

Kathleen Diohep Fall Meeting 2017

I am grateful to ULI and ProLogis for underwriting my participation in the Fall Meeting. This opportunity came at a time of career transition for me; in fact, I was notified of the scholarship the same day I started at the University of California, San Francisco in the Real Estate Asset and Development Department. ULI and the Fall Meeting were very helpful to me professionally in my new role and in reconnecting with the greater real estate development field. Personally, as a Planning Commissioner, the Fall Meeting also provided insights into opportunities and trends that could be implemented in the City of Vallejo.

This was the fifth Fall Meeting that I have attended and I also attended a Spring meeting. Prior to this, I've been a guest twice before at a product council. Reviewing the schedule of speakers and presentations only gives one view of the value of Fall Meeting. Yes, there is substantial information provided in the sessions but the full experience is much greater than just a series of presentations.

At this meeting, I connected with people undertaking public private partnerships at other universities, creating arts venues, and had interesting discussions about approaches to attracting investment to disadvantaged neighborhoods. I made several connections that will lead to future opportunities. As well as the parties and networking efforts. I had the privilege of attending the Women in Leadership Initiative steering committee, where I got to meet my fellow scholarship awardees and learn about how WLI efforts are underway worldwide. Gender is topical now. WLI is identifying ways to mentor and support women in the industry and in ULI. Seeing their efforts in action illustrates how important that providing this support, in the context of the larger ULI efforts, is to equalizing the role of women in the industry.

I attended the Office Development Council as a guest. I enjoyed learning about the renovation of the Empire State Building, market outlook for real estate, and background on other projects. We toured the LA Arts District and saw the transformation of this former industrial area into creative offices. My work history has focused on how real estate investment transforms cities through historic rehabilitation, parks, and arts spaces. It was fascinating to be reminded that for many in the field, real estate is seen strictly through the lens of cash flows and risks and returns. This meeting was the first time in years that I've been in a professional meeting with only a handful of women. In that context it was interesting to discuss with product council members the need for such a scholarship for women.

My final observation about the ULI 2017 Fall meeting was that, unlike prior meetings I'd attended, it seemed to avoid discussing head on the implications of federal policy on the real estate industry. With a real estate developer as President and substantial tax reform and infrastructure funding programs under discussion, the absence of significant discussion of these issues seemed to be missing an opportunity. ULI should lead in policy discussions about how federal policy can impact real estate and urban environments. I hope that as part of ULI's strategic planning underway, there is discussion about how to best advise on public policy.

