on effective community building through place making and integrated development, and less on the segregation of land uses and the entitlement of standalone developments stranded on individual parcels. The panel’s place-making code and sensory law recommendations are critical to the implementation of this development strategy.

The county’s existing priority permit processing program should be expanded to include all developments proposed for the Route 1 corridor, where

such development complies with the proposed new place-making code and advances the implementation of this development strategy. As part of the county's efforts to raise development standards along the corridor and attract the kind of high-quality development that it wants, codes must be enforced. Serious investors will not be willing to invest in an environment in which high and predictable standards are not maintained, because this failure will put their investments at risk.

### Revitalize Both Ends of the Corridor and Control the Middle

The panel believes that a strategic opportunity exists to commence revitalization of Route 1 at the North and South gateways. The panel thus feels that the first phase of improvements along the corridor should begin in the South Gateway with the Triangle upgrade and in the North Gateway with the screening of the concrete batching plant, the construction and beautification of the Route 123/Route 1 interchange, the development of the Woodbridge multimodal transit center and Belmont Town Center, and the acquisition of obsolete highway frontage properties from the Occoquan River to the Route 906/Route 1 intersection.

The emerging communities in the Central Gateway, on the other hand, have the most land available for new development and thus pose a different problem. While there is less need for redevelopment in this area, there is a great risk that the county will lose control of what happens on the large, undeveloped parcels in this part of the corridor if it does not act quickly.

The Cherry Hill peninsula demands the urgent preparation of a new master plan that will optimize the strategic contribution this area can make to the Potomac Communities and that will enhance its linkages to the Potomac River, thus resolving issues related to the existing nonresidential development. Should the county fail to seize the initiative, the panel believes it runs a very great risk of losing the ability to bring in the kind of development that would enhance the commu-



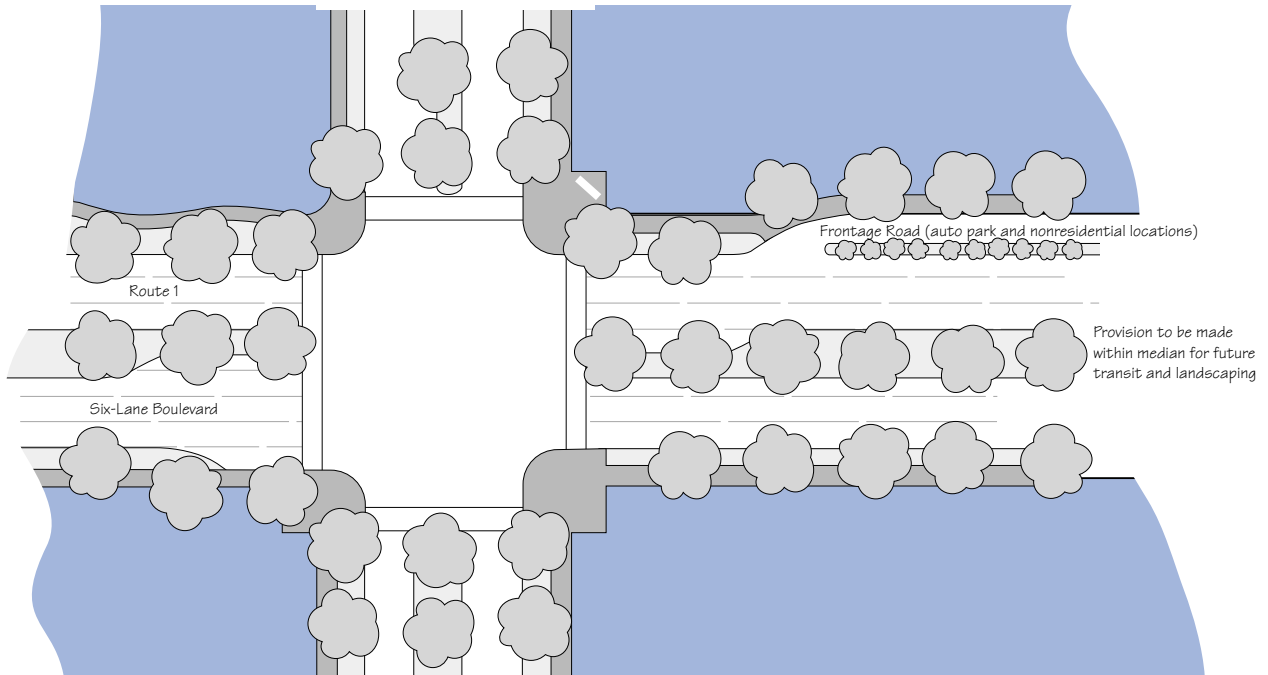
nity. This would undermine seriously the economic, social, and environmental attractiveness not only of the Potomac Communities but also of the entire county.

### Act Now to Ensure Transportation Choices

By having the foresight to act now to provide adequate horizontal and vertical alignments along Route 1 for future transit, committing to build pedestrian trails and linkages through (and connecting) the Potomac Communities, upgrading north/south—and, most important, east/west—road infrastructure, and supporting the establishment of a high-speed Potomac River ferry service linking Prince William County to downtown Washington, D.C., the county will create a very strong competitive advantage over the metropolitan region's other transportation-challenged counties.

Just as the fiscal management and position of Prince William County stand in stark contrast to the current fiscal plight of the region's other counties and governmental entities, so too can a current investment in preserving future transportation choice pay huge dividends in the short to medium term for Prince William County. Given the inclusion of the Quantico Marine Corps Base as a venue for the Washington/Baltimore area's bid for the 2012 Summer Olympic Games, the panel believes it is particularly important to undertake the planning and provision for transit improvements in the area in a timely manner.

Existing manufacturing activities in the Dawson Beach Industrial Park are likely to be replaced in time or supplemented by high-technology firms.



Proposed road design and treatment for widening Route 1, above. The OmniLink bus system provides improved transit connections to employment and retail nodes on Route 1, such as this center in the town of Dumfries, right.



## Summary

The panel's development strategies are to:

- Develop east/west, not north/south;
- Emphasize the connection to the Potomac River and its estuaries;
- Concentrate commercial growth in three activity centers;
- Plan smaller retail nodes;
- Develop mixed-use centers in well-designed nodes;
- Diversify the housing stock, offering choices;
- Reduce the amount of retail-zoned land;
- Amend the comprehensive plan and reform zoning regulations;
- Revitalize both ends of the corridor and control the middle; and
- Act now to ensure transportation choices.

# Implementation

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**T**he panel's suggested development strategy and the significant place-making dividend it offers the Potomac Communities will remain stillborn unless Prince William County acts now to adopt a coordinated set of initiatives, which the panel has incorporated in the recommended Potomac Communities Initiative. The 1996 ULI Advisory Services panel report, *Innovation, Prince William County, Virginia*, succeeded because county supervisors and staff acted quickly and resolutely to implement the report's recommendations. That report provided strong leadership by example and offered creative, outside-the-box solutions to traditional and hitherto intractable problems. Similar thinking is needed to transform the county's Route 1 into the Potomac Communities, Prince William County, Virginia.

## Change the Role, Character, and Perception of Route 1

The panel recommends a change in orientation from the Route 1 corridor's current north/south orientation to an east/west orientation that emphasizes the ecosystems that are a major positive element of this planning area. Road additions need to bring people to areas near the Potomac River; east/west roads need to become the corridor's main focus and greenbelts must be added to bring tourists and users to the river and link the river to the park system of Prince William County and beyond.

## Implement the South Gateway Initiative

The relationship between the Quantico Marine Corps Base and Prince William County is excellent and is expected to improve. Enhancing its relationship with the base is in the county's best interest, since projected growth at Quantico will have beneficial impacts on the county. The county should explore the new "facilities sharing"

arrangements that the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) is testing in conjunction with communities surrounding bases and posts. The panel recommends that county officials contact their counterparts in the city of Monterey, California, to discuss its ground-breaking agreement. The county also should explore Congressional political support for growth at Quantico. Although the base is in no danger of being closed, every effort must be made to assure DoD (and the base itself) that the Quantico Marine Corps Base is a valued part of the Potomac Communities and Prince William County.

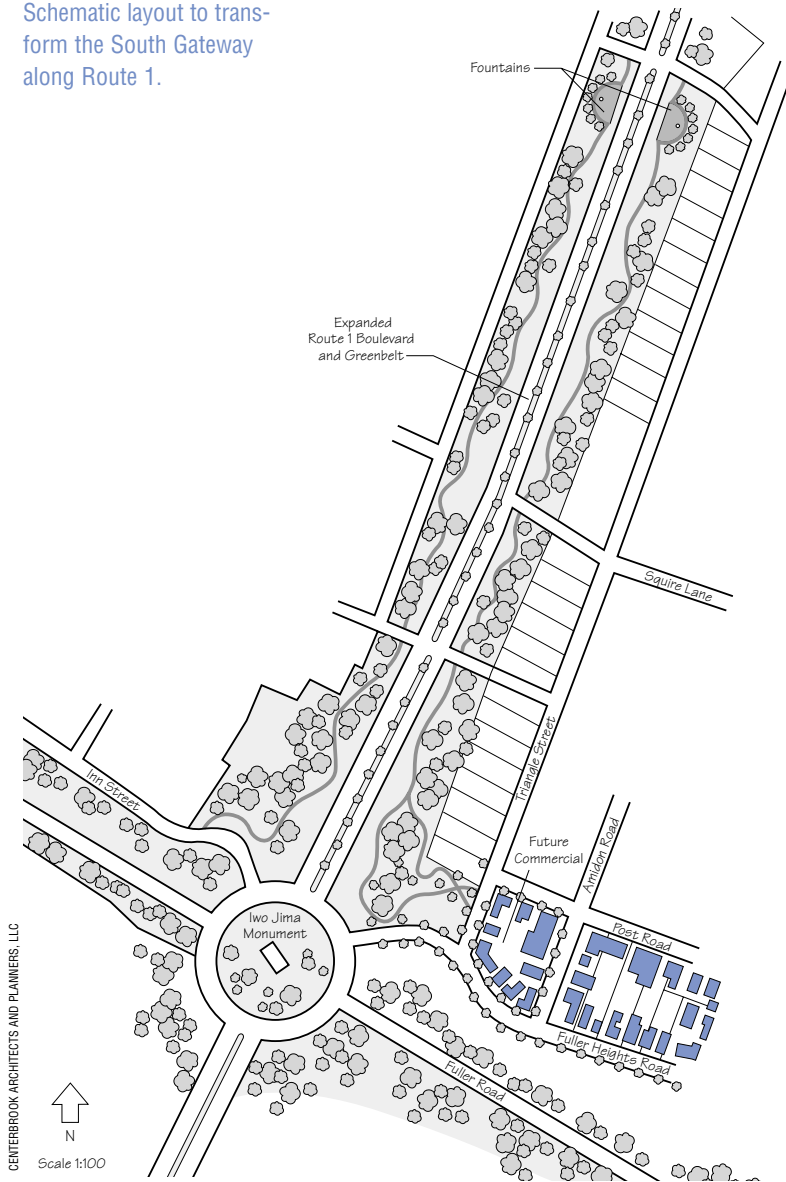
The northern boundary of the base forms an anchor or gateway entry to the Potomac Communities. Property adjacent to the base is conveniently located to accommodate development activity needed to service the base. The planned Marine Corps Heritage Center offers an unusual opportunity to draw a large number of travelers from I-95 into the county as destination visitors. The county's and the Marine Corps's plans for the area also offer a realistic opportunity to transform this part of Prince William County.

The relocation of the Iwo Jima statue at Quantico to the center of the proposed traffic circle on Route 1 will be the symbolic centerpiece of the reinvented South Gateway.





Schematic layout to transform the South Gateway along Route 1.



CENTERBROOK ARCHITECTS AND PLANNERS, LLC

Local Marine Corps icons such as the Globe and Laurel restaurant (right) should be incorporated in the reinvention of the South Gateway.



The county should support financially the design and construction of the traffic circle and centerpiece for the relocated Iwo Jima monument to calm traffic and provide good access into and out of the base. In exchange for providing the right-of-way for the traffic circle, the county should seek land opposite the Marine Corps Heritage Center from the base to provide a site for one or more U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) buildings. (Use of excess base land by adjacent communities through long-term land lease agreements is permissible under DoD rules.) The panel feels that the GSA is likely to prefer land within the base rather than in Triangle for security purposes.

The county should create an office-zoning overlay on the two northern corners of the intersection at Triangle to provide for integrated ancillary mixed-use development serving the base, the museum, and their users. Controlling the environment immediately outside the gate and across from the Marine Corps Heritage Center will enhance visitation to the museum as well as opportunities for job creation. The Quantico Marine Corps Base should be encouraged to upgrade its entrance gate significantly—to a standard consistent with this international facility—in a way that will reinforce the new, improved image created by the Marine Corps Heritage Center, the traffic circle, and the office-overlay zoning.

### Activate the North Gateway Project

Many of the people interviewed by the panel called Route 1's northern point of entry into Prince William County a "major eyesore." The element that first greets motorists is a cement batching plant—a fixture that is not likely to go away, due to logistics as well as economics. Between I-95 and the batching plant, however, lie sites with delightful Occoquan River frontages. If appropriately buffered, these sites could accommodate mixed-use development and provide the impetus to soften the view of the batching plant.

The panel supports suggestions made by residents that the use of mid-rise apartments in this area should be studied further. The panel also recommends short-term actions such as berming and

landscaping to screen the cement batching plant and demolishing the burned-out silo that currently dominates the Route 1 entry to the county from the north. The North Gateway project also should include the construction and beautification of the Route 123/U.S. Route 1 interchange, the development of the Woodbridge multimodal transit center and Belmont Town Center, and the acquisition of obsolete highway frontage properties from the Occoquan River to the intersection of Route 906 and Route 1.

### Focus Community Development on the Potomac River and Ecotourism

The Potomac Communities suffer from the lack of a real relationship with the environmentally sensitive areas and water elements on or near the Potomac River, yet the area's estuarine features are among its most predominant and beautiful elements. If the county takes the following actions to correct this relationship, they will have a bountiful place-making dividend:

- Create roads and paths—and complete the Potomac Heritage Trail—to connect the wetlands and estuaries and allow local residents and visitors to enjoy the area's natural beauty.
- Enhance and interpret these environmentally sensitive areas, to add a critical mass of integrated ecotourism and recreational attractions that will help the county create new jobs and secure future tax income streams.
- Create an environmental critical mass by developing an ecotourism and educational center adjacent to the Rippon rail station with greenways (biking, walking, and equestrian trails and transit) connecting the planned Belmont Bay Science Center, the Occoquan Bay National Wildlife Refuge, Rippon Lodge and the corridor's other historic sites, Prince William Forest National Park, Leesylvania State Park, the planned Marine Corps Heritage Center, and the Quantico National Cemetery.



The potential exists to bring together several successful automobile dealerships currently spread along Route 1 into an integrated auto park.

### Initiate Right-of-Way Acquisitions Immediately

The panel recommends that the county immediately initiate right-of-way acquisitions on Route 1 that will improve its vertical and horizontal alignments, to accommodate (in the future) six lanes of traffic and a center median wide enough to allow a full range of transit options, from a dedicated bus rapid transit route to a hard-rail extension of the existing Metrorail system. The county should act in advance of any Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) action, which, in all probability, is years away. The panel notes that any immediate VDOT program for Route 1 has been put in grave jeopardy by the Commonwealth of Virginia's current fiscal shortfall.

The center-line acquisition of the widened Route 1 will provide the opportunity to acquire and remove obsolete buildings.





The county's early acquisition of this land will result in reduced acquisition costs and the assurance that a center-line approach to acquisitions will be adopted. The panel recommends that the county take the following actions:

- Set priorities for right-of-way acquisitions. The county's initial focus should be on acquiring properties that are an eyesore and/or those on which positive economic benefits can be accelerated. The county also should immediately acquire critical properties that will bring to an end the "condemnation blight" that has proved such a disincentive to private investment and that will allow affected landowners and businesses to be relocated and assisted in the development of their business plans.
- Upon acquisition, immediately demolish obsolete buildings, to improve significantly the tone and perception of Route 1 as a business investment location.
- Enter into a memorandum of agreement with VDOT—immediately—that will reimburse the county when VDOT funds ultimately become available.

The panel also recommends that the county support the establishment of a high-speed ferry service linking Prince William County to downtown Washington, D.C., since this—and other transit initiatives—will benefit the Washington/Baltimore area's bid (and the proposed Quantico venues) for the 2012 Summer Olympic Games.

### Fund the Action Plan Innovatively

The panel acknowledges that many of the actions it proposes require a financial commitment from the county to make them happen. The county cannot afford to wait for VDOT to include the required right-of-way acquisition and upgrade of Route 1 in its forward estimates; current budget shortfalls make this unlikely within the next ten years. Selected land acquisitions need to start *now*.

Through its interviews with members of the business community, the panel learned that there is general support for dedicated taxes to enhance

the Potomac Communities. The panel understands that private investment will only follow public commitment, and accordingly recommends that the county take the following specific actions:

- Adopt a tax increment financing arrangement as a vehicle for funding county planning actions. The current tax revenue creates a baseline. Additional tax dollars received from increased valuation due to improvements—or for any other reason—would be dedicated to the actions required by this plan.
- Set up a transportation improvement district for the Potomac Communities to facilitate the funding of area improvements.
- Limit or slow the planned real estate tax reduction. Current plans call for taxes to be reduced from \$1.35 to \$1.23 over three years. While that is a laudable and supportable action to encourage businesses to come to the county, three cents in taxes in this planning area would generate as much as \$60 million in bond revenues from pledged tax assets. Half of this amount could be made available to the county, while the other half could be used by the school district. Slowing the rate of decrease to \$1.23 or dedicating the next three cents planned for follow-on years would yield sorely needed dollars. The school's half of the funds could be dedicated to construction of the county's tenth high school.
- Use current county surpluses as seed money, to be paid back from future VDOT reimbursements and/or tax increment financing.

### Rely on Place Making Rather than Zoning

The panel recommends that the area bounded by I-95 and the Potomac River, from the Occoquan River county line at the north to the southern boundary of the Quantico Marine Corps Base, be designated the Potomac Communities District, an overlay zoning district with subdistricts within its boundaries. The panel believes that the area's general retail zoning should be replaced with more flexible mixed-use zones that would encour-

age a mix of retail, office, residential, hotel, and cultural uses. The zoning overlay should be used to:

- Create zones with minimum residential densities to concentrate housing, protect environmentally sensitive areas, and support job creation;
- Establish office zones contiguous to the Quantico Marine Corps Base, surrounding the proposed traffic circle in the Triangle area, to support the base's plans for the Marine Corps Heritage Center, enhance the Triangle redevelopment plans, and support GSA efforts to establish one or more federal agency buildings either on the edge of or within the base;
- Create an auto park zone to enhance the existing concentration of full-service dealerships, allow for expansion, and replace some of the smaller retail lots taken by the widened Route 1 right-of-way;
- Relocate the proposed town center zone within the Central Gateway and incorporate in it a mix of uses that will complement county government facilities;
- Establish an office/mixed-use zone on and around the Hahn property to promote both job creation and realistic office space opportunities between Optiz and Dale boulevards as well as between I-95 and Route 1;
- Create a second office/mixed-use zone around the Potomac High School complex that will incorporate research and development and flex space as well as office uses in a business park setting; and
- Establish a mixed-use/residential/retail zone on the western side of the new Route 123/Route 1 interchange to help relocate tenants and businesses displaced by the right-of-way acquisition on Route 1 and to enhance the North Gateway.

The panel believes that the county's zoning ordinance and its comprehensive plan both have proven to be inadequate place-making tools. The county must reinvent both its land use regulations and its government and intergovernmental



programs to better deliver and encourage the creation of place in the Potomac Communities. The panel suggests that the county's visual model of the Route 1 corridor be developed into a digital planning instrument and place-making code for the Potomac Communities.

### Create a Development Authority and a Citizens Committee

Clear governance needs to be established to guide the investment program for the Potomac Communities. The county has precedent in setting up transportation improvement districts (TIDs) or community development authorities (CDAs). The panel recommends that the county take bold action to set up a governance structure that will take advantage of existing opportunities and not be bound by traditional methods and timetables.

This authority—the Potomac Communities Authority (PCA)—would provide direction for this planning area. It also could have powers to approve uses within the county-approved zoning overlays and grant planning approval for submissions within the existing zoning. Other governance matters that the panel considers important include the following:

- The area under the PCA's control should have the same boundaries as the Potomac Communities planning area.
- The PCA should be governed by a board of directors drawn from business fields related to the needs of the authority, such as law, real estate, public finance, environmental issues, and general business.

New investment along Route 1 can provide the foundation for strong retail/entertainment nodes in areas where integrated development reinforces community focus and attraction.

Panel Chair David Leland meets on site with local real estate agent Nancy Z to discuss the sale of waterfront residential land.



- The PCA should have a direct descendent relationship with the Prince William County Board of Supervisors, with its board members being appointed by the county.
- The PCA should determine the actions to be taken for the right-of-way acquisition, tax authority, zoning overlay district, and new planning instruments.
- A companion organization, a citizens advisory committee (CAC) made up of members of the business and residential communities with participation by one or more county supervisors, also should be established. The CAC would meet periodically and advise the PCA.
- The PCA should report periodically to the county supervisors and coordinate its activities with the newly formed CAC.

### Adopt New Ideas on Community Engagement

The Potomac Communities Initiative can succeed only if the public is effectively engaged. In addition to creating the citizens advisory committee, the county should develop an ongoing community engagement process to help inform and receive input from the public on the Potomac Communities Initiative. The public should be engaged in two primary ways: periodic community meetings and publications.

Community meetings within the focus area should introduce new projects, provide periodic updates, present annual forecasts, gather citizen input, and celebrate successes. Publications should be concise; they should include brochures, newsletters, inserts in utility bills, dedicated pages on the county's Web site, and guest editorials in local newspapers and newsletters published by local organizations such as the chamber of commerce.

The county also should explore other ways of reaching the public, including segments on the county's cable television show and learning sessions at the county's Community Leadership Institute. In order to engender public leadership, excitement, and support, the panel feels such community engagement efforts must be ongoing and consistent throughout the life of the Potomac Communities Initiative.

### Summary

The panel strongly recommends the implementation of this integrated set of initiatives, which it has named the Potomac Communities Initiative:

- Change the role, character, and perception of Route 1;
- Implement the South Gateway Initiative;
- Activate the North Gateway Project;
- Focus community development on the waterfront and ecotourism;
- Initiate right-of-way acquisitions immediately;
- Fund the action plan innovatively;
- Rely on place making rather than zoning;
- Create a development agency and a citizens committee; and
- Adopt new ideas on community engagement.

# Conclusion

The panel has presented a new and exciting vision, an integrated development strategy and coordinated list of actions—the Potomac Communities Initiative—which, if adopted and resolutely implemented by Prince William County as a matter of priority, will transform the Route 1 corridor from a serious liability into one of the county’s greatest assets and achievements—the Potomac Communities, Prince William County, Virginia.

The transformation will not be immediate; indeed, it likely will require many years to complete. To delay implementation is to escalate the proposed transformation program’s ultimate cost and jeopardize its likelihood of success. What can be said with certainty is that the county—because of its determination to address these problems immediately and its strong leadership and fiscal stability—has begun to arrest this situation just in time.

All great journeys begin with first steps. Prince William County has taken a number of those steps, as evidenced by the commitments both in place and pledged, such as its work with the Quantico Marine Corps Base and the Virginia Science Center to bring into being the planned Marine Corps Heritage Center and the Belmont Bay Science Center, respectively, as well as this ULI Advisory Services panel, to name only a few. Now is the time to consolidate these strong foundations and leverage their success.

Implementing the panel’s recommendations will take both time and money. To deliver this place-making dividend, the panel urges the Prince William County Board of Supervisors to include the following specific commitments for the Potomac Communities Initiative in each ensuing fiscal budget:

- Endorse and implement the North Gateway and South Gateway projects. Immediately put

in place controls to ensure that the currently open land in the Central Gateway (the home of future sizable residential, employment, and retail communities) is not forever lost to low-density, “business as usual” subdivision development.

- Fund east/west road upgrades and focus all future nodes of retail and mixed-use development at the recommended intersections with Route 1 as well as the Belmont Town Center, with smaller convenience and service retail located around transit stops.
- Immediately enter into negotiations with the U.S. Department of Defense to provide for facility sharing and office accommodations necessary to maximize community return on the Quantico Marine Corps Base’s location within the Potomac Communities.
- Adopt and fully fund the implementation of a heritage/ecotourism plan, ensuring that all transportation infrastructure and linkages maximize the brand and competitive advantages that these assets provide Prince William County over other localities in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan region.
- Develop and implement an assertive and targeted local economic development program to



The South Gateway project will upgrade the Route 1 entry to the Quantico Marine Corps Base from a highway bordered by strip retail development (left) to a tree-lined boulevard that properly honors the U.S. Marine Corps.

ensure that fully serviced land and buildings (complete with all infrastructure, including broadband Internet connections) are available. Then—with the help of brokers’ tours, direct marketing, negotiation, and media campaigns with community developers—target prospective tenants and firms that could locate in the Potomac Communities to redress the current jobs/housing imbalance.

- Finalize a right-of-way acquisition agreement with the Virginia Department of Transportation to ensure county reimbursement for the widening of Route 1 to include a future transit line from the Quantico Marine Corps Base to the Occoquan River and ultimately into Fairfax County, where it could connect with the existing Metrorail station. Once this agreement is finalized, the county should begin to acquire property, immediately demolish all obsolete buildings, and relocate all suitable tenants to the new east/west-oriented retail and mixed-use nodes described above. The county also should support the establishment of a high-speed ferry service linking Prince William County to downtown Washington, D.C.
- Reconstruct the county’s regulatory instruments, comprehensive plan, planning and budget programs, administrative procedures, and intergovernmental programs to ensure that they stress results, not regulation. The focus must move from zoning to place making. The county must focus the full force of its resources on the transformation of its historic Route 1 corridor into the Potomac Communities, Prince William County, Virginia. This rebirth must be the threshold audit test for all county programs, actions, and initiatives.
- Establish a community development authority and a companion citizens advisory committee to be charged with the responsibility and resources to implement this development strategy and be held accountable for its success in putting this action plan into effect. Their charters should incorporate the new vision as outlined in this report.
- Immediately embark on a comprehensive community engagement process to transform the

community’s perception of the Route 1 corridor and secure the community opinion, support, and ownership necessary to ensure that this place no longer will be perceived as merely a collection of dormitory suburbs and a discount shopping location, but rather as a destination rich in opportunities to incubate and grow businesses, educate children, and enjoy a secure, affordable, and inclusive quality of life as well as a rich recreational experience.

The panel believes that by adopting and implementing this new vision, Prince William County will accomplish the following goals:

- Build communities as the focus of the Route 1 corridor’s rebirth;
- Reverse the job/housing imbalance;
- Enhance connectivity to environmental assets as the centerpiece of community building and smart growth;
- Use the principles of place making and smart growth to guide development decisions;
- Better connect western Prince William County with the Potomac River and its communities;
- Create family-wage jobs and housing choices and diversity within the Potomac Communities;
- Strengthen and brand the critical mass of educational, historical, and ecotourism assets; and
- Lay the foundations for transportation choice and land use excellence that will make Prince William County a destination in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan region.

The members of the panel look forward to joining the many other Americans and international visitors who in the future will make the Potomac Communities, Prince William County, Virginia, not just part of a Route 1 journey to somewhere else, but their destination as well.



# About the Panel

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## David Leland

*Panel Chair  
Portland, Oregon*

Leland is the managing director of Leland Consulting Group, a Portland, Oregon-based firm with offices in Denver and San Diego. He has more than 36 years of experience in the real estate industry as a consultant, adviser, developer, and owner, and has conducted more than 2,500 real estate assignments in North America and Asia. Formerly CEO of the real estate acquisition and development subsidiary of a multistate Fortune 500 corporation, Leland is a member of the Counselors of Real Estate and has a strong working knowledge of real estate acquisition, development, and management. He understands the delicate linkage and interdependence among location, program, design, market strength and focus, cost of capital, community relations, and timing that provides real estate developments with their competitive edge.

Leland Consulting Group serves public and private development interests throughout the United States. Leland's areas of special interest include revitalizing downtowns through the development of mixed-use projects, employing the principles of smart development, place making, new urbanism, and public/private partnerships.

He is a development adviser to many agencies and corporations on transit-oriented urban redevelopment and corridor revitalization, as well as a member of ULI—the Urban Land Institute, a national speaker on place making, an invited participant in ULI's Mayors' Conferences, and a member of the Congress for the New Urbanism.

## Donald Bauer

*Tustin, California*

Bauer is the owner and founder of Bauer Planning Services. He has more than 32 years of experience in urban and regional planning, having focused his

expertise in strategic planning and economics to design new communities and to conceptualize and deliver large-scale development programs. In each of the national and international projects for which he has been responsible, Bauer has emphasized the project's quality-of-life and environmental values to create enduring economic value and secure financial returns.

Bauer has designed residential villages and commercial centers for the California-based Irvine Company; large mixed-use projects in Baltimore, Washington, D.C., Miami, Fort Lauderdale, Orlando, and Denver; new towns such as the Woodlands, Texas; and resort communities, including Ventana Canyon in Tucson, Arizona, and the Cojo-Jalama Ranch in Santa Barbara, California. His international experience includes projects in Indonesia, Colombia, China, and Taiwan, as well as designs for the summer national capital in Saudi Arabia and the new national capital of Nigeria.

As an active member of ULI—the Urban Land Institute, Bauer was the ULI District Council coordinator for Orange County, California, from 1992 to 1996. He also is a member of the American Planning Association. Bauer studied sculpture and architecture at the University of Oregon and participated in an exchange program at the University of Florence, Italy. He is called upon as a guest lecturer by several universities.

## Michael Beyard

*Washington, D.C.*

Beyard is an urban planner and economist with more than 20 years of experience in real estate development, land use planning, and economic development. His experiences in the United States and Europe have been focused on commercial and retail development, shopping centers, e-commerce, location-based entertainment, and downtown revitalization.

Beyard is ULI's senior resident fellow for retail and entertainment development and is the author/project director of numerous ULI books, including *Developing Urban Entertainment Centers*, *Shopping Center Development Handbook*, *Dollars & Cents of Shopping Centers*, *Value by Design*, *Developing Power Centers*, *Downtown Development Handbook*, *The Retailing Revolution*, *Ten Principles for Reinventing America's Suburban Strips*, and the *Business and Industrial Park Development Handbook*. He created and directs ULI's International Conference on Urban Entertainment Development and created *ULI on the Future*, the Institute's annual publication devoted to emerging land use and development trends.

Beyard is a featured speaker on retail, entertainment, and downtown development issues in the United States, Europe, and South America, and has been widely quoted in the national and the international media, including the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Washington Post*, *Chicago Tribune*, CNN, and CBS News, as well as in U.S. and European planning and real estate journals.

Before his appointment at ULI, Beyard was a senior consultant in urban planning and real estate development. He spent ten years at Booz Allen & Hamilton, Planning Research Corporation, and Gladstone Associates, advising both public and private clients on market analysis, feasibility, and development planning. He is a member of Lambda Alpha, the international land economics honorary society, and was an appointed member of the Mayor's Interactive Downtown Task Force in Washington, D.C.

Beyard travels widely, having visited more than 50 countries in Europe, South America, Africa, and Australasia for business or adventure, including two trips overland across the Himalayas and a successful ascent of Mount Kilimanjaro. He holds a BA in international economics with honors from Rutgers College and a master's degree in urban planning and development from Cornell University, where he was elected to Phi Kappa Phi.

## Charles Burge

*Houston, Texas*

Burge is president of Eland Development Corporation, which has been involved in all forms of land development since 1973 and also is active in the provision of construction management services to various lending institutions throughout the United States. The firm has undertaken major residential and commercial real estate developments in Houston, Dallas, Atlanta, New Orleans, and Los Angeles. It currently is developing South Shore Harbour—a 2,200-acre master-planned community on Clear Lake in Houston—for the American National Insurance Company. The project involves an extensive mix of uses, including residential, office, retail, a 1,000-berth marina, a 27-hole golf course with a clubhouse, and a 250-room hotel and ancillary amenities.

Burge is an expert in real estate finance, development, and project management. He has a BA from Texas A & M University and a doctor of laws from the University of Houston. He is a member of the State Bar of Texas. Prior to becoming a real estate developer in 1973, Burge was a lawyer with the San Antonio-based practice of Foster, Lewis, Langley, Gardner, and Banack. He served as a captain in the U.S. Marine Corps and was awarded the Bronze Star with Combat V, the Purple Heart, the Combat Action Ribbon, the Presidential Unit Citation Medal, the Navy Unit Citation Medal, and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm.

Burge is a member of ULI—the Urban Land Institute. He currently sits on ULI's Residential Development Council and formerly was a member of the Mixed-Use Development Council. He is a member of Texas A&M University's Corps Development Council and its Development Council for the College of Liberal Arts.

## Arun Jain

*Piedmont, California*

Jain is an urban designer and planner with Urban Design Consultants, which provides consulting services to private and public, local and interna-

tional planning agencies as well as design, engineering, and development firms on a wide range of real estate projects from small, county-level projects to new towns and master-planned communities. Jain's areas of expertise include new town and large-scale master planning (for mixed-use, residential and waterfront development); master development planning, specific planning, and campus planning; yield and feasibility studies; research and development; corporate (office) campus site planning; residential subdivision site planning; development proposal analysis; design/planning implications assessment and development strategies; urban design guidance (including streetscape design and revitalization); resource management and development suitability studies; developing density bonus development strategies; design review and code conformance evaluation; signage regulations; and zoning ordinance revision impact analysis.

Jain is also a facility instructor and design critic in the landscape architecture program at the University of California at Berkeley. He has written various articles and books and is vice president of strategic development and a member of the board of directors of San Francisco-based ID8 Media, Inc. He has held the positions of senior land planner with Anthony Guzzardo and Associates in San Francisco; associate, urban design, with Sedway Cooke and Associates in San Francisco; project planner with CYP, Inc., in Irvine, California; and urban design consultant with Parsons, Brinckerhoff, Quade & Douglas in Orange County, California.

Jain is a member of ULI—the Urban Land Institute as well as a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners, the American Planning Association, the International Federation for Housing Planning, and the Indian Council of Architects.

### **Christopher Kurz**

*Baltimore, Maryland*

Kurz is president and CEO of Linden Associates, Inc., a Baltimore-based regional real estate services and mortgage banking company engaged in the financing, acquisition, development, and man-

agement of commercial property. The firm also provides a range of corporate real estate consulting services.

Prior to his current position, Kurz was cofounder, chairman, and CEO of McGill Development Company as that firm grew into the fourth-largest commercial real estate development company in the Baltimore metropolitan area. He served as chairman of the board of directors and cofounder of Columbia Bancorp and the Columbia Bank, a \$500 million publicly traded bank holding company. As a principal of Alex Brown Real Estate Group, Inc., he acquired investments for pension fund clients. Other companies with which Kurz has been associated include J.G. Smithy Company, Maryland National Corporation, and the Rouse Company.

Kurz holds a master of business administration from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania and a BA from the University of Pennsylvania. He is a member of ULI—the Urban Land Institute, where he also serves as chair emeritus of the Institute's Baltimore District Council, vice chair of its Small-Scale Development Council, Blue Flight, and a member of the National Program Committee. He is a member of the International Council of Shopping Centers, a past member of NAIOP and the Mortgage Bankers Association of America, and a past board member of the Catherine McAuley Housing Foundation in Denver.

### **James Meadows**

*San Francisco, California*

Meadows is the principal of Meadows and Affiliates, a San Francisco-based association of experts in military base conversion and real estate development. He has more than 29 years of senior management experience in private sector homebuilding and development firms and public agencies in the disciplines of homebuilding, urban master-planned community development, commercial building and land development, resort development, and government agency management and land disposition.

Prior to forming Meadows and Affiliates, he served as the first executive director of the Presidio Trust, a federal agency charged with the preservation of the Presidio as a 1,500-acre urban national park in San Francisco. He also was the first executive director of the Lowry Redevelopment Authority, an intergovernmental agency set up by the cities of Denver and Aurora, Colorado, to master plan, rezone, and redevelop the 2,000-acre Lowry Air Force Base into an urban mixed-use neighborhood. Meadows previously was senior vice president and head of homebuilding operations for Castle & Cooke Homes, Inc. (a division of Dole Foods), a community development firm with extensive land holdings and residential and commercial development projects in California, Arizona, and Hawaii.

Meadows currently is president of the board of directors of the National Association of Installation Developers, a member of Lambda Alpha, and a board member of the Coro Foundation of Northern California. He is a member of ULI—the Urban Land Institute and has served on a variety of ULI Advisory Services panels relating to military base closures and redevelopment, including one that evaluated Treasure Island, California. Meadows is a graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy. He is a keynote speaker and author on the subjects of sustainable development and military installation conversion and reuse.

### **Julia Trevarthen**

*Hollywood, Florida*

Trevarthen is assistant director of the South Florida Regional Planning Council, a planning and public policy agency serving Broward, Miami-Dade, and Monroe counties, where she is responsible for agency program management. Prior to being appointed to her current position, she managed the council's dispute resolution, facilitation, intergovernmental coordination, and development of regional impacts programs.

The council's region encompasses 4,300 square miles of south Florida; includes 69 local governments, encompassing Key West, Miami, and Fort Lauderdale; and has a population of nearly 4 million people. The council works with the public,

private, and nonprofit sectors to identify, analyze, and develop strategies to meet the challenges facing south Florida.

Prior to joining the council, Trevarthen was the senior planner with the town of Carrboro, North Carolina; before that, she was a researcher at the Florida Atlantic University–Florida International University Joint Center for Environmental and Urban Problems. Trevarthen has authored several publications on such diverse topics as brownfields and urban redevelopment, regional growth management, economic development, smart growth, transportation management, intergovernmental coordination, and dispute resolution. She is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners and holds a master of regional planning degree from the University of North Carolina and a BA from Florida State University.

### **Walter Winius, Jr.**

*Phoenix, Arizona*

Winius is managing director of Integra Winius Realty Analysts. For more than 40 years, he has conducted real estate and economic market research, analysis, and real estate appraisals. He has worked for hundreds of clients and has undertaken market identification and analysis, demographic trend analysis, and economic trend analysis, and has assessed absorption rates, project feasibility, and land use mix recommendations over the widest possible range of real estate development and investment projects in 18 states and Mexico.

Winius and his firm currently are providing real estate consulting services to the Eastern European Property Foundation, a U.S. State Department–funded organization working with the public and private sectors in the Ukraine, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia to assist in the privatization of real estate and in the provision of teaching assistance to appraisers in those countries. He is a member of ULI—the Urban Land Institute and sits on the Institute's Community Development Council. He also is a member of the Appraisal Institute.





