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Contact: Cindy Mackey, 757-754-4553, cindymackey@cox.net

## **DOWNTOWN NORFOLK COUNCIL BRINGS INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL EXPERTS FOR INAUGURAL DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT FORUM ON DECEMBER 13**

NORFOLK, Va. – (November 2018) – Downtown Norfolk Council will host the first Downtown Development Forum on December 13 at Hilton Norfolk The Main. Downtowns are increasingly becoming the major economic generators for cities across the country. The inaugural Downtown Development Forum will review national trends and explore focus areas of mobility, retail, residential and business. The Forum is open to the public with rsvp by December 7, and ticket options are below.

“We want to present the most relevant information available to educate the audience on importance of downtowns as economic generators,” said Mary Miller, president & CEO of Downtown Norfolk Council. “We anticipate the information will energize our region to explore opportunities for regional economic growth.”

Urban expert Bruce Katz, co-author of *The New Localism: How Cities Can Thrive in the Age of Populism*, will be the keynote speaker. Katz is the co-founder of New Localism Advisors, a firm that helps cities design, finance and deliver transformative initiatives that promote inclusive and sustainable growth. Katz regularly advises global, national, state, regional and municipal leaders on public reforms and private innovations that advance the well-being of metropolitan areas and their countries. Katz has also authored *The Metropolitan Revolution: How Cities and Metros are Fixing Our Broken Politics and Fragile Economy*, which focus on the rise of cities and city networks as the world’s leading problem solvers.

Katz was the inaugural centennial scholar at the Brookings Institution from January 2016 to March 2018, where he focused on the challenges and opportunities of global urbanization. Katz also served as chief of staff to U.S. Housing and Urban Development Secretary Henry Cisneros. Katz is a visiting professor at the London School of Economics and is a graduate of Brown University and Yale Law School.

In *The New Localism*, Katz and co-author Jeremy Nowak argue that cities and counties will be tested as never before in the coming years. They will need to innovate and reform—to pursue new strategies for growth and finance—in a fiscal environment dominated by rising health-care and pension costs. In these circumstances, the quality of metropolitan governance will matter more than ever.

Other topics and speakers include:

### **Mobility, Brooks Rainwater, National League of Cities**

Brooks Rainwater is the senior executive and director of the National League of Cities’ Center for City Solutions. Rainwater drives the organization’s research agenda, community engagement efforts and leadership education programming to help city leaders create strong local economies, safe and vibrant neighborhoods, world-class infrastructure and a sustainable

environment. As an advocate for strong local leadership, Rainwater has published numerous reports and articles on innovative solutions that lead to vibrant and successful cities. He also speaks regularly across the country and overseas on issues facing city leaders. Rainwater's recent research and interests include advancements in technology and city innovation, the sharing economy, and how the rise of state preemption is impacting local authority.

**Retail, Rod Blake, Starwood Retail Partners**

Rod Blake, a long-time specialist in mixed-use development, joined Starwood Retail Partners as vice president of development. Drawing upon nearly 30 years of development, leasing, sales and government relations experience in both the public and private sectors, Blake is responsible for identifying and implementing mixed-use development opportunities.

**Residential, Todd Zimmerman, Zimmerman/Volk Associates**

Todd Zimmerman is principal in charge of Zimmerman/Volk Associates' consulting practice and is now expanding that effort outside the country. Zimmerman was one of the framers of the Charter of the Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU), a member of the CNU Board of Directors and the CNU executive committee. He also served as chairman of the CNU Council of Task Force Chairs. Zimmerman was named a CNU Fellow in 2016. Zimmerman established a national reputation for his early identification of real estate market trends as editor and publisher of *Multi-Housing News* and *Senior Living News*, and founding publisher and editorial director of *Real Estate Times*.

**Business, Larry 'Chip' Filer, Old Dominion University**

Larry Filer is the associate vice president for entrepreneurship and economic development at Old Dominion University, an associate of the economic forecasting project and associate professor of economics. He earned his doctoral degree in economics from the University of Kentucky. Prior to rejoining the faculty in January of 2014, Dr. Filer served as MBA director and associate dean. His specialty areas include economic forecasting, economic policy analysis and strategic planning.

**The Downtown Development Forum schedule:**

7:15 am - Registration Opens  
7:45 am - Breakfast and Keynote Address with Bruce Katz  
9:00 am - Focus Area Remarks and Panel Discussion  
12:00 pm - Luncheon and Downtown Plan Update and Conversation  
RSVP [Online](#) or call 757-623-1757 by December 7  
Morning Keynote Program \$30 • Half Day Forum Program \$75

The Downtown Development Forum is presented by Downtown Norfolk Council, Greater Norfolk Corporation and Slover Library Foundation. Sponsors include Norfolk Economic Development, HRV, Starwood Retail Properties, TowneBank and Queen of Virginia Skill & Entertainment.

Downtown Norfolk Council (DNC) is a private, not-for-profit membership organization comprised of businesses and individuals working toward a dynamic, attractive and prosperous Downtown. DNC also manages the Downtown Norfolk Improvement District, a 48-block special services district with enhanced services that keep Downtown friendly, safe and spotless. Connect with Downtown Norfolk on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram or visit [downtownnorfolk.org](http://downtownnorfolk.org).