

May | 2021

School of Architecture Planning and Preservation  
Maryland's Built Environment School

## CONGRATULATIONS, CLASS OF 2021!



Dr. Robert Stanton, 15th Director of the National Park Service

*Photo credit: NPS photo/Rachel Hendrix*

Spring 2021 Commencement was held virtually on Thursday, May 20, 2021, and featured heartfelt speeches by our outstanding students and a moving address by this year's commencement speaker, **Dr. Robert Stanton**, 15th Director of the National Park Service. In addition, **Weishi Zhang** gave an uplifting and inspirational message on behalf of the MRED graduating students. Congratulations to MRED students **Steven Bernard, Domyinique Garrett, Yuan Hu, Siyue Huang, Jessica Ramirez, Catherine Roach, Kia Smith, Mohsen Teimouri, Nathan Veliz** and **Weishi Zhang!** Also, congratulations to dual degree students (MRED + M.ARCH) **Rachel Cain, Tochi Ohakawa** and **Andrew Walker!**

[View  
Recording](#)

## 2021 Capstone Projects Pioneer Economic and Social Growth for Prince George's County's Seat Pleasant



Seat Pleasant Plan, Catherine Roach

By Maggie Haslam / May 20, 2021

Ten visions for a slice of Seat Pleasant, Maryland, were presented this past week by students from Maryland's Master of Real Estate Development (MRED) Program in a bid to inspire its future. Community greenspaces, wide thoroughfares and bustling hubs for live-work-play were just a few components—shared with members of the Seat Pleasant City Council, residents and stakeholders—that resulted from a semester-long capstone project that focused on two challenging sites within this Washington, D.C.-bordering community in Prince George's County, that could hold the key to kickstarting development, walkability and community resilience.

[View  
Recording](#)

[Read More](#)



Tochi Ohakawa, The Pointe



Catherine Roach, Wye Point,



Nathan Veliz, THE VERGE

---

The Spring 2021 John B. Colvin Capstone Competition kicked off on Friday night, May 21st, with three dual degree students (MRED + M.ARCH) presenting their projects to a panel of industry experts. Judges included **Ashleigh Simpson**, Director, Regional Head of Acquisitions and Joint Ventures, Real Estate, MetLife Investment Management and **Lisa Wiersma**, Director, Development, Neighborhood Development Company.

Taking top prize was **Tochi Ohakawa** with his project, The Pointe, a mixed-use, mixed-income development located on a 0.72-acre property in downtown San Diego, CA. Other presenters included **Rachel Cain's** project, The I.R.I.S., a mixed-use development with a focus on a built-in multi-sensory environment to promote independent living for the blind and visually impaired in Baltimore County, MD. and, **Andrew Walker's** project, Cayler Point, a mixed-use, mixed-income development located in the Williamsburg neighborhood of Brooklyn, NY., a former brownfield site to be repurposed to create a sustainable development.

On Saturday, May 22nd, the competition continued with 10 students presenting their final capstone projects. Judges included **Van Anderson '75**, Senior Vice President, Sandy Spring Bank, **John Lin**, President, CapStar Commercial Realty and **Lisa Wiersma**, Director, Neighborhood Development Company. Congratulations to first place co-winners **Catherine Roach** and **Nathan Veliz!** Roach's project, Wye Point, focuses on cultivating a wellbeing and nurturing community in Seat Pleasant, MD. Veliz's project, THE VERGE, addresses the need for retail to service the community, job creation and affordable housing. Third place went to **Steven Bernard** for his project, District Line, and honorable mentions went to **Domynique Garrett** for her project, Elysian, and **Weishi Zhang** for East King both in Seat Pleasant, MD.

A special thank you to the professionals who gave their valuable time and expertise as student capstone mentors: **Jerry Dawson**, Principal, Greenwood Commercial Real Estate Group, **Jessica Jones '09**, Senior Real Estate Development Manager, Enterprise Community Development and **Timur Ryspekov '14**, Senior Project Manager, Telesis Corporation. Thank you to the architects for designing the posters and project images: **Angella Dariah**, **Alla Elmahadi '18**, **David Ensor '14**, **Mike Fischer '14**, **Nicole Hinkle '13** and **Maryssa Timberlake '17**. Lastly, a special thank you to our poster judge, **Catherine Ryckman '18**.

Congratulations to all the students that presented their Seat Pleasant, MD projects: **Yuan Hu**, Pleasant Square; **Siyue Huang**, The Plaza at 5922; **Jessica Ramirez**, Paragon; **Kia Smith**, THE RAILS and **Mohsen Teimouri**, The Pleasant Gates.

---

View Recording: Friday, May 14,  
2021

View Recording: Saturday May 15,  
2021

2021 NAIOP Capital Challenge Celebration!



On May 17, we got the rare in-person opportunity to celebrate the 2021 NAIOP Capital Challenge winners with students, staff, faculty and alumni at Pinstripes in North Bethesda! The group gathered for a debrief, dinner and bowling!

Congratulations to the team of **William Christian, Sharmin Davoodian, John Plachta, and Weishi Zhang**. And a special thank you to Professor **Ron McDonald** and all the mentors, alumni and consultants.



## Student Spotlight: Weishi Zhang



### Weishi Zhang

**Weishi Zhang** is a recent graduate from the MRED program. During her time at the University of Maryland, she worked as a Graduate Assistant assisting professors with classroom and Zoom set up, in addition to working Colvin Institute events.

Zhang grew up in Taiyuan City, Shanxi Province, China and has lived in the United States for the past 3 years pursuing her Master of Real Estate Development degree. She earned an undergraduate degree in Land Resources Management from Guangdong College, China. Weishi received many accolades and successfully competed in over four student competitions.

At the University of Maryland, Zhang made her mark when she and her team competed and won First Place in the 2021 NAIOP Capital Challenge Competition. She is also the recipient of the 2020 ICSC Nexus Conference Scholarship. Recently, she received an honorable mention for her Capstone project, East King, a mixed-use, mixed-income project in Seat Pleasant, MD. Additionally, she is the President of the UMD Society of Real Estate Development (SoRED). She is the first woman to hold this position.

Zhang's interests are in market and financial analysis, but would like to develop her own project. "My future goal is to develop a project by myself and become a developer one day. The program has given me the knowledge and helped me to connect with professionals in this industry.", said Zhang.

The Colvin Institute would like to thank Weishi for her service, commitment and friendship. We wish her the best of luck, and know she will be great at whatever she undertakes.

