



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PANEL REPORT

Powering Progress on Benning Road

WASHINGTON, DC

SPONSORED BY:
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Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
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 **Urban Land
Institute**
Washington

ABOUT ULI WASHINGTON

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ULI's mission is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. ULI Washington carries out the ULI mission locally by sharing best practices, building consensus, and advancing solutions through educational programs and community outreach initiatives.

ABOUT THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PANEL (TAP) PROGRAM

The objective of ULI Washington's Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) program is to provide expert, multidisciplinary, and objective advice on land use and real estate issues facing public agencies and nonprofit organizations in the Metropolitan Washington Region. Drawing from its extensive membership base, ULI Washington conducts one and one-half day panels offering objective and responsible advice to local decision-makers on a wide variety of land use and real estate issues, ranging from site-specific projects to public policy questions. The TAP program is intentionally flexible to provide a customized approach to specific land use and real estate issues. Learn more at <http://washington.uli.org/TAPs>.

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Executive Summary

The Benning Road Power Plant and Service Center, which is owned by The Potomac Electric Power Company (Pepco), is a 77 acre site within a ¼ mile of the Minnesota Avenue Metro Station in Ward 7 of the District of Columbia. The site's undefined future makes it a strong candidate for redevelopment. Pepco has decommissioned and demolished the buildings on 19 acres of the 77 acre Benning Road Power Plant and Service Center. The 19 decommissioned acres serve as the primary study area for this TAP.

Given the unique locational opportunities and the larger community context of the decommissioned 19 acres of the Benning Road Power Plant and Service Center, the District of Columbia Office of Planning approached ULI Washington and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) to host a TAP that could offer recommendations for ways to either enhance or redevelop the site so that it could better serve the surrounding community, which was designated as an Activity Center by COG in 2013. Activity Centers—defined as urban centers, traditional towns, transit hubs, and areas expecting future growth—are viewed as key places where the Metropolitan Washington Region's growth and development will be concentrated over the next 30 years.

The Panel's recommendations, which were divided into short-, interim-, and long-term strategies, highlight the site's potential as a place that can serve as a community asset. Near term improvements, viewed as "what is needed now," were deemed as enhancements that could be made immediately, with or without significant proposed changes to Pepco's property. The Panel's recommendations for interim uses are intended to engage the community while also make good use of the property. Interim recommendations activate the site in a way that is relatively low in cost, will draw people to the area, and could lay the foundation for partnerships with other agencies, businesses (including Pepco), and civic organizations.

Over the long term, the Panel encouraged the District of Columbia Office of Planning to "think big" about options that are both visionary and practical, given the market in the area. Economic opportunity served as the driving factor for the Panel's three long-term recommendations. These recommendations are rooted in options that are intended to generate jobs for residents of Ward 7.

Overall, the Panel aimed to be pragmatic and creative, as well as thoughtful and visionary in its recommendations. If implemented, any of the recommendations outlined in this report can lead to a win/win proposition for the Benning Service Center site.

Study Area and Surrounding Community

DC WARD MAP



This TAP took place in Ward 7 of the District of Columbia, the District's most eastern-ward.

Map source: District of Columbia Office of Planning (<http://planning.dc.gov/page/wards-district-columbia>)

The Benning Road Power Plant and Service Center, which is owned by The Potomac Electric Power Company (Pepco), is a 77 acre site within a ¼ mile of the Minnesota Avenue Metro Station in Ward 7 of the District of Columbia.

The site's undefined future makes it a strong candidate for redevelopment. Pepco has decommissioned and demolished the buildings on 19 acres of the 77 acre Benning Road Power Plant and Service Center. The 19 decommissioned acres serve as the primary study area for this TAP. All physical structures have been removed from the decommissioned portion of the study area, and Pepco has covered the ground with large and chunky crushed blue stone in the interim.

Pepco maintains offices on the remaining portion of the 77 acre site, and uses the facility as an active power transfer station, as well as for operational functions like fleet vehicle storage. According to Pepco, over 700 people are employed at the Benning Road Power Plant and Service Center. Most of these employees work in shifts over the course of 24 hours, 7 days a week.

The study area is hemmed in by poor pedestrian and vehicular connections along Benning Road, Anacostia Freeway (DC 295), and inaccessible portions of the Anacostia River and Park. The study area also suffers from poor connections to the surrounding community, even though it is immediately adjacent to the Anacostia River and Park. Furthermore, the study area itself is a harsh and unsightly barrier that prevents connection between the river and parkland to the adjacent community—and specifically to the Parkside neighborhood.

Of note, the study area is the subject of a District Court approved Consent Decree in 2011 that required Pepco to complete a Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study ("RI/FS") and Natural Resources Damages Assessment that must address six documented releases of polychlorinated biphenyls ("PCBs") on the property site between 1985 and 2003.



The surrounding community and its relationship to the study area also served as a focus for this TAP. The River Terrace, Mayfair, and Parkside neighborhoods surround the study area, with the Minnesota-Benning commercial area to the east across Kenilworth Avenue (I-295). Generally, this part of the city is underserved by retail and possesses a strong market for mixed-income housing.

The surrounding neighborhood, home to the Minnesota Avenue Metro Station on the Orange Line, also contains 15 bus routes that serve the community and connect riders to destinations throughout the region. Car-sharing services are provided near the metro station as well. The community contains one Capital Bikeshare station. The Anacostia Riverwalk Trail serves as a backbone of the Anacostia Waterfront, and connects residents, visitors, and communities to the river. Two new pedestrian bridges, which will provide important connections with the existing retail and different modal choices, are planned to replace existing crossings over Kenilworth Avenue to the metro station.

The demographics of the area tell an interesting story. Income per capita in the surrounding community is approximately \$34,999, and median household income is \$28,388. By comparison, the District of Columbia's income per capita is \$45,004 and the median family income is \$78,993. The population of the surrounding community in 2013 was 4,186, with households in the area totaling 1,933. The majority of households contain families. Ninety-nine percent of residents are African-American.

All physical structures have been removed from the decommissioned portion of the Benning Service Center, yet Pepco uses the remaining 58 acres as an active transfer station. Crushed blue stone covers the decommissioned portion of the site. *Image Source: District of Columbia Office of Planning*



The 19 acres, highlighted in orange, served as the primary study area and focus of this TAP. *Image Source: District of Columbia Office of Planning and ULI Washington*

According to the briefing materials provided by the District of Columbia Office of Planning, the major employers in the study area, based on 2013 data, include the DC Public Schools, DC Charter Schools, Pepco, Unity Health Care, and the DC Department of Employment Services. The U.S. Census data for years 2008 through 2012 indicate a 23% unemployment rate for residents over the age of 16 in the surrounding community. There are also several subsidized housing developments adjacent to the study area.

Land uses around the study area tend to skew heavily towards office space, industrial, and residential uses. Office space is particularly notable, and is mostly located in or proximate to the neighborhood of Downtown Ward 7, and within the East River Shopping Center on the second floor. In addition to the Benning Road Power Plant and Service Center, there are several pockets of industrial uses throughout Ward 7. A number of residential developments have delivered recently, and additional multi-family is underway to be constructed in the very near future.

Given the unique locational opportunities and the larger community context of the decommissioned 19 acres of the Benning Road Power Plant and Service Center, the District of Columbia Office of Planning approached ULI Washington and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) to host a TAP that could offer recommendations for ways to either enhance or redevelop the site so that it could better serve the surrounding community, which was designated as an Activity Center by COG in 2013. Activity Centers—defined as urban centers, traditional towns, transit hubs, and areas expecting future growth—are viewed as key places where the Metropolitan Washington Region’s growth and development will be concentrated over the next 30 years.

The Panel was asked to address the following questions:

1. Buildings on approximately 19 acres of the 77-acre site have been demolished and could potentially be part of a larger redevelopment scenario. What are the highest and best uses for the decommissioned portion of the site that would provide the greatest benefit to this Activity Center and the existing neighborhoods?
2. In order to further catalyze private investment and to support the development goals highlighted in the Benning Road Corridor Redevelopment Framework, is there an opportunity to incorporate modern, light, industrial uses that are job generators and compatible with adjacencies? Are there specific industrial uses and ‘creative maker’ uses that can thrive here, especially from a city-wide perspective?
3. While only a half-mile from the Minnesota Avenue Metro Station, there are currently no viable or safe access points to and from this Activity Center. What and where should multi-modal connections be prioritized to promote transit-oriented development and to further enhance ongoing adjacent
4. What creative place-making, urban design approaches and multi-modal connections would enhance the sense of place around the Pepco site and better leverage its proximity to the Anacostia River?
5. What partnerships would best position the District to maximize this Activity Center’s redevelopment potential in the following areas and why: 1) Current innovations in the power industry; 2) Citywide sustainability initiatives; 3) Required environmental mitigation on site; and, 4) HUD’s Promise Neighborhood Initiative.

An Area of Opportunity

Given the assets of the study area and surrounding community, the Panel identified several opportunities that served as the foundation for which they formulated recommendations. The main focus of the Panel's recommendations center around potential re-use of the vacant 19 acres within the Benning Road Power Plant and Service Center, and how such re-use would impact the surrounding community. As part of the considerations of re-use, the Panel considered shifting energy technologies, and how these trends might dovetail with differing land uses within the study area. The increasing prevalence of new and renewable energies provides innovative and creative opportunities for consideration, according to the Panel.

The Panel also focused on extending the street network as a way to create better connectivity within the larger community. Additionally, the Panel focused on strengthening the connection between the neighborhoods, the surrounding park resources, and Downtown Ward 7, which the Panel recognized contains opportunities for further revitalization.

Finally, the Panel focused recommendations on ways to better integrate the overall Benning Road Power Plant and Service Center with its surroundings. Panelists felt very strongly that the Pepco property needs to better relate to the community, and provided a host of buffering recommendations.

Recommendations

LEVERAGE THE EXISTING STRONG COMMUNITY

During the TAP, the Panel enjoyed the opportunity to tour the Pepco study area as well as the surrounding neighborhood. There are many community assets that the neighborhood enjoys. The community is adjacent to the Anacostia River, and is surrounded by significant parkland—much of which is owned by the National Park Service. The neighborhood is also well-served by public transit, including rail and bus, and enjoys a Capital Bikeshare station—all of which provide connectivity and a variety of transportation options to residents.

The Anacostia River pictured below is the western boundary of the study area. Much of the surrounding neighborhood enjoys significant parkland as well. *Image Source: District of Columbia Office of Planning*



The study area and surrounding community suffers from connectivity challenges. In particular, the study area lacks connection from the Parkside neighborhood to the Anacostia River and Park. *Map Source: District Office of Planning*



Furthermore, there are a variety of existing and new mixed-income residences, as well as new office space and public facilities, all of which contribute to a vibrant and diverse community fabric.

The Panel was particularly impressed with the high level of neighborhood engagement. Many community stakeholders were present during the TAP, and offered the Panel a range of feedback on ways to improve their community. The most critical stakeholder priority was the desire for strong and sustaining employment opportunities for community members in Ward 7. Residents made it clear that job training alone is not enough to serve the neighborhood, and emphasized that training opportunities must lead to stable, reliable, and local employment in order to be viable. Residents were also very concerned about connectivity, and voiced a desire for improved and enhanced vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle connections both within the neighborhood, and between the neighborhood and other areas of the Region.

A notable concern voiced by both community members and by the District of Columbia Office of Planning staff was limited access to the Parkside neighborhood. Currently, there is only one point of entry into this neighborhood. The Panel agreed that this neighborhood is in dire need of a secondary point of entry, which would not only improve the quality of life for residents, but also ensure adequate access for emergency vehicles.



Connectivity Issues plague the surrounding community.

TOP

The Anacostia Avenue access road looking east to Foote Street, NE, is blocked off.

BOTTOM

The Anacostia Avenue access road looking west from Foote Street, NE shows that pedestrians and bicycles are prohibited, and vehicles are limitedly permitted.

*Image Sources:
District of Columbia*



Community members also voiced a strong desire for more and better retail opportunities that serve the neighborhood—particularly for access to fresh food options. Finally, there was a desire expressed for the establishment of a cultural facility that could also serve as a neighborhood gathering spot. Residents referenced THEARC, which is a building that houses several partner organizations, all of whom collaborate to create high quality educational,

The blue dotted line indicates a proposed 800 foot extension of Anacostia Avenue, NE that would connect to Foote Street, NE, and thus provide an important second access point for the Parkside neighborhood. Map source: ULI Washington



health, cultural, recreation, and social service programs to neighborhood residents in Ward 8.¹ Community members noted the absence of a similar facility in the immediate neighborhood, and expressed hope that a similar cultural institution could eventually serve the residents of Ward 7.

NEAR TERM PRIORITIES

Panelists formulated recommendations in three tiers. Near term improvements, viewed as “what is needed now” were deemed as Tier 1 enhancements that could be made immediately, with or without significant proposed changes to Pepco’s property.

Most immediately, the Panel proposed strengthening access to the Parkside neighborhood by continuing Anacostia Avenue, NE from Benning Road, NE, on West side of study area, to Foote Street, NE.

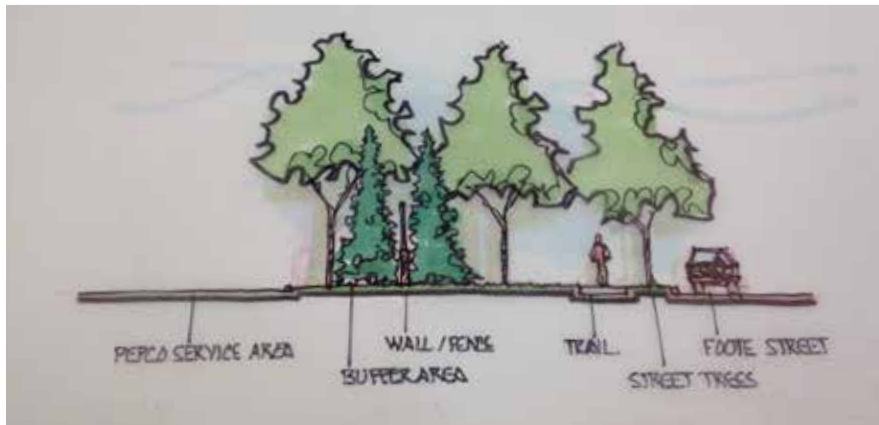
This added connection would require collaboration with the National Park Service, and would only require an 800 foot extension to connect the two streets through National Park Service property. Such an extension is necessary to provide emergency vehicle access to the neighborhood, according to

¹ <http://www.thearcadc.org/partners-programs/building-bridges-across-river-bba>



TOP

This sketch rendering shows enhanced streetscape possibilities along Benning Road. Screening the area with such elements as a green wall, street trees, safety hedges, or art walls can make the area less unsightly while also improving the pedestrian experience. *Image source: ULI Washington*



BOTTOM

Perimeter buffering around the Benning Road Power Plant and Service Center could include natural elements such as evergreen and deciduous street trees that provide shade. *Image source: ULI Washington*

Panelists. The street extension should be have a width of at least 40–50 feet in order to adequately accommodate trucks, vehicles, and cyclists, and should include sidewalks to accommodate pedestrians as well.

The Panel also proposed a variety of techniques aimed at enhancing the public realm and at protecting residents from the harsh views of Pepco's property. Buffering the perimeter of the 77 acre Pepco parcel can be accomplished through a variety of measures, including enhanced screening and street-scaping along Benning Road, NE, adding landscape screening on and off the Pepco property on Foote Street, NE and on Anacostia Avenue, NE, and through techniques that could include biofilter and stormwater management—which could also offer opportunities to take advantage of the location's adjacency to the Anacostia River.



TOP LEFT

The Lego Bridge—or Lego Brücke—in Germany features painted colorful legos on the undercarriage of a concrete overpass. A similar design installation could soften the public realm of the surrounding neighborhood of this study area.

Image source: <http://jamisonwieser.com/post/58284018682/lego-bridge>

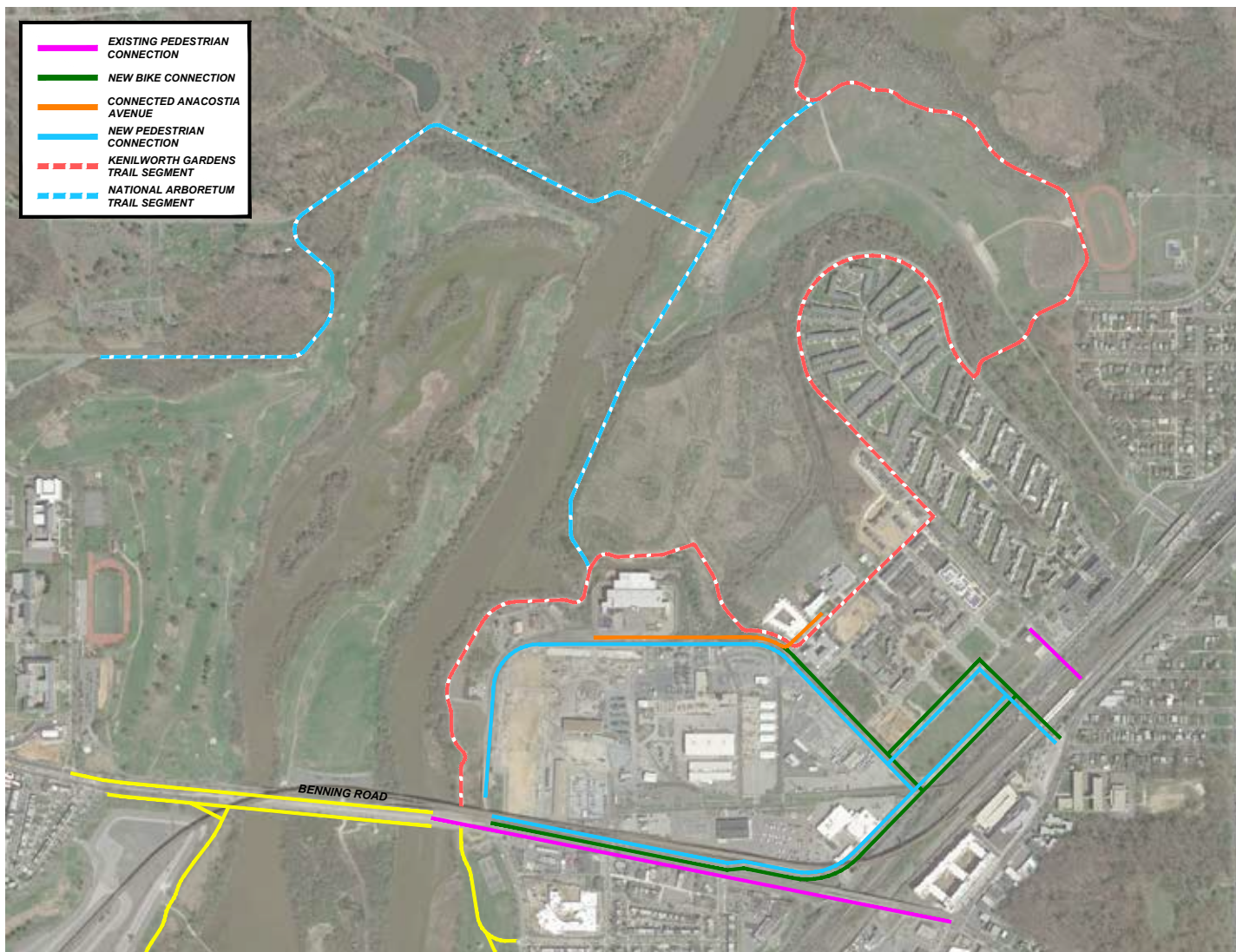
TOP RIGHT

The study area lacks appropriate perimeter buffering and contains a lot of “hard stuff” like concrete overpasses.

Image source: District Office of Planning



Panelists also offered recommendations that would soften the public realm of the overall neighborhood. Noting that the community is characterized by a lot of “hard stuff,” such as large infrastructure, bridges, and concrete walls, the Panel offered several creative options for making the environment more artful and fun. These recommendations include light installations under bridge overpasses, as well as the use of bright color on some of the harder infrastructure elements—such as concrete walls.



The Panel further emphasized the importance of completing a network of streets and trails to improve connections within the neighborhood and to other areas. The Panel was happy to learn that the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail is under construction and is scheduled for completion by October 2016. Panelists also proposed several enhancements that would increase access between the community and surrounding parkland and the Anacostia River. These enhancements include pedestrian and trail improvements along Benning Road, improving connections to Metrorail, and enhancing bicycle trails.

The proposed bicycle and pedestrian connections in green and blue, respectively, work in concert to create a more complete trail system that knits the community together.

*Map Source:
ULI Washington*



This map summarizes several proposed near term changes, including extending Anacostia Avenue, NE to connect to the Parkside neighborhood; buffering along Foote Street, NE; enhancing streetscape along Benning Road, NE; and improving the street connection between the study area, surrounding community and east to “downtown” Ward 7. All of these changes can be inexpensively implemented over the near term and will result in making significant positive changes to the community. *Map Source: ULI Washington*



Delivering fresh produce and other products to the neighborhoods in Ward 7 through a mobile market is one interim suggestion for activating the study area. *Photo credit: <http://arcadiafood.org/programs/mobile-market>*

INTERIM USES: ACTIVATING THE SITE

The Panel proposed several concepts for interim uses for the study area that would both engage the community and make good use of the property. These recommendations activate the site in a way that is relatively low in cost, will draw people to the area, and could lay the foundation for partnerships with other agencies, businesses (including Pepco), and civic organizations.

One idea proposed by the Panel is to provide better access to fresh foods through a mobile market. A mobile market differs from the established food truck industry because it provides an opportunity to bring fresh produce to the areas, which are otherwise difficult to access on a regular basis. A mobile market concept would also enable the District to partner with such agencies as Washington Parks and People or the University of the District of Columbia, among others, to deliver healthy food programs to Ward 7 residents on a regular basis.

Another recommendation is to partner with local businesses on bringing culinary events to the site. Curating brewery gatherings and festivals through collaborating with the District of Columbia's burgeoning craft beer and spirits industry presents a robust programming opportunity. A related recommendation is to hold a BBQ battle, which could feature cooking competitions among local top chefs.



Because the study area may be subject to soil contaminants, the Panel recommended hydroponic farming as an interim use for the site. This A-frame hydroponic planting system maximizes above-ground space for growing vegetation without the need for soil. *Photo credit: Off Grid World: <https://www.offgridworld.com/a-frame-vertical-hydroponic-garden-grows-168-plants/>*

Other recommendations focused on recreational and athletic uses to activate the site. Urban adventure activities like Tough Mudder, paintball, or an outdoor roller rink can be fun programmatic opportunities that bring a focus on wellness to the area. Because executing these uses require ample space, the Panel thought the acreage of the study area could lend itself well to these recommendations.

The Panel further proposed ideas that focus on industrial arts, such as welding or other crafts that require maker-type spaces. Like the recreational athletic uses, these industrial craft uses often necessitate more physical space than would otherwise be available in denser urban settings, and could therefore be good options to consider for the study area.

The Panel also proposed addressing the land that is immediately to the west of the site that serves as the access point to the Anacostia River. Through collaborating with the National Park Service, and through leveraging the near-complete Anacostia Riverwalk trail, the Panel identified an opportunity to activate this existing neighborhood asset in a meaningful way.

The Panel also viewed an opportunity to use the site—with its proximity to the Anacostia River and its ample sunshine—as a location to grow vegetation. Understanding that there may be contaminants below ground, the Panel proposed hydroponic farming as an interim use. This “no soil” solution would allow the site to be used for growing vegetation in containers above ground. Liquid solution containing plant nutrients would be applied directly to the root of the produce, which could be used to supply area restaurants with vegetables and herbs. The Panel also proposed using the site as a hydroponic/container nursery which could be dedicated to meet the urban forestry needs of the District of Columbia—such as trees or other landscaping elements. Other uses such as rain gardens or compost production could be considered as well.

Finally, the site presents a great opportunity to be used as a visible demonstration of high quality green stormwater infrastructure and waterfront stewardship. The District of Columbia recently created a Stormwater Retention Credit (SRC) trading program that allows property owners to certify green stormwater projects in order to obtain credits that can be sold to regulated entities. The study area’s location makes it a great candidate to participate in this SRC trading program.²

² *The RainPay program, which is sponsored by the Anacostia Waterfront Trust, provides solutions to managing stormwater in the District of Columbia, helping to restore the Anacostia River by installing the highest quality green infrastructure in the areas of the District where it has the most impact. The objective of RainPay is to accelerate the pace of cleaning up the Anacostia River by leveraging the District of Columbia’s Stormwater Retention*

LONG TERM PRIORITIES AND BIG IDEAS

Over the long term, the Panel encouraged the District Office of Planning to “think big” about options that are visionary but practical, given the market for the area. Generating economic opportunity served as the driving factor for the Panel’s long-term recommendations. First and foremost, all long-term recommendations are rooted in options that are intended to generate jobs for residents of Ward 7. Within these long-term recommendations, the panel also identified opportunities to achieve sustainability and resiliency goals.

The Panel acknowledged that any long-term use of the site would require Pepco’s cooperation as a partner with the District Office of Planning. Cooperation could occur in several ways, such as through a short-term lease, or through a long-term land swap. The Panel acknowledged that the proposition of a land swap could be costly for the District, and might require environmental remediation. Nevertheless, the Panel concluded that such a proposition is not insurmountable, and affirmed that a land swap could be a strategic move for Pepco. A land swap could entice Pepco to expand its footprint with alternative sites, and to strengthen its business continuity—particularly in cases of severe weather where Pepco will need more space in more locations to assemble fleet and staff. The Panel also identified potential for Pepco to achieve more efficiencies through a land swap. Currently, there are multiple operations in existence at the Benning Road Power Plant and Service Center, and the Panel contended that a business process reengineering could be a valuable option for Pepco.

The Panel provided three recommendations that range in their intensity of use for the study area. The recommendations, which are outlined below, were developed amidst an evaluation of the existing construction and the planned development for the surrounding neighborhoods—including the growing retail presence in Ward 7—and a general market analysis for the area. These recommendations provide several options to use the space in a meaningful and unique way, given the greater neighborhood context.

OPTION 1: INDUSTRIAL BUSINESS INCUBATOR

Incubator and maker spaces are concepts that are gaining traction both regionally and nationally. The Panel recommended that establishing an Industrial Business Incubator, or a maker space that is solely devoted to light industrial manufacturing activities, would be a great option for the

Credit (SRC) trading program to increase stormwater management in the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) portion of the District’s Anacostia watershed, where they have a direct impact on water quality. Learn more by visiting <http://www.rainpay.org/>.

CASE STUDY: PIER 70, SAN FRANCISCO

The redevelopment of San Francisco's Pier 70 provides one example of plans for a future light industrial maker space, which will be incorporated into a larger 28-acre mixed-use redevelopment project. Today, the site is a mix of vacant land, deteriorating buildings, and other structures that restrict public access to the adjacent waterfront. Although the scale of the Pier 70 project differs from the amount of available at the Benning Service Center, the Pier 70 development will incorporate a connection to a waterfront park and to open space, thereby providing some examples for this study area to consider on a smaller scale—such as incorporating some of the proposed interim uses into plans for a longer-term industrial maker space. For more information, visit <http://www.pier70sf.com/>

decommissioned 19 acres of the Benning Road Power Plant and Service Center. Based on the Panel's research, the space needs for such a use range from 2,000 square feet to 4,000 square feet, depending on the number of users and the type of facility, and could therefore be accommodated on the existing decommissioned 19 acre parcel.

According to the Panel, an Industrial Business Incubator would serve as a mid- to high-job generator for Ward 7 residents by connecting skills training to jobs on the ground. Furthermore, because industrial land is limited in supply, providing a dedicated place for light industrial manufacturing meets a specific niche. In fact, the Panel noted that area stakeholders expressed an active demand for this kind of niche space during their conversations with TAP panelists, which validated that this recommended long-term use would meet a unique community need.

Panelists also suggested that there is some flexibility in how much capital would be required to establish an Industrial Business Incubator, and stressed that this capital can be obtained in a variety of ways. Most likely, moderate to high capital requirements would be needed, and several private, philanthropic, and corporate funding options exist that could provide resources to facilitate in developing a Industrial Business Incubator. Panelists encouraged the District Office of Planning to look into such resources as the Chamber of Commerce, the District Association of Business Improvement Districts, and the Kauffman Foundation, which is a grant-making organization that focuses on education and entrepreneurship.³ Public Private Partnerships can also be leveraged to establish such a use.

³ *The Kauffman Foundation offers a program called FastTrac, which may present complementary funding and programmatic opportunities for creating an Industrial Business Incubator. See more at <http://fasttrac.org/>.*

OPTION 2: ECO INDUSTRIAL PARK

Creating an Eco Industrial Park—or a center for solid waste operations—served as the Panel's second long-term recommendation. According to the Panel's research, the District of Columbia processes 900,000 tons of waste annually through the existing waste treatment system. The Panel proposed several creative uses for the Benning Road Power Plant and Service Center site that could provide opportunities to reduce the overall amount waste.

A full Eco Industrial Park can require between 19 and 50 acres, and can house one or more distinct uses related to the treatment of waste. Given the space constraints of the study area, the Panel provided three separate examples of solid waste operational functions, and encouraged the Office of Planning to confer with the District Department of the Environment to consider the potential for either one use, or a combination of uses, for the study area. Some of these recommendations can be coupled with other suggestions from the Panel, thereby furthering the impact that this study area can have on the District of Columbia's environmental infrastructure:

- » An Anaerobic Digester would take both yard and food waste and convert it to biofuel, which can be used to power solid waste operations. Such a use requires only about 2–5 acres.
- » A Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) extracts construction and other fixtures or equipment from the waste stream to be used for recycling. This use would require approximately 5–10 acres, and outputs from a MRF could be used to supply light manufacturing functions—such as those described in the recommendation for an Industrial Business Incubator. In fact, combining the notion of an Industrial Business Incubator with an Eco Industrial Park is something

CASE STUDY: COMMUNITY FORKLIFT—TURNING THE WASTE STREAM INTO A RESOURCE STREAM

Community Forklift, a nonprofit reuse center for home improvement supplies, facilitates the recycling of construction waste by finding new lives for old materials, thereby reducing the overall amount of building materials in the nation's solid waste stream. According to the Panel, a unique operation such as this could be well suited for the Benning Road Power Plant and Service Center. For more information, visit: <http://communityforklift.org/>

the Panel thought might be feasible for this study area—provided a land swap arrangement could be orchestrated whereby Pepco would consolidate its operations onto the eastern portion of its site, rendering a larger footprint available on the western portion of the site that could be dedicated to solid waste functions and light manufacturing.

- » A Yard Waste Composting Facility can combine waste with other elements to create fertilizer, which, in turn, could be used to support urban agriculture endeavors throughout the District—such as hydroponic farming described earlier. Like the MRF, this use would require approximately 5–10 acres as well.

The Panel pointed to several examples of successful waste treatment plants—such as in Edmonton, Canada, and in Alexandria, Virginia—as examples for further consideration.⁴

In making this recommendation, the Panel acknowledged the controversial realities involved in creating a new waste-related facility near a residential area that already has at least one other waste-related facility nearby. However, the Panel pointed to several benefits that outweigh any unsavory attributes. An Eco Industrial Park dedicated to solid waste functions could create 100–200 jobs, according to the Panel’s research. While the Panel acknowledged that jobs relating to waste treatment may not be as appealing as other job options, the Panel advocated that the job generation would be a higher yield over the short term when compared with jobs generated through other recommendations in this report. The Panel also pointed to the connection between reducing waste and the overall sustainability objectives outlined by the District of Columbia government. Anaerobic digestion, for instance, can support the District of Columbia’s emerging urban agriculture infrastructure, which can result in enhancing the locally grown food supply. There is also potential for making innovation in power generation and distribution.

⁴ *The Edmonton Waste Management Centre (http://www.edmonton.ca/programs_services/garbage_waste/edmonton-waste-management-centre.aspx) is a unique collection of advanced waste processing that produces outputs, some which go to market. In Alexandria, the Alex Renew Enterprises (<https://alexrenew.com>) is an advanced water resource recovery facility that uses reclaimed water, which is cleaned in-house to run its equipment, as well as provide wet biosolids to enrich farmland throughout Virginia.*

OPTION 3: ENERGY INNOVATION DISTRICT

The final long-term recommendation, which would require not only a land swap, but also the formation of partnerships with Pepco and other agencies, is to create an Energy Innovation District. This cutting edge suggestion is characterized by establishing a research and development microlab on the Benning Road Power Plant and Service Center that would be dedicated to testing new energy technologies. These new technologies would, in turn, be used to power some of the District of Columbia's public services, thereby enhancing the sustainable use for the site.

In particular, given the site's proximity to the Metrorail tracks that service the Benning Road Metrorail station, the Panel suggested that an Energy Innovation District could be used to generate power for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). WMATA's needs to reduce operating costs, combined with Pepco's aggressive plans for achieving energy efficiency and developing solar technology and microgrid activity, highlighted an opportunity for collaboration. A partnership between WMATA, Pepco, and the District of Columbia to create an Energy Innovation District could lead to innovative energy generation, as well as new and efficient ways to transmit and distribute energy for public services, according to the Panel.

Conclusion

The Panel was very grateful for the opportunity to take a deep dive to formulate creative recommendations for the 17-acre decommissioned portion of the Benning Road Power Plant and Service Center. By and large, the Panel believed that the study area holds huge potential to achieve multiple objectives at the same time.

The Panel's recommendations, which were divided into short, interim, and long-term strategies, highlight the site's potential as a place that can serve as a community asset. In the near term, improving the connectivity in and around the site to the surrounding neighborhoods as well as beautifying the area through buffering and creative art installations will enhance the overall sense of community for Ward 7. In the interim, activating the site through a combination of programming that will draw people to the area while also maximizing the site's proximity to the Anacostia River can have both wellness and environmental benefits. Over the long term, using the site to solve challenges relating to industrial use, waste reduction, and energy renewability will result in generating area jobs and improving operations of both the private sector and the public services in the District of Columbia.

The Panel aimed to be pragmatic and creative, as well as thoughtful and visionary in developing its recommendations. If implemented, any of the recommendations outlined in this report can lead to a win/win proposition for everyone with a role in developing a portion of the Benning Road Power Plant and Service Center site.

PANELISTS

Elizabeth Baker, CHAIR

Planner, Walsh, Colucci, Lubeley, & Walsh, PC
Arlington, VA

Elizabeth has been a planner with WCL&W since 1990. Prior to joining the firm, she was the Vice President of Planning for the Milton Company, a home-builder in Northern Virginia. Her public sector experience has included working as a Land Use Planner for Fairfax County and as Economic Development Coordinator for the City of Falls Church. Ms. Baker specializes in Fairfax County, City of Fairfax, and Town of Herndon matters, helping clients achieve comprehensive plan amendments and zoning approvals and assisting them in the resolution of land development/site plan issues. She has worked on numerous residential, commercial and large scale, mixed-use projects as well as redevelopment transit-oriented projects. Most recently, Ms. Baker has focused on transit-oriented developments for the extension of Metro's Silver Line through Tysons Corner to Dulles Airport.

Daniel Anderton

Senior Planner, Dewberry
Gaithersburg, MD

Dan Anderton has served in the region for more than 30 years and has been directly involved in the creation of communities with services in all aspects of Land Use Planning and Physical Planning including: comprehensive and master planning, urban and mixed-use planning, site planning, redevelopment planning, affordable housing, re-zoning, subdivision planning, Small Town Revitalization & Landscape Architecture. He has proven project management experience in the applicability of planning, zoning, subdivision and Landscape Architecture. He also has extensive experience with local and state government development review processes and effective working relationships with local and state agencies, boards, commissions and public officials in multiple jurisdictions.

Mr. Anderton has a goal to create communities that are comfortable, sustainable and inclusive to a wide demographic of residents and business owners while also being marketable for either public or private developers. He takes care to ensure that a conceptual design's integrity and density is maintained through the planning process. By carefully planning FAR and densities, providing for a mix of diverse building and product types and phasing, and by incorporating traditional and neo-traditional styles, community developments are poised to capture the needs of the market and a wide cross section of prospective renters, buyers, and shop owners.

Mr. Anderton has been involved with, and completed, hundreds of projects involving direct interaction with citizens, developers, planning boards, County Councils, Mayors, public utilities, State Highway officials, and other involved parties. The juggling of everyone's interests throughout the completion of a plan or project is extremely important. The desire being to make it through the design and planning process with the majority of stakeholders feeling as though they have succeeded in having their personal vision incorporated into the community.

Mr. Anderton graduated with a Bachelors of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning from Utah State University in 1983 and with a Masters of Landscape Architecture from the University of Illinois in 1985.

Mr. Anderton is currently employed by Dewberry, a national planning, engineering, and architectural firm, and is responsible for Community Planning & Urban Design within the company. He has worked for architects, engineers, landscape architects, and horticulturalists throughout his career giving him a unique and holistic perspective of community planning and urban design.

Timothy Canan, AICP

Associate Vice President, The Louis Berger Group, Inc.
Washington, DC

Tim is a native of Arlington, Virginia, and has cultivated a strong track record of accomplished planning and compliance in the Washington region. His work focuses on planning and environmental regulatory compliance for government agencies and his technical areas of expertise include land use, transportation and environmental planning, compliance studies and demographic and real estate industry analysis. He has worked on planning and compliance projects in more than 20 states and the District of Columbia.

Locally, Mr. Canan manages two large projects for the General Services Administration, including a master plan and environmental impact statement for the Department of State in the District of Columbia. He also leads the development of multiple high-profile National Park Service (NPS) environmental assessments within the District of Columbia. These projects include planning and compliance activities for the replacement and rehabilitation of turf panels on the National Mall, a new permanent visitor screening facility for the

Washington Monument, the Franklin Park Vision and Transformation Plan, and permanent security improvements at President's Park South. He was also part of the Louis Berger project team that supported DCOP in the last update of its comprehensive plan.

In addition to his private sector experience, Mr. Canan worked for regional and local planning agencies in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. These assignments included serving as a principal planner with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' (MWCOC) Department of Transportation Planning; senior planner with the Loudoun County Department of Planning; and a planner with the Arlington County Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development.

Mr. Canan is a member of ULI and has served on an Advisory Service Panel in New Orleans for Mayor Ray Nagin's Bring New Orleans Back Commission in 2005. The advisory panel prepared a series of rebuilding strategies to set the framework for a new city master plan in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in Public Administration from James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia, and his Master in Urban and Regional Planning degree from Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia.

Christopher Kabatt

Principal Associate, Wells + Associates, Inc.
Silver Spring, MD

Mr. Kabatt is a principal associate at Wells + Associates and registered professional engineer with over 18 years of experience in traffic, parking and transportation planning and engineering. He has worked for private developers, institutions and public sector clients. Mr. Kabatt's specialties include traffic impact studies, parking analysis and design, site access and circulation studies, speed studies, transportation demand management plans, and design plans such as traffic signals, signing and pavement marking plans, and maintenance of traffic plans. He has provided expert testimony and presented in front of various boards and commissions as well as citizen groups. Mr. Kabatt received his BS in civil engineering from Penn State University and is a member of ITE, NAIOP, and ULI.

Molly McKay

Principal Consultant, Willdan Financial and Economic Consulting Services
Washington, DC

Molly McKay, Principal of Willdan's Washington, DC-based Financial and Economic Consulting Services practice, provides strategic real estate and economic development advisory services to public and private clients to support a variety of land use, infrastructure finance and public policy initiatives.

In the past 15 years, Ms. McKay has completed more than 100 fiscal, economic and financial feasibility analyses in 21 states and abroad in 15 countries in the Middle East, Africa, and the Caribbean, triggering more than \$5 billion in economic development investment. Her professional skills are anchored by an educational foundation in applied economic analysis, commercial financing structures, urban planning, sustainable environmental management and cutting-edge economic policy tools.

Since launching Willdan's Washington, DC practice, she has consulted on economic planning and public-private financing engagements to support transit-oriented development, adaptive reuse and redevelopment, tax increment financing,, and economic development strategic plans for cities, counties, transportation authorities, energy efficiency organizations, and private developers throughout the US.

Before joining Willdan, Ms. McKay was a senior associate of the Economic Policy and Planning Practice of AECOM Economics (formerly Economics Research Associates) from 2003 to 2012; a manager in the Real Estate Consulting and State and Local Tax Practices of Ernst & Young (1997 to 2002), and program coordinator, ULI—the Urban Land Institute's International and Advisory Services (1995 to 1997) and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) in Washington, DC (1992 to 1995). Ms. McKay is a full member of the Urban Land Institute Redevelopment & Reuse Council, the International Economic Development Council (IEDC), the American Planning Association (APA) and Lambda Alpha International.

Ms. McKay holds an MA in International Economics from the University of Exeter, Devon, UK as the Fulbright/Direct Exchange Scholar (1990–1993) and a BA from the University of Kansas (1990). Ms. McKay conducted post-graduate studies at the Johns Hopkins John Carey Business School in Real Estate Development and Finance (1995–1997) and also studied abroad the University of Law, Economics and Political Science at Aix-Marseille, France (1988–1989).

Areas of Expertise include Market Analysis, Financial Feasibility Analysis, Fiscal Analysis, Development, Strategy, Management and Development Agreements, Strategic Planning, Organizational Development, Infrastructure and Energy Efficiency Financing.

Sophie Mintier, AICP

Planner, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
Washington, DC

Sophie Mintier, AICP is a Regional Planner at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. She is responsible for project management, planning, analysis, and technical assistance to support implementation of Region Forward, the region's first comprehensive vision plan. Her current projects include coordinating an initiative through Aspen Institute's Communities That Work Partnership to advance workforce development in the stormwater infrastructure sector, and an economic competitiveness analysis of the Washington Region. Ms. Mintier was project manager for the COG report Place + Opportunity: Strategies for Creating Great Communities and a Stronger Region, and the Regional Activity Centers Map 2013 update. Before joining COG, Ms. Mintier was a consultant specializing in land use, housing, zoning, and environmental review projects for cities and counties throughout California. She has a Master's Degree in Regional Planning from Cornell University, and a B.A. in Political Science from the University of California, Los Angeles. She was a member of the 2013–2014 class of the ULI Land Use Leadership Institute.

Jamie Weinbaum

Chief Operating Officer, Ditto Residential
Washington, DC

Mr. Weinbaum is the Chief Operating Officer at Ditto Residential, an urban-in-fill developer focused on high-design, innovative projects in the Washington region. He leads development and construction efforts, as well as focusing on long-term strategic planning for the company. Prior to joining Ditto, Mr. Weinbaum worked as a Development Manager at The JBG Companies, where he focused on mixed-use, transit-oriented residential/retail projects. Mr. Weinbaum also served as the Director of the District of Columbia Office of Zoning from 2009 until 2011, and in the D.C. Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development, where he focused on large-scale infrastructure, parks and transportation projects. He also served as a liaison to several Business Improvement Districts and supported the District's business attraction and retention initiatives. Before his employment with the

District of Columbia government, Mr. Weinbaum spent time in the private sector as a developer and investor, as well as in private practice as a contracts and construction attorney. Mr. Weinbaum received an undergraduate degree from Wake Forest University and a law degree from the George Washington University School of Law.



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