Redevelopment of the
Chula Vista Municipal Golf Course

Assessing market opportunities and infill strategies of a community

June 7 - 8, 2017

Sponsored by:
Chula Vista Municipal Golf Course

Assessing market opportunities and infill strategies of a community asset

JUNE 7 - 8, 2017 | CHULA VISTA | CALIFORNIA

The Urban Land Institute San Diego - Tijuana
1620 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400
San Diego, CA 92101
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ABOUT THE URBAN LAND INSTITUTE

THE MISSION OF THE URBAN LAND INSTITUTE is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. ULI is committed to:

Bringing together leaders from across the fields of real estate and land use policy to exchange best practices and serve community needs;

Fostering collaboration within and beyond ULI’s membership through mentoring, dialogue, and problem solving;

Exploring issues of urbanization, conservation, regeneration, land use, capital formation, and sustainable development;

Advancing land use policies and design practices that respect the uniqueness of both built and natural environments;

Sharing knowledge through education, applied research, publishing, and electronic media; and

Sustaining a diverse global network of local practice and advisory efforts that address current and future challenges.

ULI was founded in 1936 on the belief that the world would benefit from an organization dedicated to developing leadership in the responsible use of land in order to create sustaining and thriving communities.

ULI members aim to improve the quality of the places we live, and we believe this starts with an open sharing of practical experience and pragmatic solutions. Being active in ULI means being a part of a formidable global network with some 40,000 members engaged in all aspects of real estate, land use, and urban development. ULI is present in all markets, all property sectors, and all professional disciplines.

ULI members believe that no matter in what aspect of development you participate, you need to understand how it is integrated into the community. Globally, we produce about 900 events each year where people learn, connect, and give back to their communities and their industry.

The San Diego - Tijuana District Council is one of the most active. With more than 700 members, we have a robust advisory services program, produce more than 30 educational programs annually and nurture leadership opportunities throughout the course of our members’ careers.
ADVISORY SERVICES AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PANELS

THE GOAL OF ULI’S ADVISORY SERVICES program is to bring the finest expertise in the real estate field to bear on complex land use planning and development projects, programs, and policies. Since 1947, this program has assembled well over 400 ULI-member teams to help sponsors find creative, practical solutions for issues such as downtown redevelopment, land management strategies, evaluation of development potential, growth management, community revitalization, brownfield redevelopment, military base reuse, provision of low-cost and affordable housing, and asset management strategies, among other matters.

A wide variety of public, private, and nonprofit organizations have contracted for ULI’s advisory services.

ULI San Diego - Tijuana launched the technical assistance program in 2010. Locally, we have assembled more than 100 members to provide recommendations for more than ten sponsoring organizations, including two international panels in Mexico.

Each panel team is composed of highly qualified professionals who volunteer their time to ULI. ULI hires a technical writer to take notes and prepare the final report. Panel members are chosen for their knowledge of the topic and screened to ensure their objectivity. ULI’s interdisciplinary panel teams provide a holistic look at development problems.

The agenda for the two-day panel typically includes an in-depth briefing with the sponsor, site tour, confidential interviews with community stakeholders, panel deliberations, and a presentation of recommendations and findings. Following the presentation, a final report is prepared which includes in-depth analysis, key ULI research, and visual representation of the recommendations.

Panel Members

Chris Bourassa,
President of US Construction, Ledcor Group

Mike Connel
Real Estate & Financial Analyst, H.G. Fenton

Randi Coopersmith
Founding Principal, Latitude 33

Doug Higgins
Director of Acquisitions and Development, JC Resorts

Brad Lents
Principal, Spurlock Landscape Architecture

ULI Staff

Heather Foley
Executive Director

Fiona Lyons
Senior Associate

Technical Writer

Jennifer Whitelaw
Senior Consultant, TW2 Marketing
Chula Vista is the second largest city in the San Diego metropolitan area, the seventh largest city in Southern California, the fourteenth largest city in the state of California, and the 76th-largest city in the United States. The population was 243,916 as of the 2010 census.[9]

Located just 7.5 miles from downtown San Diego and 7.5 miles from the Mexican border in the South Bay region of the metropolitan area, the city is at the center of one of the richest economic and culturally diverse zones in the United States. Chula Vista – which means “great or cool view” - is so named because of its scenic location between the San Diego Bay and coastal mountain foothills.

Founded in the early 19th century, fast population growth has recently been experienced in the city. Located in the city is one of America’s few year-round United States Olympic Training centers and popular tourist destinations include Aquatica San Diego, Mattress Firm Amphitheater, the Chula Vista marina, and the Living Coast Discovery Center.

On behalf of ULI San Diego - Tijuana, we would like to thank the City of Chula Vista and its representatives for their assistance:

- Kelly Broughton
  Development Services Director

- Eric Crockett
  Director of Economic Development

- Chris Gillfillen
  General Manager, Chula Vista Golf Course

- Gary Halbert
  City Manager

- Rick Ryals
  Real Property Manager
# THE PANEL PROCESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Process</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
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<tr>
<td>Define the problem</td>
<td>The City of Chula Vista approached ULI SD - TJ with regard to the long-term financial viability of a city-owned municipal golf course. They asked that ULI explore redevelopment opportunities.</td>
<td>May 2017</td>
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<td>Assemble the team</td>
<td>Based on the problem statement, ULI assembled a 5-person team with expertise in land planning, landscape architecture, resort and hospitality development, multi-family development, and construction</td>
<td>May 2017</td>
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<td>Build the briefing book</td>
<td>Working together, ULI and the City of Chula Vista assembled a briefing package that included scaled base maps, flood maps and financial assessment prepared by Pro Forma Advisors in 2015. These materials are then used by the panelists in advance of the TAP to familiarize the team with the study area.</td>
<td>May - June 2017</td>
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<td>Stakeholder Discussions</td>
<td>ULI staff, the panel members, and representatives from the City of Chula Vista, Touchstone Golf (the operator), and Pro Forma advisors convened the afternoon of June 7 at the Clubhouse. The City presented the problem statement, provided additional insight on the operations, capital improvements and long-term financial goals for the City.</td>
<td>June 7, 2017</td>
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<td>Site Tour</td>
<td>Together with the stakeholders, the panel members explored the golf course, historic Rohr Manor and Rohr park, which include equestrian facilities, multi-use trails and active recreation fields.</td>
<td>June 7, 2017</td>
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<td>Panel Deliberations</td>
<td>Beginning the afternoon of June 7 through the afternoon June 8, the panel explored schematic design, financial viability of ongoing golf course operations and mixed use development scenarios.</td>
<td>June 7 - 8, 2017</td>
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<td>Presentation and Final Report</td>
<td>At the conclusion of the deliberations, the panel presented recommendations to the City and interested stakeholders. Following the presentation, ULI delivers a final report that includes more in-depth analysis of the panel’s findings and observations.</td>
<td>June 8, 2017</td>
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PANEL OVERVIEW AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

The City of Chula Vista is in the midst of an economic transformation. Currently, there are more than 1,000 residential permits issued with another 5,000 permits in process. The city is anticipating the redevelopment of the port with a new waterfront convention center, luxury apartments and condominiums, three hotels and destination retail. A fully entitled innovation district hopes to be the new home for the region’s ever-expanding high tech and biotech economies, and the city has just launched a rebranding campaign focused on the future face of Chula Vista.

Located equidistant from downtown San Diego and the international border, Chula Vista is uniquely positioned to be a critical lynchpin in the region’s thriving and expanding binational economy. The developer-friendly city is finding innovative ways to speed up the residential entitlement process and defray upfront costs thus addressing some of the region’s biggest obstacles to providing more equitable housing solutions. Chula Vista is also planning growth within the commercial sector with close to a million square feet of office in the development pipeline. It is one of the fastest growing urban areas of San Diego county.

With all this growth comes the need to look closely at city-owned assets and community amenities. The City of Chula Vista owns a 129–acre municipal golf course off Bonita Road adjacent to a 60-acre public park – Rohr Park. Rohr Park is amenitized with equestrian and walking trails, passive and active green space which includes ballfields, picnic areas, basketball courts, and play equipment. The golf course is a public course that also hosts weddings, corporate events and local tournaments.

The Chula Vista municipal golf course is an 18-hole course that follows the Sweetwater River and is surrounded by popular running and equestrian trails. Sweetwater Road runs along the northern edge and Bonita Road along the southern edge of the course. Sweetwater Road is characterized with one- and two-story commercial development. Bonita Road is more rural with single family residential development.

The course hosts about 69,000 rounds of golf annually and has approximately 385 members. At the peak of the market, the course hosted more than 85,000 rounds with close to 800 members. With five clubs within a ten-mile radius, competition is fierce and keeps the price per round low despite the rising costs of maintenance. Touchstone Golf, the course operator, estimates capital improvements close to $1.5 million will be needed over the next three years to replace bunkers, greens, and irrigation equipment.

The course employs 50-70 employees, most of whom are paid minimum/prevailing wage. As municipalities compete to raise minimum wage, keeping employees long-term can be challenging. Annually, the course yields a net profit of $150,000. Given the potential
development value, this is one of the city’s most valuable assets.

Over the past decade, the demand for golf courses has begun to fade. In 2013, there was a reported 158 golf course closures and 14 course openings. With the increased cost of maintaining the course in drought conditions, the City of Chula Vista is investigating potential redevelopment opportunities for the 129–acres.

The TAP Panel was asked to consider the following concepts:

1. Would the golf course and clubhouse be enhanced by relocating the clubhouse to the Rohr Manor site?

2. Would the relocation of the club house provide opportunities to expand revenues and provide better amenities to serve a broader range of visitors?

3. How can Rohr Park parking and playfields be reorganized to enhance the users’ experience of the park and clubhouse if the club house was relocated to Rohr Manor, without the loss of park acreage?

4. What are the viable redevelopment options available at the existing clubhouse/parking lot site and other potential excess property based on a reconfigured or reduced sized golf course design and relocated clubhouse?

During the briefing, the city revealed additional goals they hope to achieve through the repositioning/redevelopment of the golf course by identifying:

- Opportunities for increased recurring revenue to account for an anticipated 100% increase in pension costs by 2026 ($27 million);

- What will provide the highest intrinsic environmental, social and economic value for the residents of Chula Vista;

- How the city can capitalize on the asset before the existing use ceases to be viable; and

- The need for an event facility to accommodate weddings and corporate events.
KEY FINDINGS AND PANEL OBSERVATIONS

Ongoing operation of the golf course will be detrimental to the long-term economic, quality of life and environmental goals for the city. Declining demand for golf, downward pressure on price per round and ongoing drought conditions are making it increasingly difficult to achieve positive economic returns. While the city is seeing a small annual profit, the course will soon become a liability as the capital improvements needed to maintain the current level are close to $1.5 million over the next three years.

The study area is ideal for redevelopment into a mixed use, hub-anchoring existing commercial project and promoting new residential and commercial development. The 129-acre golf course offers redevelopment opportunities using concepts of form-based code. Its proximity to CA-805, CA-54 and CA-125 can create a new edge or gateway for the city. The topography of the golf course, the large trees and access to the Sweetwater River can be used to attract developers. Infill housing will help support and augment the existing commercial development as well as promote new commercial development.

The City of Chula Vista is anticipating three new hotels on the Bayfront. Even with that, it will be a challenge to generate enough revenue to meet the demands of the pension fund through the TOT in this location. The panel observed an extended stay concept hotel could be successful here but the TOT is not paid for stays longer than seven days. While the hotel could serve as an amenity for the function hall, it would not be likely that the rooms could be filled during the week.

Redevelopment of the golf course offers opportunities to reprogram and increase the utility of the park for the entire community. The panel discussed golf related development including Top Golf and a 9-hole or executive course. Ultimately, they concluded return on investment on these options would be limited and Chula Vista should consider transformation to a mixed use project with a high quality public realm. Parks are a source of economic value. They increase property values, increase municipal revenue, attract new residents, and retirees.

The study area has inadequate employment options. A new activity hub could attract more diverse and lucrative employment opportunities. The addition of housing and convenient services linked to jobs and transportation options (i.e. extension of the trail system) will transform the study area into a thriving mixed use neighborhood consistent with the region’s climate action goals and principles of infill development.

Nodes of activity and anchors can support large community gatherings and innovative business ventures. Cities and towns across the country are being enriched with urban planning and design. The City of Chula Vista could lead a similar transformation. The golf course can become a multi-dimensional asset while addressing the region’s housing shortage and transportation issues.
Mixed use form-based code is needed to allow housing and services, at a height and density that reduces commuting and supports a more walkable Chula Vista. The edge along Sweetwater Drive is an ideal place for the city to be bold with the height limit. If housing, services, and local retail are concentrated in this district, a more walkable environment will emerge.

Flood plain issues need to be mitigated to allow for redevelopment of the golf course to ensure the long-term viability of this area for high density development. The panel suggested the edge along the Sweetwater River be restored to a natural riparian edge and use the river for mitigation natural efforts.

Rohr Manor does not have redeeming historical value. The $2 million investment to bring it up to code will not yield the desired economic return. The clubhouse currently serves as an event facility. The profit from the events is included in the annual $150,000 the city yields from the course. The construction of a new facility located close to the existing manor will allow the city to design and build a facility that will meet long term needs.

ULI’s principles of Building Healthy Places are relevant to the proposed transformation of the Chula Vista Golf Course. The Building Healthy Places Initiative studies ways to transform auto-centric, single use places into walkable, mixed use districts. With a focus on active transportation, access to natural amenities, healthy food and economic opportunities. The initiative links the design of places to the health of individuals, communities, and the environment.

For the past two years, ULI San Diego - Tijuana has recognized the people, places and policies that promote health and well-being. In May of 2017, the City of Chula Vista was recognized for the policies in place to support the redevelopment of the Bayfront. The principles used to develop that master plan can be adapted as guiding principles for the redevelopment of the golf course.
The existing clubhouse is outdated and occupies a prime location along Sweetwater Road. The site of the clubhouse is ideal for mixed-use redevelopment. Sweetwater Road is auto-centric and not inviting for pedestrians and cyclists to cross the road to access the retail across the street.

Key development and mobility characteristics within and near the study area include:

- The study area includes a library, museum, grocery store, pharmacy, medical office, coffee shops, and full-service restaurants – convenient daily services;
- The road, water, and sewer infrastructure is not at capacity;
- Bonita Avenue is a major city arterial;
- Multi-use trails are accessible to adjacent neighborhoods and expansion of this infrastructure would support the region’s active lifestyle preferences;
- Low-rise suburban development patterns;
- People generally drive for daily needs;
- The region’s population is expected to grow by one million people in the next 30 years and there is a dire housing shortage; and
- There are limited, nearby public outdoor spaces other than trails and active recreation fields.

Source: ULI Housing in America
OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Infrastructure: Both Bonita Road and Sweetwater Road are major city arterials. Based on the most recent traffic study, neither road is at capacity. Multi-use trails connect the study area with adjacent neighborhoods. The City of Chula Vista owns the water rights for the golf course, which is a potential new revenue stream for the city. San Diego County may resist additional traffic along Sweetwater Road as it is congested during peak travel times. Residents along Bonita Road may seek to maintain the current character of that edge which can be described as more rural and low density.

Housing and Population Growth: The San Diego region is anticipating more than one million new residents in the next 20 years. Convenient access to green space and recreation is a top priority when people consider where to move. Another top priority is mitigating the use of a car. The study area is in close proximity to convenient services including a grocery store, museum, pharmacy, medical office, coffee shops, and full-service restaurants. It will be a challenge to balance and manage the incremental development to create a more walkable lifestyle as the area builds density. The city also needs to focus on attracting knowledge-based companies to support a more diverse employment base. The current low-wage jobs in the vicinity will not support the rents needed for the city to realize its desired revenue stream to meet the demands of the pension fund.

Land Ownership: The golf course and Rohr Park are controlled by the city. They can approach both sites with a single long-term master plan. There is no need to assemble additional parcels. The adjacent business owners and other community stakeholders would benefit from additional housing and services coming to the area.

Green Space and Natural Resources: There are few outdoor places to relax and recreate with the exception of the golf course and sports fields of Rohr Park. The golf course is under-utilized while the sports fields at Rohr Park are at capacity. The golf course and clubhouse provide some opportunity for social interactions but those opportunities are limited to those who play golf. The golf course does not foster a sense of community affecting those who do not play. Social interactions but those opportunities are limited to those who play golf. The golf course does not foster a sense of community affecting those who do not play.

Dockside Green in Victoria, British Columbia has amenitized mixed use buildings with a central park where the community can gather. With access through the center of the park, it invites people into the space.
VISION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Site Analysis: Existing Land Use

Once the decision was made to redevelop the golf course, the panel examined the golf course and Rohr Park as a single swath of 190 acres of green space. The panel noted that there is no easy way to pass through from Sweetwater Road to Bonita Road and all non-golf traffic is kept at the edge along the multi-use trails and the roads.

Mixed-use redevelopment of the golf course and in certain areas of Rohr Park will activate the entire space. It will bring more people into the center of the space and facilitate access to the existing commercial along Sweetwater Road from Bonita Board thus augmenting walkability and convenience.

An internal linear park at Dockside Green reaches out to the streets and draws people in to the park. Like the study area, there are two distinct edge conditions. One calls for higher density and taller buildings and the other edge demands lower buildings and lower density consistent with Bonita Rd.
The Trust for Public Land (TPL), demonstrated the need for many more parks for the increasingly urbanized U.S. population. Cities are rising to the challenge in creative ways, building deck parks over highways, converting asphalt schoolyards to after-school community parks, installing community gardens at abandoned properties, turning unused rail lines into linear parks, and more.

All these efforts help provide green space within a ten-minute walk for the millions of urban and suburban Americans who are too far from parks to derive the health, environmental, and rejuvenating benefits they offer.

There is another, concurrent approach to providing Americans with a nearby park: bringing more dwellings to the periphery of existing parks to increase density on their edges. This is what TPL researcher Kyle Barnhart calls, “not only ‘parks for people,’ but also ‘people for the parks.’”

Urban Land Online: Which Comes First the Park of the People (October 2, 2015)
The City of Chula Vista should be **BOLD** with their vision and create a master plan for developing a public activity hub that can support housing, employment and services:

- Retain ownership and control of the land and work with a developer to who will lease the land from the city;

- Develop the study area incrementally to achieve a more sustainable urban neighborhood;

- Implement flood control measures that use the Sweetwater River and restore the natural riparian buffer;

- Enhance connections to and between existing neighborhoods with an expanded trail system;

- Increase the maximum building height to allow for taller buildings for new mixed-use development and business expansion;

- Create anchors/nodes of activity that support large community gatherings and innovative business ventures – i.e. leverage the city’s water rights for an onsite craft brewery;

- Use the expanded park space to define the study area thus creating a destination;

- Relocate the clubhouse/event facility to the site of Rohr Manor; and

- Test the market for destination retail with a developer like Caruso.
Phased Development Plan

The panel recommended the city focus initial efforts on the construction of a new clubhouse and event facility on the existing site where Rohr Manor is located. The six acres where the existing clubhouse and course parking are located should be rezoned for mixed use development with a suggested height of 80’ - 90’ (six stories).

These buildings represent the general scale, design and character the panel suggested for infill residential and commercial development. The buildings should address the street as well as the proposed park space.
Financial Viability

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<tr>
<td>Residential Units</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average Rent</td>
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<td>Annual Gross Revenue</td>
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<td>Vacancy / Affordable (15%)</td>
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<td>Lease Fee</td>
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<td>City Annual Revenue</td>
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<td>Developer Revenue</td>
<td>$47,093,000</td>
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<td>Operating Expense (33%)</td>
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<td>Developer NOI</td>
<td>$31,552,578</td>
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<td>Developer Cost</td>
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<td>Developer ROI</td>
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Development Summary

The panel struggled to find a precedent where a mixed-use / multifamily developer developed a project(s) on leased land. However, the general consensus was a return on investment of 6.3% would be appealing. Assuming the City would full entitle the land and complete the necessary environmental studies, the risk associated with holding the land and overcoming community opposition would be mitigated.
PANELIST BIOGRAPHIES

CHRIS BOURASSA, PRESIDENT U.S. CONSTRUCTION, LEDCOR GROUP
Chris provides the creative vision and leadership to Ledcor’s US Construction group and is responsible for our long term growth and stability. Chris joined Ledcor in the Properties Group, most recently holding the position of Chief Operating Officer. In his current role as President of the US Construction group, he brings a special insight to the services we provide to Ledcor’s customers with his knowledge and experience in all facets of project development, finance, sales, marketing, and construction. Having graduated from the AMD Program at Harvard University, Chris sits as a member of the Harvard Graduate School of Design Alumni Council, which provides guidance to the GSD graduate programs and an industry connection for our future workforce.

MICHAEL CONNELL, ANALYST, H.G. FENTON
Mike is a Real Estate and Financial Analyst at H.G. Fenton who partners with business leaders to help solve problems in a thoughtful and innovative way. With a strong background in accounting, Mike is fluent in the language of business and fully understands the numbers behind the analytics. Prior to H.G. Fenton, Mike worked as an accountant at CBRE. After moving to San Diego in 2013, Mike worked as a senior accountant at HG. Fenton before ultimately moving into his current finance role. Mike holds a Bachelor’s degree in Economics and Accounting from the University of Saint Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota. He has recently passed all four CPA exams and is well on his way to becoming a Certified Public Accountant.

RANDI COOPERSMITH, SENIOR PRINCIPAL PLANNER, LATITUDE 33
Public and private sector planning experience since 1974. Activities include master planning for large, complex land use projects, parks, redevelopment projects, general plans, public facilities and phasing plans, and coordination with government agencies. Major emphasis on planning and design for both public and private sector projects requiring approvals from multiple public agencies. Randi holds a M.S. in Urban Geography from San Diego State University, and a B.S. in Geography from University of California at Berkley.
DOUGLAS HIGGINS, DIRECTOR OF ACQUISITIONS & ASSET MANAGEMENT, JC RESORTS
Doug is responsible for the acquisitions, asset management & development functions of JC Resorts, a hospitality-focused real estate investment company based in La Jolla. He is also acting as project manager for the redevelopment project at Temecula Creek Inn which involves redeveloping the 27-hole golf course to include: an improved 18-hole golf course, three residential subdivisions, and an expansion of the existing resort facilities. Prior to joining JC Resorts in 2012, Doug was responsible for the design, development, and ongoing asset management of a dozen hospitality assets throughout the middle east for Sorouh Real Estate PJSC in Abu Dhabi, UAE. Prior to that, he managed the feasibility and investment analysis function for hotel projects throughout North, Central, and South America for Hilton Hotels Corporation in Beverly Hills. He began his career in hotel appraisal at HVS International in Boulder, CO. Doug holds a BS in Hotel Administration from Cornell University, an MBA from UC San Diego, and a California Real Estate Broker’s license.

BRAD LENTS, PRINCIPAL, SPURLOCK LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
With a background as both a landscape architect and urban planner, Brad’s problem solving approaches to site planning and design enable him to be an effective designer on a broad range of public and private sector projects of various scales. His focus is to create places that are pedestrian friendly, environmentally sensitive, and that fit into the larger neighborhood context. Of particular interest to Brad is the ability to complete the project preliminary planning and implementing portion of the plan from site design through construction.

Before joining Spurlock Poirier, Brad has had experience in other offices in San Diego, Chicago and Iowa. His project experience includes Marina Heights in Marina, CA is a 250 acre New Urbanism inspired neighborhood located on a portion of the former Fort Ord site, and Brad’s work here was the creation of landscape guidelines, an open space master plan, and design of the parks, streetscape and open space connections for the neighborhood. During his time in Chicago, Brad completed the LISC New Communities Plans for 13 under-served inner city neighborhoods. These plans were strongly influenced through a public input process in each neighborhood and focused on prioritizing neighborhood development issues, attracting development to these neighborhoods, increase collaboration between the neighborhoods, local developers, and agencies and establishing non-profit redevelopment agencies within each neighborhood. Brad had four years of experience as a campus landscape architect intern at Iowa State University, and assisted in the design of numerous landscape and planning projects for the historic campus.