Opportunity in Times of Austerity: Collaboration Between Housing Nonprofits and Local Government

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Stephen Seidel serves as Senior Director of Habitat for Humanity International's Global Program Design and Implementation department. In this role, Seidel and his team support the development, implementation and evaluation of programs and initiatives designed to help achieve Habitat for Humanity International's 5-year strategic plan. Seidel joined Habitat for Humanity International in the fall of 2004, after serving as the Executive Director of Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity, one of the largest Habitat programs in the country, for more than 15 years. In addition, Seidel serves as a member of the Local Advisory Council of Twin Cities LISC, and served as chair of Habitat Minnesota, and chair of the Steering Committee of Housing Minnesota.

James A. Brooks is the Program Director for Community Development and Infrastructure at the National League of Cities (NLC), a non-profit membership organization in Washington, D.C. that represents and serves municipal governments of all population sizes and their elected and appointed officials. He also is the Director for NLC's International Programs. Brooks joined the staff at NLC in November 1988 and has held previous positions in membership services, public affairs and policy development.

Martine Combal, AICP, is the Walter Reed Local Redevelopment Authority Director within the D.C. Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED). As the LRA Director, Combal manages the base realignment and closure process and proposed redevelopment of the former Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Previously, Combal was the Manager of the Property Acquisition and Disposition Division at the D.C. Department of Housing and Community Development. She also worked in DMPED as a real estate transactions project manager, as well as participated in the implementation of Inclusionary Zoning and the Workforce Housing Land Trust. Combal has a Master’s of City Planning and a Certificate of Urban Design from the University of Pennsylvania and a B.S. in Urban and Regional Studies from Cornell University.

Manuel Ochoa is the Regional Director of Homeownership for LEDC. Ochoa has more than fifteen years of national experience working in urban planning and the affordable housing arena. Previously, Manuel served as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Grant Programs in HUD’s Office of Community Planning and Development. He is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners. He has worked as a local planner in several cities and also specializing affordable housing, commercial revitalization, and historic preservation. Ochoa is a member of the Metro Washington Council of Governments Region Forward Coalition and a citizen member of the Wheaton Redevelopment Coalition. Ochoa is a native of South Florida and a graduate of the University of Miami and the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

Lynn Ross, AICP is the Executive Director of the Urban Land Institute's Terwilliger Center for Housing where she is responsible for managing the strategic direction of the center as well as the implementation of the center’s work program. From 2007-2011, Ross was with the National Housing Conference and the Center for Housing Policy first Director of State and Local Initiatives and then as COO. Prior to relocating to Washington, D.C., Ross was with the American Planning Association in Chicago, IL. She joined APA’s research team in 2002 and became manager of the Planning Advisory Service in 2006. Ross holds a Masters of Regional Planning from Cornell University and a B.S. in community and regional planning from Iowa State University.
Molly M. Scott is a Research Associate in the Urban Institute’s Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center. In recent years, much of her work has focused on providing practical support for nonprofit and local government planning, decisionmaking, and implementation. In addition to leading the Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI) project, Scott heads Urban Institute efforts to help design new initiatives for Feeding America, the nation’s largest domestic hunger relief organization, as well as for CASA de Maryland, a local Promise Neighborhood planning grantee. In addition, she advises the Green and Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI) on evaluation and works closely with Home Forward, the Portland housing authority, on its implementation of the dual-generation HOST demonstration. She holds a master’s degree in public policy with a concentration in community development from UCLA.

Charles “Chuck” Wehrwein serves as Chief Operating Officer at NeighborWorks America, overseeing the organization’s divisions of field operations, national initiatives, training, organizational assessment and information management. He joined NeighborWorks America from the Housing Partnership Network where he was president of the Housing Partnership Exchange. From 2000 to 2007, Wehrwein served as Senior Vice President for Strategic Development Initiatives at Mercy Housing. He served as regional president of Mercy Housing Southwest, Midwest and East. Before joining Mercy Housing, Wehrwein was Chief Operating Officer of the National Equity Fund, and previously as Deputy Assistant Secretary for multifamily housing at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and as Deputy Administrator for multifamily housing at the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Rural Housing Service. A Certified Public Accountant, Wehrwein earned an undergraduate degree from the University of Illinois at Chicago and an MBA from DePaul University.