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2019 Fall Meeting Reflection: Urban Land Institute/Randall Lewis Health Mentorship Program

I would like to begin by thanking Randall Lewis, Sara Hammerschmidt, everyone at Urban Land Institute, my mentor Lynn Jerath and the members of the UDMUC Purple Product Council for allowing me to participate in this mentorship program and in the Council meeting.

This year, I was fortunate to attend the inaugural ULI Resilience Summit. My biggest takeaway from the summit is that we as a profession (planners, real estate professionals, and others involved in built environment) are uncertain of the best practices to employ in every stage of real estate—from insuring, investing, to construction—to fully account for climate instability, but that we are all making strides. I left the summit thinking about methods to evaluate climate risk in the real estate investment stage, methods to predict climate refugee migration patterns, and about whether building codes with climate resilient design specifics would actually solve the problem. I hope to address these questions throughout the remainder of my graduate education and in my career.

I attended the Urban Development Mixed Use Purple Council meeting as my mentor's guest. I learned from others within ULI that guest spots within Product Councils are highly coveted, so I was very excited to take advantage of the opportunity. As a student, I was nervous about how I would contribute to discussions and conversations with the very successful and accomplished members of the Council. I settled my nerves by using the opportunity to listen and learn, asking members about their careers, work experiences, challenges, and advice. However, everyone was interested in my new and fresh ideas about issues such as climate resilience, housing affordability, and place-making. After the Council meeting, I truly felt that I was the UDMUC mentee not just Lynn's mentee.

I enjoyed the Council meeting because it was a unique 'meeting' experience. The Council meeting was split between two half-days: the first consisted of tours to three developments within Washington, D.C., and the second was a more traditional meeting with guest speakers and panel discussions. We toured mixed-use developments within three different neighborhoods with the developers of the projects to learn about their challenges, the approach to creating a unique experience, and details about the financing strategy. The insight into the development process was very useful for me as a planning student. I rarely learn about the building level challenges because I am traditionally analyzing issues at a city-wide or neighborhood level.

At the time that I attended the 2019 Fall Meeting I was in the early stages of a research paper on opportunity zones for my real estate development course. I had not yet decided on the issue that I wanted to address within the paper. There were two sessions being held at the Fall Meeting about opportunity zones that I attended. I gained valuable insight into the federal tax program and learned about existing challenges. The sessions helped me refine my research question and connect with professionals working on projects within opportunity zones.

It is an honor to be selected as one of five mentees within the 2019-2020 ULI Randall Lewis Health Mentorship Program. I have learned so much from regular conversations with my mentor about career development, real estate investing, and planning. At the Fall Meeting I was able to connect with other professionals, learn about various development projects, and emerging problems in the profession at an international and local level. I look forward to more conversations with my mentor and members of the Council, and attending the ULI Spring Meeting in Toronto, ON.