

## Members Empower ULI's Mission at the Local Level through Gifts to District Councils

Donations to the ULI Foundation support a wide variety of programs, initiatives, and groups, and among the options, donors may choose to direct their gifts to their local ULI District Council. Three donors who have made recent substantial contributions to their respective District Councils—Jack Cohen, Marc Pollack, and Greg West—highlight the impact individuals can have on their local communities. Their gifts, ranging from \$15,000 to \$100,000, enable their local District Councils to advance ULI's mission priorities and carry out community outreach, all while helping members build relationships and share educational and other resources in their area.

For all three donors, their contributions grew out of their engagement with their District Councils. **Marc Pollack**, co-founder, senior adviser, and chairman emeritus of RangeWater, says that although he has been active in ULI for the better part of 25 years, most of his involvement had long been at the national level. Five years ago, however, he stepped back from running RangeWater and became more involved locally, serving on ULI Atlanta's Livable Communities Council and ultimately chairing ULI Atlanta for two years.

"ULI has been good to me in terms of exposure and education and networking, both nationally and locally," Pollack says. "I have a new passion for increasing the number of high-quality real estate professionals in the Atlanta ecosystem." Pollack also appreciates ULI's efforts to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion in the real estate industry and hopes that his gift will help improve access to the resources, educational opportunities, and networking that he drew on. "That's where I'd like to have the greatest impact," he says.

**Jack Cohen**, head of CRE Originations at ArrowMark Partners, moved in the



**Greg West, CEO, ZOM Living**

wake of the COVID-19 pandemic from Chicago to Colorado, where he met Rodney Milton, the new executive director of ULI Colorado. "Rodney has a background as ... an educator and an urban planner, and he's bringing new ideas," Cohen says. "I wanted to make a contribution that would back his ideas."

Impressed by ULI Colorado offerings such as UrbanPlan and the Real Estate Diversity Initiative, Cohen hopes his contribution can also help with issues particular to Colorado. "Mountain towns have a big challenge providing workforce housing," he says. "It will take time for public/private partnerships to develop the best solutions, and I'm hopeful that ULI Colorado will help them make progress." He also notes that today's high interest rates pose a challenge for a real estate industry that has grown accustomed to falling interest rates and capitalization rates for the past 30 years. "District Councils can provide capital markets training for people to retool."

**Greg West**, chief executive officer of ZOM Living, was involved in ULI Southeast Florida/Caribbean for more than 20 years and served as its District Council chair for three years. "There are so many things that I love about ULI," he says, "but it's in the District Councils where the rubber meets the

road, where members gather to think about and implement ways to improve the place where they live. My gift was an expression of appreciation and admiration for all the work of my deeply valued friends in our District Council."

West feels that the District Councils are uniquely positioned to help local governments address difficult challenges. "In South Florida, the District Council has been able to convene conversations with local governments around best practices for addressing sea level rise, building codes, and planning," he says. "We've done studies, of course, but the real action comes when we hold advisory panels and technical assistance panels, where there's a concentrated effort by ULI members not only to think about an issue conceptually, but also to develop ways to apply solutions to that issue in a specific community. That gives elected officials tangible tools that they can use to make change."

"We have 52 District Councils across the Americas," says **Jill Lucken**, ULI's executive vice president, District Councils. "They are the primary way in which our members interface with the organization. They not only facilitate carrying out ULI's mission priorities but also provide programming to fit the needs of local members. Any gift makes a huge difference, allowing the councils to focus more on quality programming and high-level engagement opportunities with the local members. A lot of District Council members establish lifelong friendships and build professional trust with their industry colleagues through their involvement in ULI. A gift helps sustain that level of connection."

All donations to District Councils are counted as part of the ULI Foundation's \$100 million capital campaign *Our Cities, Our Future*. ■