



Topic Area: The Role of Innovation Districts in Creating Workforce Equity

(Magisterial) Supervisor District(s): Mason and Lee Districts

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Advisors: Stefan Mascoll and Denise Miller

Topic Area Overview:

Innovation districts facilitate the creation and commercialization of new ideas and support metropolitan economies by growing jobs in ways that leverage their distinct economic attributes. These districts build on and revalue the intrinsic qualities of cities: proximity, density, authenticity, and vibrant places. Given the proximity of many districts to low-income neighborhoods and the large number of sub-baccalaureate jobs many provide, their intentional development can be a tool to help connect disadvantaged populations to employment and educational opportunities. – Brookings Institution

Workforce equity is when the workforce is inclusive of people of color and other marginalized or underrepresented groups at a rate representative of the greater community. Institutional and structural barriers impacting employee attraction, selection, participation and retention are addressed and reduced, enabling opportunity for employment success and career growth.

Location:

Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton, VA 22079

Timeline:

Contacted SME and consultants: week of November 25, 2019

First Review with LFI Program Committee: December 5, 2019

Second Review with LFI Program Committee: February 6, 2020

Program Half day: Thursday, February 20, 2020

Agenda for our Presentation Portion of the Day:

1:00-1:10pm Introduction

1:10-1:30pm Keynote by James Quigley, Co-Founder & CEO, GoCanvas

1:30-1:45pm Activity 1: Let's Make a Deal: Identifying collective elements of Innovation Districts important to you and them

1:45-2:00pm Break

2:00-3:15pm Innovation Districts and their Potential to Influence Workforce Equity Panel* Discussion

3:15-3:30pm Break

3:30-4:25pm Activity 2: I Spy IDE: An Exercise in Identifying Innovation District Elements

4:25-4:30pm Wrap up

***Subject Matter Experts / Panelists:**

- *Panel Moderator:* Scott Sizer - Incentives and Catalytic Projects Department of Economic Initiatives, Fairfax County Government
- *Panelist:* Dave Baker - Virginia Tech, Government & Community Affairs, Innovation Campus
- *Panelist:* Rockelle Morris – Year Up

- *Panelist:* David Ihire – Center for Innovative Technology (substitute for Robert Mazer - Smart City Works)
- *Panelist:* Robin Wilson - One Fairfax, Fairfax County Government

Primary Research Areas

How do Innovation Districts promote/contribute to workforce equity?

- Create job opportunities spanning varied educational backgrounds.
- Opportunity to energize low-income neighborhoods.
- Potential to create or expand internship/apprenticeship opportunities.
- Possible infrastructure updates and other support services.
- Facilitate/build connections between institutions, employers, and the public (including government).
- Provide transportation options to benefit older adults, people with disabilities, other people with transportation barriers.
- Fairfax County has a “fluid” population—many relocate to the county and there is an out-migration of millennials. Innovation Districts may serve as a potential way to attract millennials to stay in or return to Fairfax County.

What challenges do Innovation Districts pose to workforce equity?

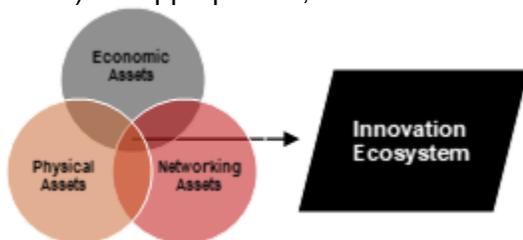
- Gentrification - in other Innovation Districts in the US, the poverty levels declined within Innovation Districts and increased in neighboring areas.
- Increased market pressures—does this negatively impact employers/start-ups?
- Focus on one area (i.e. technology) could limit inclusion across populations/educational backgrounds, etc.
- Other Innovation District areas introduced taxes to fund educational programs - is this an effective model (consider Fairfax County’s “out-migration”)?
- How “out-migration” of millennials and changing demographics impact the workforce and overall equity in Fairfax County.
- With the “One Fairfax” priority, what considerations are present for employers/workforce?

How does Fairfax County create and expand world-class research and development in the County?

There is an existing footprint with technology-oriented companies—research indicates this can foster expansion/development:

- “For each new high-tech job... five additional local jobs are created outside the high-tech sector.” – Enrico Moretti, Harvard University
- “Half of all STEM jobs are available to workers without a four-year college degree, and these jobs pay \$53,000 on average—a wage 10% higher than jobs with similar education requirements.” – Jonathan Rothwell, *The Hidden STEM Economy*

One area for exploration is the degree of intent with establishing Innovation Districts, specifically related to the Embark Richmond Highway project. According to the Brookings Institution’s [One year after: Observations on the rise of innovation districts](#): “the model of innovation districts has been embraced, co-opted, and (in some cases) misappropriated, further reinforcing the need for grounding this work in empirically based evidence.”



At our presentation our moderator and panelists brainstormed the idea of an Innovation District in the Embark Richmond Highway project:

- What assets are available in the Mount Vernon/Lee districts?
- How these items might contribute to “Embark Richmond Highway”.

- Action items to support the availability of these assets.
- Promoting “networking assets” to support idea exchange/innovation.

How can Fairfax County best promote Innovation Districts/economic development?

The initial thought is to further research technology/how to best attract employers to? the area. Technology employers have the opportunity to attract individuals, foster job growth in other sectors, and partner with institutions. Technology is also a leading employment sector in Fairfax County. According to the [Fairfax County Economic Development Authority](#), **47% percent of employees at our largest companies work for professional, technical and scientific service firms.** In addition, Inova is developing an innovation district around health care at the former Exxon/Mobil site through the Inova Center for Personalized Health Innovation District.

What affordability issues/challenges are associated with Innovation Districts?

[According to 12 Principles guiding innovation districts](#), **“Successful [innovation] districts can, over time, drive up market pressures, impacting the ability of start-ups, maturing firms, and neighboring residents to remain in these areas.** Smart districts respond early, getting ahead of the curve through a range of policy moves and strategic projects that preserve affordability and the diversity it engenders.”

Other Research Areas To Consider:

- Has equity been a challenge in established Innovation Districts? If so, what steps have been taken to increase equity?
- How have small businesses in established Innovation Districts been impacted? What are the takeaways for Fairfax County?
- How might public/private partnerships support workforce equity within Innovation Districts in Fairfax County?
- What are the workforce entrepreneurship skills and opportunity gaps that may restrict Fairfax County now and in the future?
- Analyze the impediments to innovation within Fairfax County.
- Are there contributing elements—infrastructure, affordable housing (such as graduate student housing) near work centers, transportation, education, potential economic slowdown, race and gender—to these gaps?
- How do zoning changes promote innovation?
 - In the Brookings Institution’s 2017 report [Clusters and Innovation Districts: Lessons from the United States Experience](#), the idea is discussed that **infrastructure must be available and zoning rules must allow/encourage the development of start-up companies and labs.** What are the growth trends and forecasts in the open innovation entrepreneur space?

Subject Matter Experts We Contacted:

| <i>Name</i> | <i>Company</i> | <i>Email</i> | <i>Phone number</i> | <i>Areas of Expertise</i> |
|-----------------|--|---|-------------------------------|--|
| James Quigley | CEO Go Canva | kiersten.helmey@gocanvas.com (admin support) james.quigley@gocanvas.com | 703-436-8069; 866-242-9334 | Innovation |
| Eta Nahapetian | LFI 19 Economic Success Program Coordinator | eta.nahapetian@fairfaxcounty.gov | 703-324-4320 | Fairfax County |
| Ester Lee | CEO Refraction and Former Director | hello@refractionpoint.org | 703-429-1254 | Innovation/Entrepreneurship |
| Robert Mazer | CoFounder | robert@smartcityworks.io. | NA | Smart City Works, Arlington |
| Steven Patridge | VP Workforce Development | spatridge@nvcc.edu | 703-323-3282 | NOVA/Education |
| Scott Sizer | Incentives and Catalytic Projects Department of Economic Initiatives | scott.sizer@fairfaxcounty.gov | 703-324-2581 | Fairfax County |
| Meaghan Kiefer | Small Business Coordinator | meaghan.kiefer@fairfaxcounty.gov | 703-324-3278 | Fairfax County |
| Robert Stazler | City Manager | rob.stalzer@fairfaxva.gov | 703-385-7850 | Previous Fairfax County Lead |
| Ed Albrigo | President and CEO, Center for Innovative Technology (CIT) | ed.albrigo@cit.org | 703-689-3040 | Tech/Innovation |
| David Ihrie, | Chief Technology Officer CIT | david.ihrie@cit.org | (703) 689-3000 | Technology |
| Tom Weithman | President and Chief Investment Officer | tom.weithman@cit.org | 703-689-3060 | Business |
| Victor Hoskins | President and CEO/Fairfax County Economic Development Authority | vhoskins@fceda.org | 703-790-0600 | Innovation and Economic Development |
| Mark Scarano | Executive Director/Community Business Partnership (CBP) | mark@cbponline.org | 703-768-1440 | Business Development and Collaboration |

Resources to consider:

- <https://www.brookings.edu/innovation-districts/>
- <https://drexel.edu/uhc/resources/briefs/West-Philadelphia-Promise-Zone/>
- <https://drexel.edu/civicengagement/centers-initiatives/promise-neighborhood/>
- <https://drexel.edu/uhc/resources/briefs/West-Philadelphia-Promise-Zone/>
- <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicaffairs/innovation-districts-will-grow-fairfax-countys-economy>
- <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicaffairs/fairfax-growing-innovation-hub>
- <https://www.transformgov.org/programs-and-projects/research-request-innovation-districts>
- <https://www.hersheyresearch.com/the-benefits-of-innovation-districts>
- <https://www.educationdive.com/news/cloud-degree-amazon-george-mason-nova-dive-awards/566275/>
- <https://statescoop.com/local-governments-can-get-smart-cities-funding-if-they-know-where-to-look/>
- https://www.bisnow.com/washington-dc/news/tech/how-fairfax-county-will-become-an-innovation-hub-53546?utm_source=CopyShare&utm_medium=Browser
- <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/reports/2019/10/16/475875/design-workforce-equity/>
- Community Foundation—Brookings Institute and Refraction Presentation <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZYoPdTyZb2E&t=9s>
- <https://www.fairfaxcountyeda.org/media-center/nova-vice-president-steven-partridge-fceda-commission/>
- <https://higherlearningadvocates.org/2019/03/20/getting-higher-education-in-sync-with-workforce-a-qa-with-steve-partridge-vice-president-of-workforce-and-economic-development-at-nova/>
- <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2019/mar/13/business-case-economic-mobility/>
- <http://relations.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/MEC-Incubator-Presentation-10.17.19.pdf>
- <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/sites/planning-development/files/assets/documents/complanamend/merrifieldsubctr/taskforcemtgs/mtg9/ipch%20benchmarking%20innovation%20districts%20task%20force%20presentation%20final.pdf>
- <https://www.inova.org/locations/inova-center-personalized-health/our-campus>
- <https://facilities.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/Downing-Tech-Square-Building-an-Innovation-Hub-3.pdf>
- <https://facilities.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/putting-innovation-in-place-Tech-square-Cross-paper.pdf>
- <https://smartcityworks.io/smart-city-works-and-refraction-win-grant-for-smart-city-initiative/>
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Equity Resources:

- <https://www.yearup.org/>
- <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planningcommission/sites/planningcommission/files/assets/documents/pdf/schools/one%20fairfax%20update%20presentation.pdf>
- <https://nextcity.org/daily/entry/fairfax-county-jobs-income-inequality>
- <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/racial-inequities-fairfax-county-2011-15>
- <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/topics/sites/topics/files/assets/documents/pdf/equitable-growth-profile-summary.pdf>

NOTE FOR LFI STAFF. Going forward it might be best to have the next group work on just work force equity and the work of One Fairfax or just focus on innovation districts. The two subjects could have been more compelling if presented independently.