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

As part of the ULI/Randall Lewis Health Mentorship Program I want to learn more about the development sector and explore land development and health equity. My interests are to learn about the incentives driving land developers to build projects that not only provide shelter but also bring people together and enhance quality of life. Furthermore, I want to learn how land developers visualize the role of land as well as how progressive land development practices can safeguard our ecosystem and maximize the land use in the urban environment.

I enjoyed attending the ULI Fall Meeting. I listened to many perspectives about how land developers and other innovators in the sector tackle the issues of our times: cost, climate change impacts, density, accessibility, mobility, land access and redevelopment, among others.

In the Resilience Summit, I was able to get a taste of how climate change is influencing the development sector. During the summit I heard from many public and private practitioners. Yet, I found the message of the keynote speaker, Spencer Glendon, thought-provoking. He called upon the urgency to think about the instability climate change is activating and encouraged the private and public sectors to change their respective development practices. He highlighted a problem and a bad solution. The problem being that everyone seems to build their own fortress and work in isolation. The bad solution, he said, is to “leave the solutions to individuals.” Therefore, he called upon on a more collaborative approach to build stable developments and communities. Spencer invited the audience to take climate change as the opportunity not only to mitigate and adapt to sea level rise but also help improve people’s quality of life and help establish a more stable climate. He expressed a need to improve building codes and adopt complementary regulation that brings stakeholders together. He also advocated for repairing existing infrastructure (i.e. buildings) as opposed to building new ones. The latter point was interesting to wrestle with because many urban cities favor control growth policies, which tend to curtail development and density, while many professionals favor growth management policies, which are more flexible and accelerate development and density in the urban environment. It is bitter-sweet, but overall appears that climate change is facilitating the opportunity for the private and public sector to collaborate and think through regulations and development process that could enhance better development practices. I am glad to see the public and private sectors moving in the right direction towards a more sustainable approach to land use development.

The highlight of the Fall Meeting was the opportunity to attend the Product Council Meeting with my mentor, Jose Bodipo-Memba. In this space I gained a valuable perspective around the process, negotiations, compromise, and efforts involved to achieve successful developments through public-private partnerships. The Public Development and Infrastructure Product Council introduced me to the nuts and bolts of successful public-private partnership in the land development sector. Learning about the achievements of the Washington D.C. waterfront development was very enriching. Furthermore, I visited other development projects that emerged from public-private partnerships. I not only learned about the success of the projects but also about the hurdles developers face when building these projects. The financial responsibility developers experience made me reflect upon the importance that as a future planner, I must consider multiple perspectives and sensitive situations when engaging in negotiating and planning any development.

The ULI Fall Meeting was a stimulating experience. I walked away with so much information. In addition to a better perspective in how as a planner I can become an effective facilitator to ensure that public-private partnerships are successful, and everyone can rally around self-interests that lead to positive compromise and outcomes to improve all people’s quality of life as well as the built environment. I look forward to making more connections during the Spring Meeting in Toronto and dive deeper into the health equity intersectionality of land use development.