

## ULI Resident Fellows Global Experts with Home-Grown Solutions

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One afternoon Charleston County called ULI South Carolina. They had their eyes on an undeveloped parcel of land and wanted ULI's counsel. But they wanted it soon. "I didn't have enough time to plan a TAP," Heather Foley, ULI South Carolina Executive Director said, "so I called Tom and Maureen." [Tom Murphy](#) and [Maureen McAvey](#), two of ULI's three Senior Resident Fellows, were on a plane to Charleston shortly thereafter.

"This was a classic ULI issue," Murphy said. Charleston County had no city-wide development strategy in place. They had never even done a charrette before. Over two days, Murphy and McAvey spent time taking site tours, moderating mobile workshops, facilitating 60 person discussion groups, and bringing together public officials with local real estate professionals. "The private sector gave the county a reality check," McAvey noted, "discussing design ideas and asking how much land the development could absorb." After the whirlwind of tours and panels and meetings, Murphy and McAvey gave Charleston County a fresh perspective on their parcel. "Charleston has the opportunity to grow outside its historic district," Murphy notes, "but what we've seen so far are small, individual developments rather than an orchestrated plan. The next challenge [facing Charleston] is working together." "This project," McAvey said, "really could set Charleston up for the next 30 to 50 years of development." Murphy and McAvey are planning a follow-up in the coming months.

Murphy and McAvey's Charleston trip is one of many examples that illustrates why the ULI's Senior Resident Fellows are so valuable: because they always seek to advise a District/National Council on its own unique challenges.

Senior Resident Fellow [Ed McMahan](#) (the third of the trio) has reminded ULI local staff that the Fellows are willing to do more than your garden-variety keynote. For example, ULI New Mexico had local media interview McMahan ahead of his trip to the state. And ULI Colorado organized an "off-line" conversation between McMahan and Boulder City officials. That opportunity allowed them to more freely discuss innovative land-use practices, and controversial changes to local policy and regulations. "A fresh set of eyes [especially eyes with a national perspective] can help local developers and officials realize how big of an opportunity they have," McAvey says.

So if you're ever wondering whether you should invite the Fellows to your District/National Council, remember McAvey's advice: "Don't think about it as us trying to sell our expertise. Think about it as you trying to buy a solution."



*The senior fellows participate in the "You Get What You Pay For" panel from the ULI 2014 Spring Meeting. From left to right: Mary Ludgin (moderator), Maureen McAvey, Ed McMahan, and Tom Murphy.*