



Washington

Capitol Heights



MARLBORO PIKE CORRIDOR

Prince George's County, Maryland

Technical Assistance Panel Report | April 2–3, 2025

About

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Cover photo: The ULI Technical Assistance Panelists at the pedestrian bridge adjacent to the Gordon Road Triangle. (ULI)

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Executive Summary

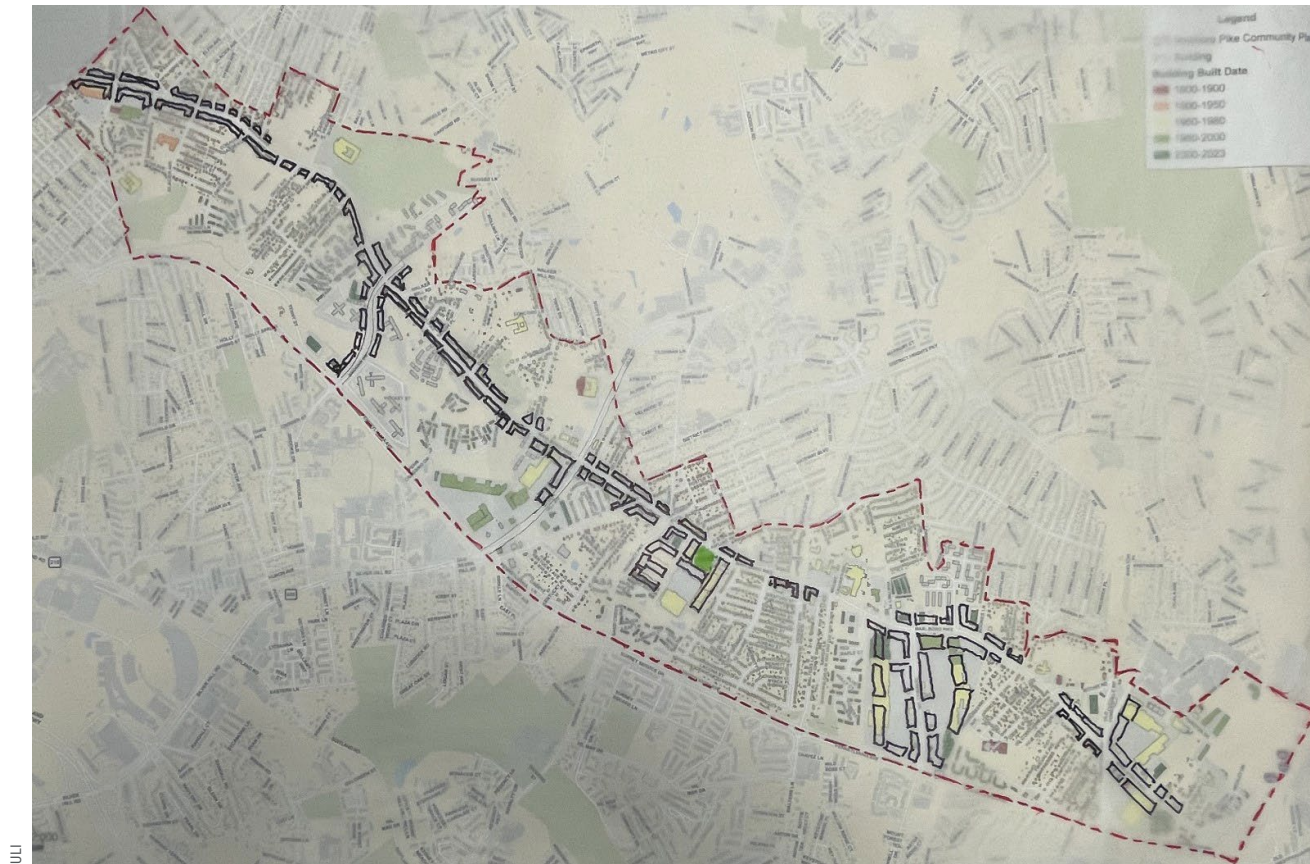
The Marlboro Pike Corridor is a 4.5-mile main road in western Prince George's County that connects Upper Marlboro with D.C. and lies near major federal institutions. In recent years, however, the corridor has experienced economic decline and now lacks major retail amenities and newer housing stock. The Prince George's County Planning Department and the Marlboro Pike Partnership CDC believe the corridor holds strong potential for revitalization and improvement. To explore ideas and solutions, they convened a two-day TAP through ULI Washington ("the Panel") aimed at identifying strategies to attract younger residents and new retail options—such as additional grocery and fresh food outlets, sit down restaurants—and to improve multimodal transportation, connectivity, and walkability.

After touring the site and convening with County leadership and stakeholders, the Panel developed five sets of recommendations. These are designed to boost the Marlboro Pike Corridor's ability to attract and retain both businesses and residents—while honoring the area's current residents and its rich history. The recommendations are to create a vision for Marlboro Pike; to invest in entrepreneurship and small business strategies; to enhance the public realm to create destinations where people can gather and connect; and to expand housing options. The fifth recommendation is to build strong

partnerships, especially with Prince George's County, which already has several improvement projects underway along the corridor, and with the faith-based community, which has an extensive presence in the area.

At the conclusion of the TAP, the Panel agreed that the Marlboro Pike Corridor has

tremendous potential to transform from a thoroughfare into a cultural destination. While this will take time, effort, and collaboration, the high level of enthusiasm and engagement from willing partners makes the Panel confident that it can be accomplished.



A Diagram of the Study area envisioning increased frontage along Marlboro Pike.



Background

Located in western Prince George's County, the Marlboro Pike Corridor is about four miles long and half a mile wide, bounded by Southern Avenue SE to the west, I-95/495 (the Capital Beltway) to the east, and MD 4 (Pennsylvania Avenue) to the south.

Marlboro Pike originated as the Washington-Marlboro Turnpike, linking the county seat of Upper Marlboro with the District of Columbia, and grew significantly from the 1930s through the 1950s. Nearby major federal institutions, including the Suitland Federal Center and Andrews Air Force Base (now Joint Base Andrews), further increased market demand for housing.

Marlboro Pike was designated as Maryland State Route 4 (MD 4). But in the 1960s, Pennsylvania Avenue was extended from central Washington, D.C. to Upper Marlboro and beyond, effectively creating a bypass of the communities along Marlboro Pike. Most regional traffic was rerouted, and the Pike lost the economic benefits of through traffic. Years of disinvestment and neglect have led to deterioration of the commercial corridor.

In 2009, Prince George's County Council approved the Marlboro Pike Sector Plan, which contains comprehensive recommendations for revitalization of the Pike based on market analysis and extensive stakeholder input. However, many of the plan's recommendations have not yet been implemented.

The Marlboro Pike Partnership CDC (MPP) was formed in 2020 to spur investment and

revitalization along the corridor with a renewed interest in the Marlboro Pike Sector Plan. The Partnership's focus includes expanding economic opportunity and safety for all residents and businesses along the Pike, as well as façade improvement and rebranding ideas to make it an attractive destination and improve overall quality of life for residents.

According to the Prince George's County Planning Department's ongoing Marlboro Pike Market Feasibility Assessment, The study area median household income was \$69,433 in 2023, over a third lower than the county median household income of \$92,437. The assessment also found that more than one in five households (22 percent) make less than \$35,000 in the Study Area, and only 16 percent earn \$150,000 or more. Over the past decade, the sector plan area has experienced minimal population growth, remaining relatively inactive from 2013 to 2023.

The area holds a relatively older housing stock with very limited new construction. Over half (fifty-five percent) of the area's housing was constructed prior to 1980. Employment patterns reveal that many residents commute outside the area for work, however local job opportunities in the area are concentrated along Marlboro Pike.

The Marlboro Pike Corridor west of Lakehurst Street is in a state-designated Enterprise Zone, which allows for real property and state income tax credits in exchange for job creation and investment activity.



The crosswalk across Donnell Dr. with the Centre at Forestville shopping center beyond.

TAP Questions

MPP and M-NCPPC staff shared their sentiment that the Marlboro Pike Corridor has great potential for development and improvement. The sponsors hoped that the panel could identify the most effective and actionable methods, strategies, and recommendations to achieve the following goals along the Marlboro Pike Corridor.

- Enhance Walkability and Multimodal Transit Objective
- Encourage Revitalization and Sustainable Development Objective
- Develop Urban Design Guidelines Objective
- Establish Public Facilities for Community Benefit Objective
- Support Health and Well-Being Outcomes Objective

Prior to the TAP, the sponsors provided ULI Washington with a list of questions to address and recommendations to create, including:

1. What strategies and designs can be used to improve walkability, access to transit, and promote multimodal transportation options along Marlboro Pike?

2. How can we encourage the preservation and revitalization of existing residential areas and commercial centers while supporting new development along the corridor?
3. Provide recommendations for urban design standards, particularly in lighting and renewable energy, as well as guidelines for compatible development.
4. Offer recommendations for where public investments could be located along Marlboro Pike to provide public benefits for community, social, and recreational services.
5. How to develop partnerships and provide creative spaces to increase access to healthy food options and support health and wellbeing?

Additionally, the sponsors asked that the Panel's recommendation include developing strategies to implement the 2009 Approved Marlboro Pike Sector Plan, promoting development and redevelopment, revitalizing and beautifying the area, capitalizing on existing retail capacity, and diversifying the housing stock, especially on underutilized parking surfaces.



ULI

The sidewalk along Donnell Drive with trees buffering the sidewalk from the thoroughfare.



The Process

The sponsors engaged ULI Washington and COG to convene a TAP with the overall goal of addressing the future of the Marlboro Pike corridor and providing recommendations to revitalize and improve the area. The Panel consisted of ten ULI Washington members with expertise in urban design and planning, placemaking, transportation, architecture, housing and economic development.

The two-day TAP convened on April 2, 2025, at The Gathering Place on Marlboro Pike in Capitol Heights, Maryland. The Panel toured the Marlboro Pike study area and surrounding streets. The Panel then interviewed over 25 stakeholders, many of whom were corridor residents, and local and county agencies, small business owners, educational institutions, faith-based institutions, and civic associations leaders re-convened in the afternoon to deliberate and formulate their recommendations. During the second day, the Panel finalized the recommendations and invited the sponsors and stakeholders to hear the presentation of their findings at The Gathering Place.

Lessons from Stakeholders

Multiple themes emerged in the stakeholder interviews that the panelists considered when forming their recommendations, including:

Economic Opportunities

Stakeholders were eager to explore opportunities that engage local communities in economic development. They emphasized

creating a positive and inclusive space for participation, citing successful cross-disciplinary collaborations between the government and the local community.

One major barrier to economic development is low community engagement. Stakeholders stressed the importance of gathering community input on necessary economic initiatives and educating residents about potential improvements. For example, rather than simply advocating for renewable energy, explaining how green energy translates into job creation can foster greater support.

Many in the community are interested in entrepreneurship but struggle with

navigating funding mechanisms and the entitlement process. Stakeholders suggested establishing a start-up kitchen or business incubator to assist aspiring entrepreneurs with startup processes and access to financing.

Stakeholders also highlighted the need to leverage partnerships so that economic development is not solely the responsibility of individuals or businesses. They emphasized the importance of community buy-in and recommended that developers and government officials engage with residents—particularly those directly impacted—before implementing projects.



Stakeholders meet with Panelists as part of the ULI Technical Assistance Panel.

Additionally, stakeholders pointed out the need for greater education on existing regulations, particularly in planning and zoning. For instance, in industrial areas, residents should have a clearer understanding of allowable industrial uses and their implications on the built environment.

Housing Concerns

Stakeholders noted that the area's aging demographic has made it challenging to attract and retain young people, a problem compounded by limited economic and recreational opportunities relative to other

neighborhoods. "People leave and gravitate toward other areas in the County and D.C.," one stakeholder observed. To create a more sustainable community, stakeholders recommended focusing on vibrancy and offering more opportunities for younger residents.

They also stressed the need for additional housing to attract young people, as much of the existing housing stock is outdated and unappealing to potential homeowners. They suggested options such as narrow-lot single-family homes for those wanting proximity to D.C., as well as mixed-use housing

and townhomes to create a more inviting and affordable environment for younger generations.

Healthy Options and Walkability

Stakeholders expressed a strong desire for better access to healthy food. They discussed the need to improve walkability to food sources, diversify dining options (e.g., more sit-down restaurants rather than takeout-only establishments), and attract higher-quality grocery stores or a farmers' market. A cited example of a successful market was the Amish Market in Upper Marlboro.



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Stakeholders meet with Panelists as part of the ULI Technical Assistance Panel.

Stakeholders also advocated for bringing in high-end grocery stores such as Trader Joe's, Market Fresh Gourmet, Whole Foods, and Amazon Fresh, along with restaurants offering healthier choices. However, they acknowledged that demographic shifts might be necessary to attract such retailers. One business owner who introduced a Smoothie King to the area noted that demand exists; the challenge is persuading other businesses to invest in the corridor.

Additionally, the community lacks general public fitness facilities and green space and has poor walkability, which limits exercise options. Additionally, there is insufficient access to mental and behavioral health services, forcing residents to travel outside the community for care. With few walking trails or paths, many residents resort to walking at Forestville Mall. Stakeholders suggested that adding sidewalks and tree-lined pathways would improve access to retail areas while promoting physical activity.

Promoting Development and Attracting Investment

Stakeholders called for more wayfinding signs, particularly those highlighting historical sites important to the community and the history of the Marlboro Pike Corridor.

Law enforcement officials expressed concerns about crime, especially around 24-hour retailers such as tobacco shops. However, stakeholders emphasized the need to shift the narrative surrounding crime to make the area more attractive to investors and residents.

To encourage development, stakeholders discussed strategies to attract developers while reshaping perceptions of Marlboro Pike. The presence of a CDC has helped initiate this process, but stakeholders want to build greater momentum for development that prioritizes residents' needs.

The Marlboro Pike Corridor has the potential to attract a broader customer base. Nearby Pennsylvania Avenue experiences heavy traffic, Joint Base Andrews draws a large workforce, and Bishop McNamara High School brings higher-income families to the area daily. Additionally, numerous faith communities attract families from beyond the immediate area. Stakeholders emphasized the importance of leveraging these existing assets to enhance the corridor's appeal and encourage further investment.



A food truck with an artistic wrap.

PIXEL WRAPS



Recommendations

The Panel grouped the recommendations into five sections:

1. Vision for the Marlboro Pike Corridor Community: Community Goals and Making the Case for Marlboro Pike
2. The Public Realm: Establishing Destinations and Safe Connections in Between
3. Housing Strategy
4. Entrepreneurship & Small Business Strategy
5. Partnership Recommendations

Recommendation 1

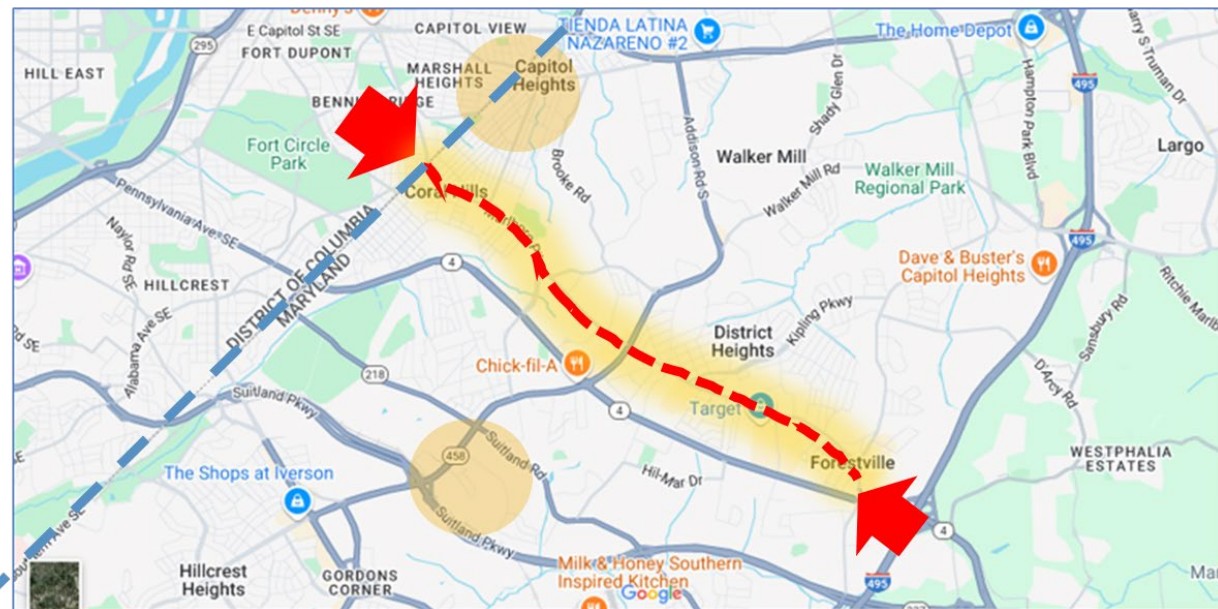
Vision for the Marlboro Pike Corridor Community: Community Goals and Making the Case for Marlboro Pike

The Panel's Vision: *The Marlboro Pike Corridor can become a vibrant, self-sustaining community that serves as a hub for celebrating art, culture, and entrepreneurship, welcoming families and individuals of all ages.*

In keeping with this vision, the panel created a series of recommendations to create a thriving, self-sustaining community that prioritizes pedestrian safety, celebrates culture and art, and fosters entrepreneurship. The goal is to move beyond just being a thoroughfare and become a destination for families of all ages. This revitalization effort will support small businesses, improve housing, and enhance the public realm to make the corridor a more vibrant and connected place.



A Signal Box wrapped with artwork developed by the community in Lakewood, WA.



A map of the study area, with the Marlboro Pike Corridor highlighted.

Why Marlboro Pike? Why now?

The Panel feels that this corridor is in a unique position, sandwiched between developed zones in D.C. and Prince George's County, and this includes being connected to large employment centers in the area. There is also a commitment from Prince George's County to improve the pedestrian, bike connectivity and overall transit safety in the area, and the potential for the communities to grow through well-established flourishing community organizations. Given Marlboro Pike's proximity to D.C. and the historic communities that have been there for decades, there is a strong desire to preserve the existing culture and to provide amenities, housing, and attractions to welcome future generations who may consider relocating or visiting the area.

Why Creating a Vision is Critical:

Vision is important because it unites stakeholders, connects the community with the revitalization strategy, and aligns short-term projects with long-term goals. Without a clear vision, neighborhoods can deteriorate, economic activity may decline, and crime rates can increase. A lack of vision ultimately closes the door to future opportunities and growth, making it essential for fostering a thriving and sustainable community. The alignment of public, private, and community interests through authentic partnership to create this vision can enable successful economic ecosystems and scalable growth along the Marlboro Pike Corridor.



The Panel recommends creating a vision for the Marlboro Pike Corridor that would draw on its strengths.

Recommendation 2 The Public Realm: Establishing Destinations and Safe Connections in Between

Recommendations:

- ⇒ **Connectivity: improving safe access to destinations and transit.**
- ⇒ **Branding: crafting a distinct identity.**
- ⇒ **Artmaking: infusing creativity into the corridor with local arts.**
- ⇒ **Creating Space: making and activating shared spaces for all.**

The Panel envisions a vibrant, connected corridor with safe access to transit, a distinct identity, and local art that celebrates community creativity. By activating shared spaces, a welcoming place for all to gather and thrive is created.

The corridor has several key assets, including legacy institutions such as schools, faith-based organizations, recreation centers, small businesses and community spaces. Major roadways like Silver Hill, Regency Parkway, and Donnell Drive serve as important connections to the area.

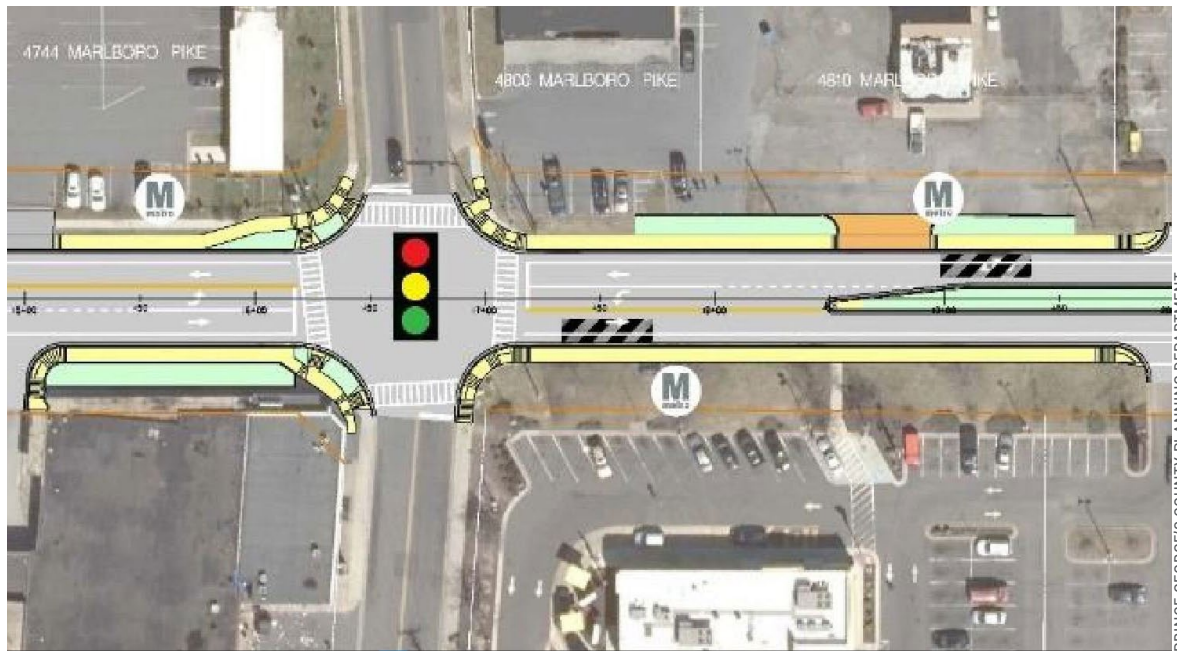
Marlboro Pike Corridor, like any major thoroughfare, has challenges to overcome. Because the Pike serves as a bypass and has a divider, vehicular traffic goes at high speeds and can be a threat to pedestrians and cyclists if not effectively managed. The current array of retail and community options lacks a signature gathering space for people to congregate, or that would provide a visual to define the area. Though many people come to the area to go to school or work, there are not sufficient amenities or attractions that encourage them to stay, either as a retail or restaurant patron, or as a possible resident.

The Panel proposed the following recommendations to improve the Public Realm of the Marlboro Pike Corridor:

- ⇒ **Connectivity: improving safe access to destinations and transit.** The Panel recommends transforming the Marlboro Pike Corridor into a vibrant destination that attracts visitors. This includes highlighting and enhancing existing amenities, particularly green spaces, which are shown as green parcels on the map. The plan leverages existing parkways to connect key destinations and uses the north-south corridors to



Major thoroughways and green spaces (highlighted) from the Marlboro Pike Corridor.



Existing plans for improvements in traffic and pedestrian safety.

bring people to the central hub: Marlboro Pike. The Panel proposes putting a gateway feature at the entrance to Marlboro Pike, which would incorporate retail opportunities, a renewable energy showcase area, and housing. The Panel also recommends supporting the existing Marlboro Pike Pedestrian Safety Improvement Project, which includes a road diet to slow traffic and improve pedestrian safety, as well as a tighter turning radius at major intersections. Any additional development along the corridor should take bus shelters into account, which will help with ridership and improve both the pedestrian and rider experience.

Already, efforts are underway in Prince George's County to invest in three phases of multi-modal improvements along the Marlboro Pike Corridor. The first phase has already been implemented, which included adding bike lanes, sidewalks and reducing the number of travel lanes to slow traffic down. Law enforcement reports that already this has been effective, and people are driving more slowly. The Panel recommends continuing a strong relationship with Prince George's County in these efforts which will greatly improve Marlboro Pike Corridor's transit experience and public transit readiness.

⇒ **Branding: crafting a distinct identity.** Branding the corridor as a destination requires incorporating public art, asphalt art installations, facade improvements and major streetscape improvements. A short-term initiative could include launching a collaborative arts program with local schools and art organizations to enhance visual appeal. A medium-term strategy could involve creating a gateway feature, such as a roundabout at a key boundary point with specialty signage, to direct slow traffic and improve safety.

⇒ **Artmaking: infusing creativity into the corridor with local arts.** Creating a central gathering space, known as the "Heart Zone," would serve as a focal point for community activities. Enhancements near Pep Boys and Aldi, utilizing the vacant parking lot can create pedestrian-friendly areas with additional site lighting, landscaping, and public seating. Such amenities could help define the area as a welcoming entryway.

⇒ **Creating Space: making and activating shared spaces for all.** Great Eastern Plaza presents an opportunity to establish a town center identity. A rebranding effort could elevate its appeal, potentially renaming it, for example, as **"Pike's People Plaza."** The panel recommends furnishing the locations, including seating, lighting, and signage. Another option would be to install a common kitchen space for

catering companies and pop-up vendors who are looking to be entrepreneurial while providing more food options for diners. Zoning should allow for all of these options.

Implementation: Strategies for revitalization should be approached in short-, medium-, and long-term phases:

- **Short-term:** Hosting pop-up events, food trucks, and seasonal festivals, supported by case studies of similar successful initiatives.
- **Medium-term:** Furnishing the plaza with seating, banners, music venues, and performance stages to create a welcoming space that ties into the fine arts concept.
- **Long-term:** Implementing Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) programs for ongoing improvements.

Parkway Connectivity

Enhancing green spaces along the corridor is another priority:

- **Short-term:** Planting trees and improving landscaping.
- **Medium-term:** Adding benches, lighting, and wayfinding signage to create a signature look and make the area more inviting.



A plan sketch of a gathering place connecting anchor tenants at Great Eastern Plaza through the space between ALDI and Pep Boys.

Improving Grocery Options

Stakeholders spoke repeatedly about the need for better grocery options, ideally in places that are walkable or easily accessible by public transit. As the Marlboro Pike Corridor exists now, the corridor needs more density to support a wider variety of grocery options that residents can easily access.

The Panel recommends that any development plans and conversations should include ongoing dialogue about bringing in grocery and fresh food options, with the option for incentives to do so in locations that are best suited for the residents immediately surrounding Marlboro Pike.

Recommendation 3

Housing Recommendations

Recommendations:

- ⇒ **Focus on repair and maintenance of existing housing stock.**
- ⇒ **Create a zoning study.**
- ⇒ **Create architectural design guidelines for Marlboro Pike.**
- ⇒ **Invest in senior housing and workforce housing.**

The Panel recommends building more housing with added density in a way that does not cause displacement. The following recommendations are designed to add housing that can accommodate a variety of demographics and includes homeowners and renters, with a focus on “missing middle” housing types that are concentrated closer to Marlboro Pike.

Currently, the Marlboro Pike Corridor faces several housing challenges:

- A lack of high-quality, affordable housing.
- Existing housing is aging and often in poor condition.
- Limited housing options for younger families seeking to transition into homeownership.
- No cohesive architectural identity along Marlboro Pike.

- A lack of recreational amenities for families.

The Panel’s housing strategy includes several recommendations:

- ⇒ **Focus on repair and maintenance of existing housing stock.** Housing repair initiatives should focus on preserving existing homes while balancing code enforcement with community-led workshops. Instead of punitive measures, education and support should be provided to help homeowners maintain their properties. The Panel recommends exploring potential funding for home repairs, including mortgage companies and banks offering

homeowner assistance programs. County economic development corporations can also provide guidance on grants for neighborhood rehabilitation.

- ⇒ **Create a zoning study.** A zoning study should be conducted to explore density changes and introduce zoning to allow for “missing middle” housing. The goal is to increase housing units without displacing the current community. Mixed-use development, incorporating storefront retail with residential units above, can help replace problematic 24/7 retailers, or nuisance retailers, that have become attractive locations for criminal activities. Zoning changes should be



Examples of the existing housing stock in the study area.

pursued to allow interested developers to assemble smaller lots into larger lots for mixed-use and missing middle housing to attract more demographics and business investments.

- ⇒ Create architectural design guidelines for Marlboro Pike. The Panel recommends considering a second technical assistance panel that focuses chiefly on the architectural design of the Marlboro Pike Corridor. This would result in a design guide that would be useful to

developers who may be inclined to bring new development to the corridor. Such a design guide, which would complement the placemaking standards, could include details such as:

- Height & Setbacks from main street
- Façade & public space materials
- Signage, Lighting, Landscaping – heights & sizes
- Sustainable Design Benchmarks

In addition, a housing typology analysis should highlight diverse options, from single-family homes to denser residential developments suitable for the corridor, more of which are discussed in the recommendation below.

- ⇒ **Invest in senior housing and workforce housing.** The Panel recommends that the County consider bringing in additional senior housing and workforce housing, especially within “missing middle” housing types. The Panel recommends that Prince George’s County identify “development-ready” sites and work with the Marlboro Pike Corridor community to find developers to build housing. This would also include educating the community on housing needs and available options, including soliciting feedback from residents and stakeholders on their needs and concerns around the additional housing stock.

Missing Middle Housing

“Missing Middle” housing refers to housing types that occupy a level of density between the low-density detached single-family homes and the more dense urban high-rise. This includes duplexes, courtyard buildings, and townhouses, as well as less common types like cottage courts and live-work units. The Panel recommends that this middle level of density is appropriate to build along Marlboro Pike, and it could serve primarily as workforce housing, attracting middle-income residents and adding to the housing stock in such a way to attract younger residents to the area.



An example of missing middle housing that the Panel recommends be considered for the Marlboro Pike Corridor. Missing Middle Housing concept created by Daniel Parolek. Image © [Opticos Design, Inc.](http://www.missingmiddlehousing.com) For more info visit www.missingmiddlehousing.com

Recommendation 4 Entrepreneurship & Small Business Strategy

Recommendations:

- ⇒ **Establish a fine-arts district.**
- ⇒ **Maintain and Support Local Businesses.**
- ⇒ **Create Public-Private Partnerships and Entrepreneur Academy.**
- ⇒ **Identifying missing commercial uses.**
- ⇒ **Partner for Renewable Energy Goals.**

The Panel's vision of the future of retail along Marlboro Pike entails transforming Marlboro Pike into a thriving corridor of entrepreneurship, creativity, and community-driven economic growth. In order to achieve that vision, the Panel recommends the County take the following steps.

- ⇒ **Establish a fine-arts district.** The Panel recommends developing a fine arts district that can serve as a catalyst for economic growth while fostering community engagement and inclusivity. By building collaborative partnerships and encouraging creative expression, the district will become a vibrant cultural hub that benefits residents, local businesses, and local artists in celebration of the rich local culture.

One of the key economic benefits of the fine arts district is the potential to increase property values through high-quality amenities. Galleries, museums, and multi-use event spaces will attract visitors and investors, creating a dynamic environment that enhances the overall appeal of the area.

A potential food hall, such as miXT in Brentwood, Maryland, combining an art gallery, event space, and diverse food vendors, could attract visitors and residents. Partnerships with Suitland High School's visual arts programs and Bishop McNamara High School's performing arts initiatives could further integrate art and local activity. A food truck park or hall, combined with a community garden, will further enhance the district by promoting sustainable



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An example of a multi-use public space for gatherings of many different types, imagined here by the Panel between ALDI and Pep Boys by Great Eastern Plaza.



miXT Food Hall

development and green initiatives. This space will create a unique “multi-sensory experience,” where the relationship between art, food, and business thrives in harmony.

Mixed-use development, blending residential and cultural spaces, will ensure the district is accessible and functional. Murals, creative zones, and artist-in-residency programs will inspire ongoing artistic activity.

Collaborations with local art and performance programs will strengthen community ties, while events like art walks and “paint and sip” sessions will keep the district lively and inclusive.

⇒ **Maintain and support local businesses**

The Panel recommends supporting existing businesses by strengthening local businesses along the corridor through community-centered improvements, shared standards, and the creative reuse of key spaces to serve neighborhood needs. This includes identifying and engaging key corridor businesses to support revitalization efforts and assisting businesses in aligning with design and streetscape guidelines. This would require addressing property maintenance needs, to improve curb appeal through initiatives such as fixing fences, ensuring proper signage, and keeping sidewalks clear of parked cars. Large vacant sites should be repurposed into food hubs, event venues, or distribution centers, and collaboration with faith-based organizations will help unify the corridor.

⇒ **Form Public-Private Partnerships and an “Entrepreneur academy.”** The Panel recommends the creation of public-private partnerships to attract franchisers with health-oriented missions to the corridor. Redevelopment efforts should be led by community organizations such as MPP to spearhead redevelopment and identify funding sources to support entrepreneurs and infrastructure improvements.

One key initiative could be the launch of an “Entrepreneur Academy” designed to support and empower local business development. This academy would serve as a resource hub for aspiring entrepreneurs and help attract businesses that align with the community’s wellness goals. In partnership with local municipalities and MPP, the academy and other revitalization efforts would strengthen the corridor’s economic landscape.

Additionally, identifying and securing funding sources is essential to sustain these initiatives and ensure long-term success. Collaborating with local schools, universities, and cultural institutions will further promote innovation, education, and community engagement, to create a well-rounded and vibrant local economy.

⇒ **Identifying missing commercial uses.**

With a low office space vacancy rate of just 2.4%, there is potential for more

medical and dental offices, which could create jobs and enhance community services. There is an opportunity to repurpose former anchor tenant locations, such as the Marlo Furniture and Giant grocery sites, for new businesses. Faith organizations, which are abundant along the corridor, should also be integrated into the redevelopment strategy.

Meeting Renewable Energy Goals through Partnership

For renewable energy, there are options to encourage and incentivize development partners to follow the example set by the Holly Spring Meadows community with solar covered parking lots and roofs. Such solar coverings could become a recognizable signature of the Marlboro Pike Corridor. The Panel recommends considering adaptive reuse of Marlo warehouse for an indoor community garden or common kitchen facility for “start-ups” to support local farm-to-table restaurants, flea markets, and area food banks. An initiative could be to use The Capital Market or other food CBOs for a possible partnership. There is also an option to leverage “Green Financing Tools” for sustainable redevelopment and adaptive reuse and look to the EPA’s Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund for possible funding.

Recommendation 5 Partnership Recommendations

Recommendations:

- ⇒ **Enhance Public-Private Coordination, stewarded by M-NCPPC and MPP.**
 - ⇒ **Work with faith communities along Marlboro Pike to create an authentic sense of identity and belonging.**
 - ⇒ **Continue to engage community stakeholders throughout the long-range planning process for Marlboro Pike.**
-
- ⇒ **Work with County government and M-NCPPC to create public-private coordination.** The Panel recommends identifying key partners to take part in the Marlboro Pike Corridor's transformation. Such public-private coordination, with Prince George's County Planning Department as a partner, will require clear leadership and collaboration among stakeholders, including leveraging

MPP's connections to attract investment. The Redevelopment Authority of Prince George's County has announced \$250,000 in community impact grants, which can be used for signage, banners, and facade improvements. These funds should be integrated into the overall strategic plan for corridor revitalization. Other County agencies like the Economic Development Corporation could play a key role in both financing and visioning for the future of the corridor.

- ⇒ **Work with the faith community to create a sense of belonging.** The Panel believes that churches can play a significant role in revitalization efforts, acting as community anchors and partners in redevelopment initiatives. Identifying key sites for redevelopment and zoning updates will be crucial in guiding the next steps toward a thriving, pedestrian-friendly, and culturally rich Marlboro Pike Corridor, and the existing faith communities will be valuable partners to include for these decisions. They are also a source of possible residents and consumers, as many people come to the area for faith and worship and are looking for amenities and retail to keep them close by.

⇒ **Engage community stakeholders.**

The Panel recommends a high level of engagement with community stakeholders and ensure that public messaging happens so that the community is aware of any changes or developments to the Marlboro Pike Corridor. Recommendations include having the MPP spearhead financial literacy programs for homeowners seeking to upgrade and beautify their properties, and identifying funding sources for businesses to improve their operations and financial success. The Panel also recommends adding property owners to the Board of the Marlboro Pike Partnership to gain financial perspective and commitment to development initiatives and involving property managers and brokers in the Partnerships' activities to increase market visibility for the Pike. A Market Feasibility Assessment dated October 14, 2024, has recommendations for improving Marlboro Pike and can be used as a supplemental guide in this process.

Next Steps and Conclusion

Next Steps

The Panel recommends the following as the immediate steps that can be taken to improve the Marlboro Pike Corridor:

1. Rally the community around a common vision that unites and grows all parties
2. Establish a lively central “heart zone” to breathe life into the area through placemaking interventions and phased redevelopments
3. Increase housing diversity and density without displacement
4. Create space for entrepreneurship and fine arts to thrive alongside community-driven economic growth
5. Create the right connections with the community, the development community, and CBOs.

Conclusion

The Panel believes the Marlboro Pike Corridor has tremendous potential to transform from a thoroughfare into a cultural destination. This will require effort and collaboration, but given the enthusiasm and engagement from willing partners, the Panel believes this can be achieved.

The Panel recommends that development efforts stay focused on the pillars outlined in this report: creating a vision, investing in entrepreneurship and small business strategies, establishing destinations in the public realm, adding housing, and working in concert with the community and surrounding organizations, including Prince George’s County.

It is imperative that the vision, goals, and progress be communicated with the public, ensuring that existing communities are aware of and included in these improvements. The Corridor’s proximity to D.C. and federal institutions presents an opportunity for significant economic growth and increased consumer spending. By turning the Marlboro Pike Corridor into a dynamic destination, there will be greater incentive and opportunity for people to come, visit, stay, and live here.

The Panel thanks the Marlboro Pike Partnership CDC and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission for taking the time to share insights and allowing the Panel to bring fresh perspectives to the Marlboro Pike Corridor and play a role in catalyzing future planning efforts.



A snapshot of a thriving multi-use public space.

DERO

Appendix: List of Stakeholders

The Panel would also like to thank the many stakeholders and organizations who participated in the process, providing valuable input that shaped this report. The following agencies and organizations were represented by 28 individuals at the stakeholder roundtable discussions.

Berkshire Civic Association	Marlboro Pike Partnership CDC	Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation
Bishop McNamara High School	Maryland State Delegate Kent Roberson - District 25	M-NCPPC Prince George's County Planning Department
City of District Heights	Prince George's County Police Department	Prince George's County Council
District Heights Elementary School	Prince George's County Councilmember Krystal Oriadha - District 7	RISE Prince George's
District Heights Police Department	Prince George's County Councilmember Wala Blegay - District 6	Shooters Sports
First Baptist Church of District Heights	Prince George's County Department of Public Works and Transportation	Smoothie King
Forestville Estates Civic Association		The Capital Market
Independent Youth & Wellness Consultants		



About the Panel

Panel Chairs



Swapna Parab
Senior Project
Manager
AtkinsRéalis
Alexandria, VA

Swapna Parab, AIA,
NCARB is a licensed
architect and seasoned

Senior Project Manager with over 25 years of experience in building design and construction. She is passionate and committed to enhancing passenger experience through station designs and TOD to create lasting impacts for communities through equitable and sustainable infrastructure.

She specializes in the execution of large-scale transportation infrastructure projects, including rail, transit, and aviation, with a strong focus on design-build delivery. She leads the development, implementation, and delivery of transit facilities and transit-oriented developments and focuses on projects at the intersection of public infrastructure and urban design. She is passionate about driving collaboration between public and private partners to promote design excellence and equitable community development. Swapna completed her Architectural education from University of Mumbai and master's degree from University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign. She works with AtkinsRéalis, a global engineering architectural firm known for impactful infrastructure projects across the world and is currently working on the Purple Line Light rail stations project delivery.

Swapna has led multidisciplinary teams through complex capital project deliveries for major transit agencies, including Washington Metropolitan Area

Transit Authority (WMATA) and Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA) for Dulles Silverline Project phase 1 and 2, Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) for the Purple Line Light rail project, Ottawa-Carleton Regional Transit Commission (OC Transpo), Ontario, Canada for Trillium line extension. Her leadership has been instrumental in delivering high-profile infrastructure projects that enhance passenger experience, improve accessibility, and meet rigorous technical and regulatory standards. A significant portion of Swapna's career has been dedicated to design-build projects across North America. She has successfully guided teams through procurement, design quality management, change management, and design optimization. Her ability to align design deliverables with contract requirements and client expectations has consistently resulted in efficient and effective project outcomes.

Swapna's portfolio includes major capital initiatives and system enhancements focused on facility quality, intermodal connectivity, and accessibility. She has led efforts in building code and ADA compliance, infrastructure upgrades, and stakeholder coordination. Her collaborative approach has facilitated successful partnerships with design-build teams, third-party agencies, owner's consultants, art collaborators, and equipment suppliers. She has also successfully implemented Art in Transit for the above-mentioned projects.

In addition to her professional work, Swapna actively contributes to the local arts community. She serves as President of the Fairfax Art League, where she collaborates with the City of Fairfax to organize and implement public art events that enrich community engagement and cultural expression.



Malik Salifu
Construction
Manager/Owner's Rep
Bawku Crossroads
LLC
Falls Church, VA

Malik is the founder of
Bawku Crossroads LLC;

a construction and development management firm seeking to represent construction and development owners in providing the project leadership and controls needed to protect the triple bottom line of their projects. As their fiduciary, he is passionate about leveraging his several years of construction management experience, academic background, and networks to ensure construction and development project owners maintain the upper hand over their projects, consultants, and contractors. Outside of his passion for development and construction matters, he is also passionate about fitness, health, and dancing.

Malik holds a Master of Science Degree in Real Estate Development from George Mason University (GMU) where he was the recipient of multiple academic scholarships and achievement awards including "Graduate Student of the Year 2023" and a member of GMU's NAIOP (intercollegiate) Challenge winning team. He also holds a Bachelor of Science in Construction Management Technology from the University of Maryland Eastern Shore with progressive experience as a Project Manager with commercial general construction companies in the Washington DC Metropolitan Area and North Dakota.

Panel Members



Tianyi Berinato
Placemaking
Manager
Tysons Community
Alliance
Fairfax, VA

Yi is the Placemaking
Manager at Tysons

Community Alliance, which focuses on creating vibrant and inclusive public spaces that foster community connection and economic growth in Tysons, VA. Previously, Tianyi served as a Grant Manager at the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, and Planning Manager at Capitol Riverfront BID, supporting community-centered initiatives. With a background in economic development and placemaking, Yi has led projects that activate public spaces, improve mobility, and engage diverse stakeholders. The experience includes managing the 2nd Street Underpass project, park space activation, and developing strategies to connect local business ecosystems. Yi is excited to bring her expertise to the Marlboro Pike Corridor TAP.



Sam Braden IV
Business Development
Manager
Prince George's County
Economic Development
Corporation
Largo, MD

Sam Braden IV is a native of Nashville, Tennessee with nearly a decade of experience in land use, zoning, transportation planning, long range planning, community development, federal/military planning, and economic development. He holds a Master's degree in Public Administration and a Healthcare Administration certificate from Tennessee State University.

Sam is a former high school Physics teacher, who began his urban planning career with Reid Planning, Inc. in 2015. He has worked in both public and private sectors as an urban planner for the Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization, Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission, Michael Baker International, and Anne Arundel County Office of Planning and Zoning.

Most recently, Sam served as the Deputy Director of Economic and Community Development for the City of Laurel (MD). Currently, he is the Business Development Manager of IT, Cyber Security & Data Centers. In addition, he is an adjunct professor at Ivy College and serves on the board of the National Capital Area Chapter of the American Planning Association as Vice President of Diversity and Outreach.

In his free time, Sam enjoys spending time with his seven-year-old son, Sam Braden V, hosting paint and sip events, creating artwork, working out, designing clothes, and writing poetry.



Gena Bradford
President/CEO
BMG3 Enterprises, Inc.
Washington, DC

Gena is a highly accomplished professional with over thirty years of experience

in operational and managerial roles. She has significantly contributed to both public and private sector organizations throughout her career, demonstrating a deep understanding of design and construction, facility management, sustainability, infrastructure, and international development.

With a broad knowledge base and expertise in various areas, Gena has led teams in design, construction, program management, and daily operations of facility services divisions. She has been at the forefront of managing large-scale public facility bond programs and has successfully overseen programs worth over \$800 million in the United States. She has also contributed to the realization of diverse projects, including shopping centers, housing complexes, hospitals, airports, convention centers, hotels, educational facilities, and office buildings.

Ms. Bradford holds a Bachelor of Architecture from Southern University and A&M College, and a Master of Construction Management from Louisiana State University. She is currently completing her Ph.D. (ABD – all but dissertation) with a focus on “Integrating AI in Workforce Development for Smart Cities in Developing Countries” at the College of Engineering at Louisiana State University. Her hands-on involvement in urban revival, tourism, and infrastructure projects in Ghana, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Namibia, and Kenya underscores the importance of international collaboration in addressing global challenges – specifically, UN Sustainable Development Goal #11.



Andrew Graham
Senior Associate,
Technical Director
LEO A DALY
Washington, DC

Andrew believes that the spaces we inhabit profoundly impact our

lives. He believes in bold placemaking that embraces our responsibility of building for the present in a way that maximizes future possibilities.

As a practicing architect for 20 years, Andrew has worked on notable projects such as the historic renovation and repurposing of the GW Corcoran, the stunning adaptive reuse of 20 Mass Ave into a thriving mixed-use destination, and the high-performing School of Public Policy for the University of Maryland. He shines when lending his technical expertise to solve complex problems by working closely with clients, the design team, and construction partners. With a career that has spanned a multitude of project typologies and scales, he skillfully leads complex projects from concept design through substantial completion.

In his free time, he volunteers on the zoning and development committee for his local Advisory Neighborhood Commission and is an avid runner.



Chris Kabatt
Sr. Transportation
Project Manager
Galloway & Company
Bethesda, MD

Chris is a professional engineer with over 25 years of experience in

traffic, parking and transportation planning and engineering. Throughout the years, Chris has worked with private developers, institutions, and public sector clients on various types of projects throughout the D.C. region. He has provided expert testimony and presented in front of numerous boards and commissions as well as citizen groups. Chris is a member of ULI and sits on the Prince George's County Local Product Council. After graduating from Penn State, Chris moved to Washington, ultimately settling in Montgomery County where he lives with his wife, their two daughters and niece, and dog - Rocky.



Katie Wagner
Principal
Gorove Slade
Bethesda, MD

Katie is a Principal at Gorove Slade where she leads the Maryland office. She has significant

transportation planning and engineering experience, including traffic impact studies, traffic simulation, site access and circulation planning, roadway signing and striping plans, traffic signal design, functional parking lot and garage design, Transportation Demand Management (TDM) planning and analysis. She has led projects for educational institutions, mixed-use developments, commercial and retail developments, office developments, government facilities, and a wide variety of other land-uses and clients throughout the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia. She takes great interest in the multimodal component of urban projects that requires brainstorming solutions to benefit all modes of transportation.

She is an active member of Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), Urban Land Institute (ULI), Commercial Real Estate Women Network (CREW), Maryland Building Industry Association (MBIA), and National Association of Industrial and Office Properties (NAIOP MD|DC). Katie completed ULI's Leadership Institute and in 2022 was recognized with the Champion Award by the DC chapter of CREW. In 2024, Katie's leadership earned her Chapter Member of the Year awards from NAIOP MD | DC and the Montgomery County Chapter of MBIA.

Katie has a focus on People and Culture where she seeks to foster a strong culture focused on organization, efficiency, teamwork, and staff development at Gorove Slade. While originally from the Pacific Northwest, Katie fell in love with the DC area seeing the impacts of the projects she has worked on in the community.



Xi Wang
Senior Project
Manager
Gordon
Ellicott City, MD

Xi Wang is a licensed landscape architect and urban planner with over a

decade of experience in land planning, public realm design, and large-scale development. His background includes work on a range of projects across the U.S. and internationally, including mixed-use communities, resort destinations, healthcare campuses, and infrastructure developments.

He currently serves as a senior project manager at Gordon, a multidisciplinary firm based in Northern Virginia, where he leads planning and design efforts in collaboration with architects, engineers, and public agencies. His work focuses on integrating functional design with community needs, environmental performance, and long term feasibility.

Xi has participated in local initiatives such as Howard County's Design Advisory Panel and ULI's Marlboro Pike Corridor TAP, contributing to planning/design recommendations and stakeholder engagement.

He is committed to supporting ULI's mission through practical solutions that support resilient communities.



William Way
Arlington, VA

William is passionate about leveraging legal expertise and community leadership experiences to advance transformative place making strategies.

He is skilled in negotiation, public advocacy, and stakeholder consensus building to ensure policies that foster economic growth and social equity. In addition to education at NYU Schack Real Estate School, his background includes leadership in the community as chair of the Arlington County commission on aging, commissioner on the park and recreation commission, as well as advisor to the WMATA board via its Riders Advisory Council.

His experience in employment and civil rights litigation provides a data-driven approach to assessing market conditions, workforce trends, and economic incentives that attract sustainable investments in urban development. He also led large, diverse teams through complex operational and legal challenges as Commander of the 154th Legal Support Organization, NATO Legal Advisor in Kosovo, Deputy Legal Advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and as Director of Government Relations and Acting Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1, U.S. Army Reserve.

He is a graduate of the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania and the University of California College of Law.