

BUILD BUSINESS:

The Urban Development Client Panel



WHAT'S NEXT FOR OUR CITIES?

INTERVIEW BY NANCY EGAN, FSMPS

“What’s next?” It’s the question we hear over and over again in client offices, staff meetings, and SMPS events. And it is on the top of Ann Taylor’s agenda for the Urban Development panel that she will be moderating on July 12 at Build Business in San Francisco. Taylor, who is the executive director of the Urban Land Institute (ULI) for Houston and San Antonio, has convinced three of the best minds in urban development to join her for a discussion about what they see as “next.”

With Taylor on the dais will be Uwe Brandes, ULI senior vice president for Initiatives, based in Washington, DC, where he leads ULI’s initiatives on Climate Change, Land Use, and Energy (CLUE) and The City in 2050. Brandes was also a principal contributor to the recent ULI publication *What’s Next? Real Estate in the New Economy*, a must-read for anyone with an eye on the future in our profession.

From the private sector will be Gary Holtzer, the San Francisco-based vice president and global sustainability officer for Hines, the real estate investment, development, and management firm. In his role, Holtzer oversees and coordinates sustainability efforts worldwide for Hines, arguably the most influential real estate development company globally.

Bringing his perspective as city manager for the City of Ventura, California, will be Rick Cole. He worked in both the public and private sectors before coming to city management. Cole’s work has been praised by the *Los Angeles Times*, which called him “one of Southern California’s most visionary planning thinkers.”

To get a sense of what this exceptional group might have to say to us, I spent some time in conversation with each of them and cannot wait for the session. Here’s a peek at what we can expect.

Ann Taylor sought to have several distinct points of view on her panel: leaders in the field who would generate discussion. “It’s rare that you have your first choices for panelists all commit,” she said. “But I did and I am delighted to have this group together. While each of them has their own perspective, I believe they all will be able to engage across the important topics.” Taking advantage of Brandes’ work on *What’s Next?*, Taylor envisions the broad themes outlined in the book—jobs, housing, technology, energy, and investment—as starting points for more in-depth exploration.

She is already formulating questions that are sure to take the conversation beyond talking points. Thinking about sustainability, she asks, “How do we move beyond the credentialing that is becoming table stakes in the environmental field and find meaningful, new performance measures? How do we inhabit buildings? How does small, incremental change in behavior begin to make a difference?”

With Rick Cole on the panel, she wants to know what cities are looking for. Where’s the opportunity, especially in an era of constrained budgets? She also has asked each of the panelists to think about what A/E/C firms and their marketers can and should be doing in response to issues that will be discussed.

Uwe Brandes’ broad understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing the real estate and development community will provide a clear context for the discussion. Acknowledging that “the economic downturn forced most businesses to make tough decisions,” he is optimistic about the future.

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—Gary Holtzer

“The themes we addressed in *What’s Next?*—accelerating globalization, changing demographics, and evolving technologies—are forces reshaping our world and our markets in indeterminate ways,” Brandes observed. “The conversation is being reframed. It’s important to stay engaged with your stakeholders and for our industry to take a leadership role.”

Brandes’ solid grasp of the trends transforming our lives and our communities is matched by his passion as he talks, citing evidence of positive change. He sees that “technology is not just a promise anymore,” but it is up to us to exploit that promise. And he thinks we will as “people are acting in new ways in communities, making sustainable decisions.”

Gary Holtzer began our conversation by sharing a definition of sustainability that extends beyond the environment to social and governance issues. “The market is driving the demand for sustainable buildings,” he noted. “Investors are now asking the questions about these issues when they are evaluating properties. To maintain Class A status, sustainability has to be part of the business plan.”

Simply put, “green” adds value and reduces risk in the eyes of the investment community, especially those like pension funds who take a long-term view and consistently seek quality buildings. In his work at Hines, Holtzer develops sustainable strategies that include

About the Panelists*



MODERATOR: ANN TAYLOR

Executive Director,
The Urban Land Institute
Houston and San Antonio
Houston, TX

As ULI executive director for Houston and San Antonio, Ann Taylor serves more than 900 members in one of the leading District Councils of a 30,000-member global organization.

Prior to joining the staff of ULI, Taylor had a 20-year career in communications consulting and public relations for clients in real estate development, financial services, and transportation. Her background includes high-profile programs, such as developing worldwide brand position for the R&D arm of one of the world's largest energy companies. She worked closely with clients in Houston, UK, and The Hague. She also developed and implemented internal and external communications strategy for a consumer airline in 24 North American markets. Taylor's work has won the highest award for an ongoing communications campaign from her peers in the Public Relations Society of America.

A graduate of Rice University and former owner of one of Houston's top independent PR firms, Taylor has won awards for crisis communications, non-profit public relations campaigns, and news and feature writing. She has been guest lecturer in the MBA programs at Rice University and Texas A&M and for communications classes at the University of Houston and HBU. Taylor's marketing and public relations campaigns for residential and commercial real estate developers, as well as architecture, engineering, and construction firms, have focused on environmental stewardship and the responsible use of land.

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—Rick Cole

the interests of all stakeholders: investors, tenants, workers, and the architects and engineers who design the buildings. Going forward, sustainability will, of business necessity, be part of any competitive development because it makes financial sense.

Holtzer suggests that the tasks for the design community are morphing from educating the client and green practice to helping define the next big leap in building performance. It may involve some risk taking on our part in order to mitigate risk for the developer and the investor.

While Rick Cole prefaced his comments by claiming that his is an idiosyncratic view, what he had to say will resonate with many in the building professions. "The delivery model for the housing—the production model—is irretrievably broken," he said. "It can no longer be financed; it can't be packaged up as a commodity and sold to Wall Street. The model won't disappear, but it is not capable of delivering a quality product."

The question is, how do we build a new model? If 2006 is never coming back, how do we prepare for 2018? Cole points out that, while the market for large two-story suburban houses is oversubscribed, the market for an entire range of urban dwelling is undersubscribed. "Neighborhoods need to be recontextualized—there is real potential for value and community."

The prospect of addressing a room full of marketers about urban issues was especially appealing to Cole. "Marketing is always a leader, because marketing is about vision. And we need a powerful vision for this new model, because it is not as cohesive as what we had, but it is richer and more diverse," he said. "It is about the renewal of our existing towns and cities."

Big challenges, new opportunities. The panelists would say, "It's all about thinking in a different way." Come and join the conversation in San Francisco.

In the June issue, read about the client panelists scheduled to participate in the healthcare panel during Build Business: Take Action. 

About the Interviewer



Contributing Editor Nancy Egan, FSMPS, heads New Voodoo, a small consultancy that provides marketing strategy, branding, content development and media relations to the design community. SMPS National President in 1983–84 and the 1996 recipient of the Weld Coxie Marketing Achievement Award, she is a regular contributor to several professional publications, writing on workplace

issues, urban design and architecture, and professional services marketing. You can follow her on Twitter as @newvoodoo or contact her at egan@newvoodoo.com.



UWE S. BRANDES

Senior Vice President for
Initiatives, Urban Land Institute
Washington, DC

As senior vice president of initiatives at the Urban Land Institute (ULI), Brandes leads ULI's initiatives on Climate Change, Land Use, and Energy (CLUE) and The City in 2050.

Prior to ULI, Brandes was vice president of capital projects at the Anacostia Waterfront Corporation in Washington, DC, and associate director of the DC Office of Planning where he managed the award-winning Anacostia Waterfront Initiative, an unprecedented \$3 billion public-private partnership including the District of Columbia, the US General Services Administration, the US Navy, and the National Park Service to revitalize the shores of the Anacostia River in the nation's capital.

Brandes was a Fulbright Scholar at the Technical University Dortmund and a Paul Sun Fellow at Tsinghua University in Beijing. He has degrees in engineering science from Dartmouth College and architecture from Harvard University.



RICK COLE

City Manager, City of Ventura
Ventura, CA

Rick Cole was selected as city manager in 2004, focusing on the City Council's four key priorities, the "ABCS" of Ventura government: (1) Accountable government, establishing specific performance management targets for every city department; (2) Balanced

budget, overcoming a long-term structural deficit and pursuing a balanced approach to delivering key services within available means; (3) Civic Engagement, ensuring citizen participation in decision-making and encouraging collaborative partnerships to tackle Ventura's community challenges; (4) Smart Growth, promoting sustainable prosperity and quality of life by holding development to higher standards while streamlining regulatory processes.

Cole serves on the Executive Committee of the City Manager's Department of the League of California Cities and the Sustainable Communities Committee of the International City/County Managers Association and previously chaired the Ventura County City/County Managers Association.

He brings an unusual public- and private-sector background to city management, having previously served as the Southern California director of the Local Government Commission, Mayor of Pasadena, executive director of the West Hollywood Marketing Corporation, and co-founder of the *Pasadena Weekly* newspaper.



GARY HOLTZER

Vice President/Global
Sustainability Officer, Hines
San Francisco, CA

As vice president and global sustainability officer for Hines, a global real estate investment, development, and management firm, Gary Holtzer is responsible for capital transactions and portfolio

and asset management in Hines' investment partnerships. He also oversees and coordinates Hines' sustainability efforts worldwide.

Since joining Hines in 1985, Holtzer has had a broad range of operating, transactions, asset, and portfolio management responsibilities in over 12 million square feet of Hines-owned and -managed office and retail space.

**Confirmed as of press time. Subject to change.*

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**Breakout Session 101: Client Panel:
Urban Development Market**

JULY 12, 10:45 AM – NOON