

2013 Evaluation of the Bethesda Urban Partnership

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The County Council established the Bethesda Urban Partnership (BUP) in 1993 as the urban district corporation for the Bethesda Urban District. By law, an urban district corporation exists for five years before it must be reauthorized by Council resolution and approved by the County Executive. Before its term is renewed, the Office of Legislative Oversight must conduct a performance evaluation.

BUP's current term ends on January 31, 2014. Since this evaluation finds that BUP continues to fulfill its mandated responsibilities, OLO recommends the Council reauthorize BUP for another five year term.

BUP's Organizational Structure and Responsibilities

A Board of Directors, consisting of 11 members appointed by the County Executive and approved by the County Council, oversees the Bethesda Urban Partnership. BUP has 34 year-round (31 full-time) staff members in four divisions: internal operations, field operations, marketing, and transportation management.

By law, "urban districts are created to provide public services and facilities that are: (1) primarily of benefit to the property and persons within the urban district rather than to the County as a whole; and (2) in addition to services and facilities that the County provides generally" (County Code Chapter 68A). Listed below are BUP's legally authorized responsibilities and the contracted services it provides.

Responsibility	Bethesda Urban Partnership Services
Maintaining and enhancing streetscape amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintenance and landscaping (including trash/recycling collection, tree maintenance, snow removal, and street sweeping) of Bethesda public rights-of-way, public parking structures, the Bethesda Metro pedestrian tunnel and highway medians• Trash collection and street sweeping in Wheaton and Silver Spring Urban Districts
Promotion, organization, and support of cultural, recreational, and business activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintenance of website, conducting media outreach and publishing written advertising materials• Organization of special promotional events such as Taste of Bethesda, Imagination Bethesda, and Winter Wonderland• Promotion and management of cultural activities and events such as Gallery B and dance festivals
Advancing the business and residential environment and sense of community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Providing of assistance to Bethesda visitors through the Ask Me Team• Communicating with appropriate agencies about emergency maintenance, safety, or cleanliness issues• Participation in the Bethesda Metro Improvement Task Force
Enhancing safety and security in public areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaboration with County Police and Fire/Rescue Service to improve safety and security• Serving as alternative command center for the Bethesda police station in an emergency
Providing specialized transportation services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Management of the free downtown Bethesda Circulator
Increasing the number of people using alternative modes of transportation for commuting to Bethesda	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assistance to employers with development of traffic mitigation plans• Marketing of alternative transportation options such as public transit, carpools, and vanpools to employers and employees in downtown Bethesda• Completion of annual survey of employees on transportation use

Feedback on BUP's Services

OLO conducted 18 interviews with County Government staff and community representatives who work with BUP. Every interviewee reported satisfaction with BUP's work. Most reported that BUP delivers very high quality services and that BUP communicates and collaborates extremely effectively with its partners. Many cited BUP's high level of expertise in urban district management and emphasized the role of BUP's senior management in ensuring efficiency and effectiveness. One County partner stated that BUP could communicate more proactively regarding interruptions and changes to services.

OLO also reviewed focus group feedback on BUP's performance that Association Laboratory, Inc. compiled as part of BUP's strategic planning process. This feedback indicated that various participants, including property developers, residents, visitors and employers in downtown Bethesda, consistently had high regard for BUP, its staff, and BUP's role in Bethesda. Focus group members shared specific positive feedback about the quality of BUP's website, BUP's ability to effectively promote events, BUP's role in resolving problems and coordinating with the local arts community, and BUP's positive relationship and effective communication with the County.

Bethesda Urban Partnership's Finances

BUP receives revenue from a combination of County and non-County sources. From FY09-FY13, 92% of BUP's revenue came from the County Government and 8% came from non-County sources. During this period, BUP's County revenue decreased by 0.6%, and non-County revenue decreased by 32%. The table on the next page shows BUP's actual revenues and expenditures for the FY09-FY13 period.

BUP's County revenue comes from four service contracts managed by 3 different County entities. Specifically, BUP provides:

- **Urban district management services**, such as maintenance and landscaping, promoting downtown Bethesda, planning special events, and managing the Bethesda Circulator, under a contract managed by the Bethesda Chevy-Chase Regional Services Center. This contract is BUP's largest single source of revenue.
- **Bethesda Transportation Management District (TMD) services**, such as promoting alternate modes of transportation and conducting an annual commuter survey of employees in the Bethesda TMD under a contract managed by the Department of Transportation.
- **Groundskeeping services** at public parking lots and garages in Bethesda under a contract managed by the Department of Transportation.
- **Street sweeping and trash collection services** in the Silver Spring and Wheaton Urban Districts under one contract with the County to provide street sweeping and a second one to collect trash from public receptacles in the Silver Spring and Wheaton Urban Districts.

BUP's non-County revenue comes from event income and sponsorships, advertising on the Bethesda Circulator, and service contracts with other entities (e.g., State Highway Administration and Imagination Stage). BUP uses this revenue to enhance services and fund an equipment replacement reserve.

BUP uses six expenditure categories: field operations (e.g., maintenance), marketing and special events, transportation management, internal operations, arts & entertainment and an equipment replacement reserve. BUP's expenditures totaled \$4.3 million in FY13, a 4% decrease compared to its FY09 expenditures of \$4.5 million. In every year except FY10, BUP's revenues exceeded its expenditures.

Bethesda Urban Partnership Revenues and Expenditures, FY09 – FY13

	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13
Revenues (\$000s)					
County Contracts	4,133	4,011	3,971	4,014	4,110
Bethesda Urban District	3,269	3,155	3,208	3,271	3,358
Bethesda Transportation Management District	614	624	567	557	563
Streetsweeping in Wheaton and Silver Spring	78	65	43	40	46
Trash Removal in Wheaton and Silver Spring	138	139	128	116	117
Groundskeeping at Public Parking Lots and Garages	33	28	27	31	25
Non-County Revenue	476	362	393	315	323
Total BUP Revenue	4,609	4,372	4,365	4,329	4,433
Expenditures (\$000s)					
Field Operations	2,273	2,254	2,205	2,305	2,306
Marketing and Special Events	841	816	806	774	769
Transportation Management	604	593	560	545	549
Internal Operations	525	531	490	492	486
Arts and Entertainment District	191	159	140	154	146
Reserve for Equipment Replacements	50	50	50	50	50
TOTAL	4,484	4,403	4,250	4,321	4,306

County Funding Sources for BUP's Contracts

Two primary sources of revenue fund BUP's County Government contracts:

Bethesda Parking Lot District (PLD) Fund. The Bethesda PLD Fund receives revenue from three sources: a property tax on commercial and non-commercial property in the PLD; parking fees and fines collected within the PLD; and investment income. By law, these funds may be used to operate, construct, and renovate parking facilities in Bethesda and to fund Urban District and transportation management activities in Bethesda. The law limits PLD support for the Urban District to no more than 10% and no less than 90% of the combined revenue from the PLD transfer and the urban district tax (see below). In FY13, the County transferred approximately \$2.8 million (or 96% of the allowable amount) from the Bethesda PLD Fund to the Bethesda Urban District, which BUP manages.

Bethesda Urban District Fund. Besides transfers from the Bethesda PLD, the Bethesda Urban District Fund receives revenue from an urban district tax on real and personal property and from maintenance charges paid by optional method developers. In FY13, approximately \$3.4 million (98%) of estimated expenditures from this fund paid for BUP's contract with the County to manage the urban district.

BUP and the Living Wage

In 2002, the Council adopted a Living Wage Law that requires certain County contractors and subcontractors to pay their employees who perform work under County service contracts a County established wage – known as a “living wage.” In FY14, the County living wage is \$13.95/hour. The County Attorney has determined that BUP is not legally required to pay the living wage.

Notwithstanding this determination, as a matter of policy, the BUP Board has advocated for funding to pay its employees the living wage rate since FY09. This past summer, the County finally adjusted BUP's budget to pay BUP employees the FY14 living wage rate. In future years, the Bethesda Chevy-Chase Regional Services Center Director will notify BUP of any living wage rate changes, and the budget request BUP submits to the County will reflect these wage rate changes.

Bethesda Urban Partnership's Strategic Plan

BUP's Board of Directors recently submitted a new 2009-2014 strategic plan with goals for maintenance, marketing and communications, transportation, and arts & entertainment to the Council. Unlike previous years, the new Strategic Plan does not request any changes to County law or any amendments to BUP's contracts. BUP has four strategic goals for its new five year term. They are:

- To create a state of the art appearance and easier customer navigability for downtown Bethesda;
- To create and implement a successful marketing plan to ensure that Bethesda is at the regional forefront of attracting customers and businesses;
- To achieve a transportation system with complementary vehicular and non-vehicular options; and
- To ensure that Bethesda is a vibrant Arts & Entertainment District that attracts artists, arts patrons and arts organizations.

Office of Legislative Oversight Recommendations

OLO offers the following recommendations for Council action regarding the Bethesda Urban Partnership:

#1: Reauthorize the Bethesda Urban Partnership for another five-year term and retain the requirement for an OLO evaluation prior to reauthorization.

OLO's review confirmed that BUP's activities continue to fulfill the purposes of the organization. In addition, OLO found that BUP's County Government and community partners are pleased with the quality of BUP's work.

#2: Require BUP to develop a new five-year strategic plan before the next reauthorization.

In developing the organization's next strategic plan, OLO recommends the Council encourage BUP to continue to seek input from constituents at the beginning of the strategic planning process and include a status report on implementing objectives identified in the previous strategic plan.

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CHAPTER I. Authority, Scope, and Organization of Report

A. AUTHORITY

Council Resolution 17-830, *Fiscal Year 2014 Work Program of the Office of Legislative Oversight* and Chapter 68A of the County Code.

B. SCOPE OF REPORT

Chapter 68A of the County Code authorizes the County to establish urban district corporations to provide services within the County's urban districts. By law, an urban district corporation exists for five years after its articles of incorporation are accepted for recording by the State Department of Assessments and Taxation. An urban district corporation can be extended for an unlimited number of additional five-year terms by a resolution adopted by the County Council and approved by the County Executive. Before the County renews a corporation's term, the law requires the Office of Legislative Oversight to conduct a performance evaluation that includes feedback from property owners, business owners, and residents from in and around the urban district.

Bethesda is the only urban district in Montgomery County that has an urban district corporation. In 1994, the Bethesda Urban Partnership, Inc. (BUP) began its first term as the urban district corporation to manage the Bethesda Urban District. In this capacity, BUP performs landscaping and other maintenance services, plans special events, promotes the urban district and oversees the operation of the Bethesda Circulator, a shuttle serving the downtown area. BUP also manages the Bethesda Transportation Management District and the Bethesda Arts and Entertainment District.

BUP has operated for four five-year terms since its creation, and the County Council has released three prior OLO evaluations of BUP. In December 2008 the County Council approved Resolution 16-786, which reauthorized the Bethesda Urban Partnership for its fourth five-year term starting on February 1, 2009 and ending on January 31, 2014.

To aid the Council as they consider the reauthorization of BUP for a fifth term, this OLO report includes:

- Descriptions of BUP's current services, staffing, progress on previous strategic plan goals and new goals and strategies, and finances; and
- Feedback on BUP's performance from County government, community representatives and other individuals who regularly interact with BUP or benefit from its services.

C. ORGANIZATION

Chapter II, Overview of the Bethesda Urban Partnership's Legal Framework, describes the Bethesda Urban District and other designated districts in downtown Bethesda, and provides an overview of BUP's governing structure, including State and County laws governing BUP.

Chapter III, BUP Operations, describes BUP's staffing and its maintenance, marketing, transportation management, and other services, BUP's progress on its 2008-2012 strategic plan and the goals and strategies of its 2014-2019 strategic plan.

Chapter IV, Finances, describes BUP's funding sources and expenditures for the past five years and the sources of County revenue spent on BUP services.

Chapter V, Feedback from County Government and Community Representatives, provides feedback on BUP's performance from a variety of individuals who interact directly with BUP or benefit from its services.

Chapters VI and VII present the Office of Legislative Oversight's **Findings and Recommendations**.

Chapter X, Agency Comments, presents comments from the County's Chief Administrative Officer and the Bethesda Urban Partnership's Board of Directors on the final draft of this report.

D. METHODOLOGY

Office of Legislative Oversight staff member Natalia Carrizosa conducted this study. The research consisted of examining County laws and operating budget documents and reviewing documents provided by BUP such as financial reports, BUP's most recent strategic plan, and other materials describing BUP's work. OLO also met with the BUP Board of Directors and BUP staff and interviewed County staff and other individuals who interact with BUP on a regular basis to obtain feedback on BUP's performance. OLO also used feedback from focus groups facilitated by the Association Laboratory, Inc. during BUP's strategic planning process.

E. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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OLO appreciates the assistance of County Government staff including Ken Hartman from the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services Center; Joe Callaway from the Mid-County Regional Services Center; Yvette Freeman from the Silver Spring Regional Services Center; Carolyn Biggins, Keith Compton, Rick Siebert, Emil Wolanin, Sandra Brecher, Philip McLaughlin, and Richard Dorsey from the Department of Transportation; Brady Goldsmith and Helen Vallone from the Office of Management and Budget; Lieutenant Thomas Jacocks and Sergeant John D'Albora from the Police Department; Battalion Chief James Resnick from Fire and Rescue Services; and Elza Hisel-McCoy from the Planning Department.

We would also like to thank Office of Legislative Oversight staff members Sue Richards and Kelli Robinson for their invaluable guidance and assistance.

CHAPTER II. Overview of the Bethesda Urban Partnership's Legal Framework

The County Council established the Bethesda Urban District in 1993, and in the same year created the Bethesda Urban Partnership (BUP) as the corporation authorized to manage the district. Since its establishment, BUP has been reauthorized three times by the Council and has taken on additional responsibilities related to other special districts in Bethesda. Table 2-1 presents a timeline of key events from BUP's establishment in 1993 to the most recent reauthorization in 2008.

Table 2-1: Bethesda Urban Partnership Timeline, 1993-2008

Date	Event
December 1993	Council creates BUP to manage the Bethesda Urban District and approves BUP's Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws (Resolution 12-1400)
December 1998	Council reauthorizes BUP until January 31, 2004 (Resolution 13-1994)
February 1999	Council adopts Resolution 14-56 which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes a transportation management district in Bethesda • Allows creation of a Transportation Management Organization (TMO) • Approves BUP as a grantee for the TMO
December 1999	BUP as TMO begins managing the Bethesda Transportation Management District
April 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State of Maryland designates Bethesda as an Arts and Entertainment District • BUP becomes the manager of the Bethesda Arts and Entertainment District
January 2004	Council reauthorizes BUP until January 31, 2009 (Resolution 15-461)
September 2006	BUP begins managing the Bethesda Circulator
December 2008	Council reauthorizes BUP until January 31, 2014 (Resolution 16-786)

This Chapter provides an overview of the governance structure and history of BUP, and is organized as follows:

Section A provides an overview of the Bethesda Urban District and its legal framework, including the requirements for establishing an urban district corporation;

Section B describes the Bethesda Urban Partnership (BUP) articles of incorporation and bylaws;

Section C reviews the other special districts created in Bethesda and their relationship to BUP; and

Section D summarizes the Council action to reauthorize BUP in 2008.

A. Overview of the Bethesda Urban District

General. County Code Chapter 68A, Montgomery County Urban Districts, permits the County Council to create urban districts. Urban districts are special taxing districts with diverse commercial, institutional, and residential development that the County desires to “maintain and enhance...as prosperous, livable urban centers.”¹ The Code states that the purpose of urban districts is to provide services for the benefit persons and property within the district that are in addition to the services normally provided by the County.² Authorized “additional” services within an urban district include maintaining and improving streetscapes and

¹ County Code § 68A-2(a)

² County Code § 68A-3(b)

amenities, promoting and programming public interest activities, enhancing safety and security in public areas, and providing capital projects that promote the growth and stability of the district.

In addition to Bethesda, the Council has also established urban districts in Silver Spring and Wheaton. The law provides that funding for urban district services can come from:

- An urban district tax that may not exceed \$0.30 per \$100 of assessed property value;
- Parking lot district fees, limited to the number of parking spaces multiplied by enforcement hours per year multiplied by \$0.20;
- A charge on optional method development property for the cost of maintaining off-site amenities such as streetscape improvements;³
- Transfers from the County's general fund which may be subject to repayment (the Bethesda Urban District no longer receives revenue from this source as of FY05); and
- Other revenue collected by the urban district from various sources, such as charges for services or corporate sponsors.

Funds for urban districts may only be used for the district where they are collected and for the allowable services. Additionally, the law states that "the proceeds from either the urban district tax or parking fees transferred into an urban district fund must not exceed 90 percent of their combined total."⁴

Urban District Corporations. The County Code requires an urban district to be managed by a County department or by an urban district corporation created by the Council.⁵ Maryland law authorizes charter counties to create commercial district management authorities for the purposes of "promotion; marketing; and the provision of security, maintenance, or amenities within the district."⁶ The Bethesda Urban Partnership was established as the urban district corporation for the Bethesda Urban District.⁷

The County Code describes an urban district management corporation as "a public instrumentality of the County...[that]... is not within the Executive or Legislative branches of County government, is separate and distinct from the County, and is an independent entity."⁸ The Code also states that an urban district corporation may provide the following services:

- Promotion, organization, and support of cultural, recreational, and business activities;
- Specialized transportation services;
- Enhancement and maintenance of streetscape; and
- Other initiatives to advance the business and residential environment and sense of community.⁹

³ Optional method development is "property for which the owner has agreed with the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission to be responsible for installing and maintaining both on-site and off-site improvements." (County Code § 68A-1(h))

⁴ County Code § 68A-4(c)(d)

⁵ County Code § 68A-9 (a)

⁶ Maryland Code art. 25A, Chartered Counties of Maryland § 5(FF)(ii)

⁷ The Silver Spring and Wheaton district do not have urban district corporations and are instead managed by the County Government.

⁸ County Code § 68A-9 (a)

⁹ County Code § 68A-9 (b)

In 1995, the County Attorney concluded that an urban district corporation is a “public entity” under County procurement laws, which allows the County to enter into a contract with an urban district corporation without competition.¹⁰ Other requirements in the County Code specific to urban district corporations that BUP must comply with include:

- Establishing an 11-member Board of Directors, composed of a diverse group of business and residential representatives, that “directs all aspects of the program, management, and finances of the corporation,” may establish rules of procedure, and adopts bylaws for the corporation.¹¹ The Board is appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council. The Board also appoints an executive director for BUP.¹²
- Preparing and submitting a budget to the County’s Office of Management and Budget for review and approval as part of the County’s budget process. Corporations must also submit an annual independent audit and management letter and financial report.¹³
- Using the County’s centralized purchasing system, and making a “good faith” effort to meet County goals for purchasing recycled goods and contracting with minority, female, and disabled-owned businesses (even though BUP is not subject to County procurement laws).¹⁴

Chapter 68A states that an urban district corporation exists for five years after the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation accepts its Articles of Incorporation. The law authorizes the County Council to renew the corporation for additional five-year terms after a performance evaluation by the Office of Legislative Oversight.¹⁵

B. Bethesda Urban Partnership Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws

County law requires the County Council and County Executive to approve an urban district corporation’s articles of incorporation and bylaws. BUP’s Articles of Incorporation establish the name and duration of the corporation, set forth the powers and restriction on powers, and describe the Board of Directors. According to BUP’s Articles of Incorporation, the corporation’s purposes are to:

- Provide more direct involvement of the community of Bethesda in the provision of services;
- Enlist the active interest and financial support of individuals, citizen and civic groups, firms, and corporations concerned about the improvement of the Urban District;
- Provide services, in addition to the services and facilities the Montgomery County Government provides generally;
- Promote and program public interest activities that benefit both residential and commercial interests of the Urban District;
- Collaborate and cooperate with federal, state and county agencies, civic associations and other improvement associations, and business associations;

¹⁰ County Code § 11B-41 and February 8, 1995 memorandum from Assistant County Attorney Melnick (Appendix A)

¹¹ County Code § 68A-10 (d, f, g)

¹² The executive director and other employees of an urban district corporation are not County employees and are not eligible to participate in the County’s retirement program. However, corporations may participate in the County’s health insurance program if the corporation pays the employer’s share of the premiums. BUP has participated in the County’s health insurance program since 1998.

¹³ County Code § 68A-12 (d)

¹⁴ County Code § 68A-11(d)

¹⁵ County Code § 68A-12 (e), County Code § 68A-13 (a,b)

- To have and to exercise to the extent necessary or desirable for the accomplishment of any of the aforesaid purposes...any and all powers conferred upon non stock corporations; and
- Support the activities of the other nonprofit organizations serving the Bethesda Urban District.¹⁶

BUP's Bylaws describe the structure of the Board of Directors, including the terms of Board members, Board meetings, and officers and committees of the Board. It also describes the duties of the Executive Director and the Corporation's finance and procurement practices.

The Council and Executive approved the Bethesda Urban Partnership's Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws in 1993. BUP must submit any changes to the Executive and Council for approval. Neither BUP's Articles of Incorporation nor Bylaws have changed since they were first approved, with the exception of amending the Articles of Incorporation to reflect reauthorization of BUP.

C. Other Special Districts in Bethesda

In addition to the Bethesda Urban District, there are four other districts in the downtown Bethesda area: the Parking Lot District, Transportation Management District, Arts and Entertainment District, and Central Business District. The map on page 10 shows the geographic relationship among the districts. It shows that the Bethesda Urban District and Arts and Entertainment District share the same boundaries, the Parking Lot District is slightly smaller, and the Transportation Management District and Central Business District Sector Plan Area are both slightly larger.

1. The Bethesda Parking Lot District

A parking lot district (PLD) is a legally designated geographic area defined in Chapter 60 of the County Code in which the County can assess a special property tax and collect parking fees (e.g., parking meter or permit fees) to acquire, build, maintain, or operate off-street parking facilities. Parking fees may also be transferred to an urban district fund, transportation management district, or to the Department of Transportation for transit-related activities within a PLD that does not have a transportation management district. Any fees transferred to a transportation management district must not exceed the fees collected in that district. Taxes and fees must be used in the PLD where they were collected.¹⁷ The Bethesda PLD is one of four parking lot districts in the County. The other districts are in Silver Spring, Wheaton, and Montgomery Hills.

2. Transportation Management District

A transportation management district (TMD) is a geographic area established by the County Council to reduce traffic congestion through transportation demand management. The goals of transportation demand management are to: "increase transportation capacity; reduce existing and future levels of traffic congestion; reduce air and noise pollution; and promote traffic safety and pedestrian access."¹⁸

The County Code allows the Department of Transportation to sign sole source contracts with a transportation management organization to carry out transportation management programs in a TMD.¹⁹ In 1999, the Council established a TMD in Bethesda, and the Bethesda Urban Partnership became the transportation

¹⁶ *Articles of Incorporation of Bethesda Urban Partnership, Inc. A Nonstock Corporation.* Article III, § 3 (a-g)

¹⁷ County Code § 60-16 (a, c)

¹⁸ County Code § 42A-22 (f)(1-4)

¹⁹ County Code § 42A-23 (c)

management organization for the Bethesda TMD through a contract managed by the Department of Transportation.²⁰ As the transportation management organization, BUP is required to:

- Monitor and assess traffic patterns and pedestrian access and safety;
- Promote traffic and parking control measures;
- Promote transportation-related capital projects;
- Promote or implement transit and ridesharing incentives;
- Promote cooperation between the County and other government agencies;
- Create and implement cooperative County/private sector programs to increase ridesharing and transit use; and
- Submit a biennial report to the Department of Transportation in even-numbered years.

Under the authorizing resolution, funding to implement transportation management programs for the Bethesda TMD may include revenue transferred from the Bethesda Parking Lot District, a transportation management fee on new and existing development, and allocation of state or federal grant funds.²¹

The Bethesda TMD also has a 17 member advisory board (11 voting and six non-voting members) appointed by the BUP Board of Directors. The TMD Advisory Board's responsibilities include advising BUP and the County Department of Transportation on transportation management issues in downtown Bethesda and advising BUP on TMD operations.

3. Arts and Entertainment District

The Bethesda Urban District received State of Maryland designation as an Arts and Entertainment District in 2002 in order to promote the visual and performing arts in Bethesda through tax incentives, special events, and other initiatives. The A&E District was re-designated by the state of Maryland in 2012 for another 10 years.

This designation provides County tax incentives including certain property tax credits and exemption from the admission and amusement tax for art and entertainment establishments and artists who reside and work in the district to encourage artists and entertainment venues to locate in Bethesda.²² As manager of the district, the Bethesda Urban Partnership markets the arts in Bethesda and organizes events that showcase visual and performing arts. The Arts and Entertainment District has its own 9-member Board of Directors.

4. Central Business District Sector Plan Area

The Bethesda Central Business District (CBD) Sector Plan Area is a planning area designated by the Maryland-National Capital Area Park and Planning Commission for downtown Bethesda. The 1994 sector plan for the Bethesda CBD and its 2006 amendment to the Woodmont Triangle area aim to establish a core development area around the Bethesda Metro Station that includes diverse commercial and residential

²⁰ Resolution 14-56

²¹ County Code § 42A-29

²² Md. Code art. 83A Department of Business and Economic Development, § 4-(702-703); COMAR 24.05.26; Montgomery County Code Chapter 25 § 52-18L

property; encourages cultural activities; improves streetscapes; and addresses transportation and pedestrian needs.²³ Specific goals outlined in the plan include:

- Encouraging the development of retail through sufficient parking availability, improved pedestrian accessibility, a circular bus route, directory maps to direct visitors to retail destinations, and marketing activities;
- Establishing Bethesda as a cultural center;
- Creating a transportation management organization to manage transportation demand in the Bethesda CBD; and
- Improving the streetscapes using methods such as planting trees and burying utilities to reduce visual clutter.

The 1994 Bethesda Central Business District Sector Plan states that the Bethesda Urban Partnership should participate in implementing some of the objectives of the plan, including “retail enhancement, ‘cultural district,’ and streetscape objectives.”²⁴

D. 2008 Reauthorization of the Bethesda Urban Partnership

Prior to the Council’s reauthorization of BUP in 2008, the BUP Board approved a new strategic plan for 2008-2012, and OLO conducted an evaluation of BUP. As part of its strategic plan, the BUP Board requested that the Council:

- Extend BUP’s authorization period from five years to ten years based on their performance over the previous fifteen years;
- Move management of the Transportation Management District contract to the Regional Services Center from the Department of Transportation for “greater efficiency”;
- Implement a biannual budget cycle, with a change to a calendar year or other off-cycle budget review that still allows for an annual review of funds;
- Expand the route and hours of the Bethesda Circulator; and
- Expand BUP’s responsibility for lighting and crosswalk repair.

OLO’s report recommended that the Council:

- Reauthorize the Bethesda Urban Partnership, Inc. for another five years and retain the requirement for an OLO evaluation before the next reauthorization;
- Require BUP to develop a new five-year strategic plan before the next reauthorization; and
- Hold a worksession with representatives from BUP and the County Government to discuss issues identified in BUP’s strategic plan.

Based on OLO’s recommendations and the comments from the Bethesda Urban Partnership, in December 2008 the Council chose to:

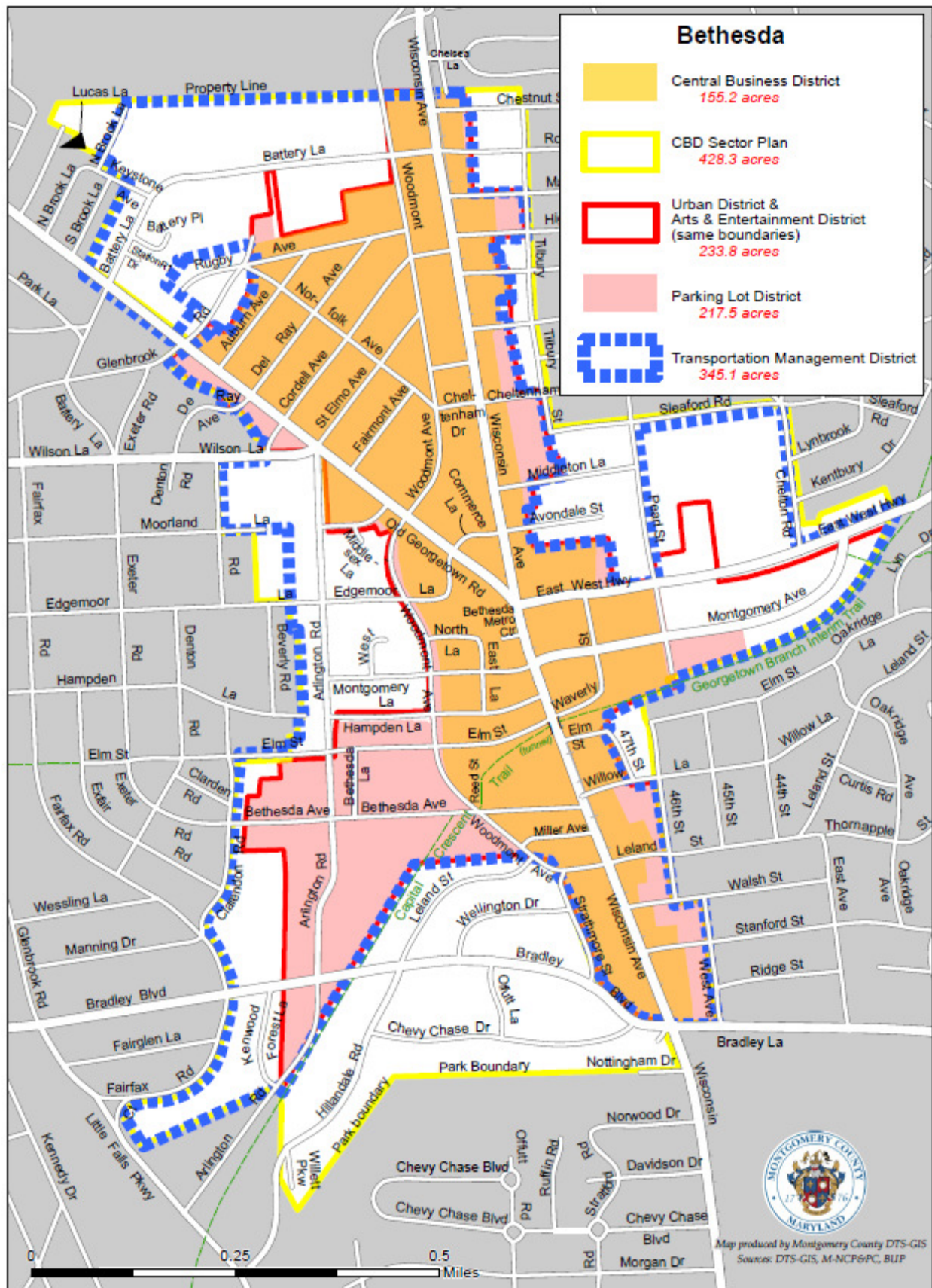
²³ *Bethesda Central Business District Sector Plan*. (July 1994); *Woodmont Triangle Amendment to the Sector Plan for the Bethesda CBD*. (March 2006)

²⁴ *Bethesda Central Business District Sector Plan*. (July 1994), p. 258.

- Reauthorize the Bethesda Urban Partnership for a fourth five-year term from February 1, 2009 through January 31, 2014. The Planning, Housing and Economic Development Committee recommended retaining the five-year term length to allow the Council to continue to review, after a reasonable period, whether changes are needed in BUP's purpose and responsibilities, how the services that BUP provides are funded, and the quality of BUP's services;
- Ask BUP to update its five-year strategic plan before the Council considers reauthorization in 2014, and as part of this process continue to seek input from constituents, solicit comments on BUP's proposed objectives from relevant County Government departments, and include a status report on objectives identified in the 2008-2012 strategic plan; and
- Ask the Executive Branch to report back to the Council by February 1, 2009 regarding decisions on contract management issues identified in BUP's 2008-2012 strategic plan, specifically the issue of moving the administration of the Bethesda Transportation Management District (TMD) contract from the Department of Transportation to the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services Center and the issue of expanding BUP's responsibilities for streetlighting and crosswalk repair.

In January of 2009, in response to the Council's request to report on decisions on contract management issues, the CAO stated that DOT's Transit Services Division would continue to administer the Bethesda TMD contract and that BUP had begun to take on an "enhanced role" in assisting DOT in identifying and addressing streetlight outages in the summer of 2008. The CAO also stated that, "A similar role for BUP in identifying crosswalk repair needs is also envisioned."

Except for confirming the County Executive's appointments to the Board of Directors, the Council has taken no further action on BUP since 2008.



CHAPTER III. Bethesda Urban Partnership Operations

This chapter describes Bethesda Urban Partnership's (BUP) oversight structure and its services. The chapter is organized as follows:

Section A describes BUP's maintenance, landscaping, marketing, transportation management, and other operating activities.

Section B describes the outcomes of BUP's 2008-2012 Strategic Plan and the goals and strategies of its 2014-2019 Strategic Plan.

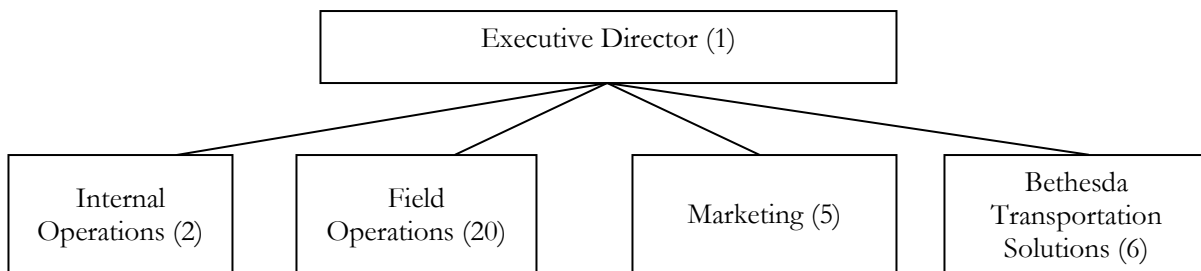
A. BETHESDA URBAN PARTNERSHIP OPERATIONS

BUP's operations are divided into four divisions: Internal Operations, Field Operations, Marketing, and Transportation Management. BUP established the Internal Operations division in 2003 and hired a director of finance to oversee it in 2005.

Since 2008, BUP's employee complement changed from 33 full-time and three part-time positions to 31 full-time and three year-round part-time positions.

Exhibit 3-1 shows the Partnership's organizational structure and the number of staff in each division. Each division has a Director who reports to BUP's Executive Director.

Exhibit 3-1: Bethesda Urban Partnership Organizational Chart



This section describes each division's activities and services, plus other BUP activities, including safety and security enhancement, that are not assigned to a particular division.

1. Internal Operations

The Internal Operations division manages BUP's finances and administration. Its primary responsibilities include:

- Maintaining BUP's financial records and providing monthly financial reports to the Board of Directors;
- Preparing annual budgets and cost analyses;
- Managing the annual audit required by the County Code and BUP's contracts with the County;

- Reporting to the County’s Chief Administrative Officer on BUP’s efforts to contract with minority, female, and disabled-owned (MFD) businesses and procurement of recycled goods, as required by County Code;¹ and
- Managing human resources and office administration, including employee compensation and equipment purchases.

2. Field Operations

With 20 staff, Field Operations is the largest of BUP’s four divisions. Field Operations provides maintenance and landscaping activities, the Ambassador Program, and the Bethesda Circulator.

a. Maintenance and Landscaping

BUP’s field operations staff maintain and landscape public property within the Bethesda Urban District, and also provide contract maintenance services on certain non-public or non-County owned properties. The field operations management team conducts regular inspections and keeps a service log to monitor service provision and quality.

Maintenance and Landscaping in the Bethesda Urban District. Each year, the Bethesda Urban Partnership executes an agreement with the County to manage the Bethesda Urban District. Like the FY09-FY12 agreements, the FY13 agreement states that BUP will conduct maintenance activities on “all public rights-of-way within the urban district boundaries.”² The Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services Center administers the contract.

Under its contract, BUP provides litter collection, trash receptacle service, sidewalk cleaning and repair, landscape and tree maintenance, street sweeping, and maintenance of the Bethesda Metro pedestrian tunnel within the Bethesda Urban District. The contract specifies minimum standards for each regular maintenance activity. Table 3-1 describes each activity with the FY13 contract specifications. Additionally, BUP completed a redesign of all gateway and pedestrian wayfinding signage in FY09 and refaced all signs in FY12.

County staff report that BUP’s performance “easily exceeds” the contract requirements. BUP reports that trash cans are emptied six days per week rather than five days per week, trash cans in heavy-traffic areas are emptied more than once a day, and streets are swept three days per week although the contract does not specify frequency.

¹ County Code § 68A-11 (d)(1)

² Article I, paragraph 3

Table 3-1: Bethesda Urban District Maintenance and Landscaping Activities

Task	Required Frequency	Description
Litter Collection	Once per day except specified holidays	Collect and dispose of litter from sidewalks, pedestrian bridges, planters, tree pits, and areas outside district if it primarily benefits the district
Trash Receptacle Service	3 times per week and daily on weekends	Empty trash cans, replace bags, and pick up litter
Brick Sidewalk Cleaning	At least annually	Clean all brick sidewalks to remove gum, paint, and other debris with an environmentally safe method
Landscape Maintenance	2 times/year	Mulch and fertilize all planting areas and prune shrubs
	Continuously	Control weeds
	As needed	Water plants and use integrated pest management techniques
Tree Maintenance	As needed	Clean up debris in tree pits, mulch, reset bricks, control weeds and pests, water, prune trees
	Annually	Fertilize
Tree Planting	As needed	Plant new and replacement trees
Mowing	12 times/year	Mow, remove litter, and edge mowed areas in public right-of-way, fertilize as needed
Snow Removal	As needed	Clear snow and ice from crosswalks
Street Sweeping	Not specified	Remove debris from curb lines and curbed medians
Sidewalk Repair	As needed	Maintain all sidewalks
Metro Pedestrian Tunnel Maintenance (beginning in FY12)	Daily	Broom sweep the tunnel, clean handrails, remove trash
	Every other day	Wash tunnel floors
	Monthly	Pressure clean walls and floors
	As needed	Replace burnt out light bulbs
Bethesda Trail Tunnel Gates	Daily	Open gates at 6:00 a.m. and close at 10:00 p.m.
Source: Annual Agreement by and between Montgomery County, Maryland and Bethesda Urban Partnership, Inc., FY13		

Maintenance of Optional Method Development Properties. BUP's annual agreement with the County to manage the Bethesda Urban District states that BUP "may enter into agreements with optional method developers enabling the Corporation to maintain streetscape amenities on private or public properties in the urban district."

In practice, the Planning Board requires optional method developers to receive services from BUP to maintain streetscape amenities such as landscaping and sidewalks in the public right-of-way as a condition of its site plan approval. However, as recommended by the Office of the County Attorney, BUP does not enter into formal written agreements with Optional Method Developers. The County Attorney reasons that because Section 68 A-4(3) of the County Code provides the County with statutory authority to assess and collect the charges addressed, agreements between Optional Method Developers and BUP are not required.

BUP currently provides maintenance services in the public right-of-way for 24 optional method development (OMD) properties. After a new OMD project is built, the director of field operations visits the property and inventories the amenities to determine the services that BUP will perform. BUP sends this information to the Regional Services Center. Additionally, BUP reports quarterly to the RSC on actual services performed.

The County bills OMD property owners for services on a quarterly basis and notifies them of any changes in services or fees. The County's monthly transfer to BUP to pay for its management of the Bethesda Urban District includes a pro-rated estimate of the fees the County receives quarterly from OMD property owners.

Groundskeeping for Public Parking Lots and Garages. BUP provides groundskeeping services for six parking lots and five parking garages in Bethesda under a County contract managed by the Department of Transportation, Division of Parking Management. Under the contract, BUP:

- Maintains turf by mowing, testing soil, fertilizing, controlling weeds, and aerating and overseeding;
- Edges curbs and walkways;
- Maintains tree pits and plant beds by weeding, fertilizing, edging, mulching, and trimming and pruning shrubs and trees;
- Collects litter; and
- Implements insect and disease control measures.

Trash removal and street sweeping in the Wheaton and Silver Spring Urban Districts. The County Code authorizes an urban district corporation to "provide any authorized service to another Corporation or urban district."³ BUP provides trash collection and street sweeping services to the Wheaton and Silver Spring Urban Districts under two contracts administered by the Mid-County and Silver Spring Regional Services Centers.

BUP collects trash five days per week from 183 public trash receptacles within the Silver Spring Urban District and one day per week from 77 public trash receptacles in the Wheaton Urban District. BUP also picks up any spilled trash within five feet of the trash receptacle. Finally, a separate contract for streetsweeping stipulates the streets in each district that BUP must sweep three times per week.

Other Maintenance and Landscaping Contracts. The County Code permits BUP to provide services "outside the boundaries of [the] urban district if the service will primarily benefit businesses or residents in the urban district."⁴

As such, BUP has entered into contracts with the State Highway Administration and the National Institutes of Health to maintain Bethesda "gateway" areas and another contract to provide maintenance for a private property within the urban district:

State Highway Administration. In 2000, BUP signed an agreement with the State Highway Administration (SHA) to provide maintenance services in certain roadway medians considered to be "gateways" to the Bethesda Urban District. In 2013, following a review of the original agreement, BUP and the State Highway Administration signed a new Memorandum of Understanding. The 2013 agreement slightly extends the limits of the medians BUP maintains. The Wisconsin Avenue medians extend from Pooks Hill Road south to Woodmont Avenue, and from the southern district

³ County Code § 68A-9 (b)

⁴ County Code § 68A-9 (b)(4)

boundary south to Somerset. The Bradley Boulevard median extends from Wisconsin Avenue west to Goldsboro Road.

National Institutes of Health (NIH). In 2013, BUP entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with NIH to provide grounds maintenance for a green space NIH owns at the corner of Woodmont and Wisconsin Avenues.

Imagination Stage. In accordance with an ongoing contract between BUP and Imagination Stage, BUP provides tree maintenance, bed maintenance, and flower planting services for the Imagination Stage, a nonprofit organization located in the Urban District.

Addressing Community Maintenance Concerns. As described in Table 3-2, BUP frequently works with the County and the broader community to address additional maintenance concerns in the Bethesda Urban District.

Table 3-2: Examples of BUP's Efforts to Address Community Maintenance Concerns

Issue	Description
Streetlight Maintenance	BUP assists DOT with streetlight maintenance by providing a monthly outage report. BUP implemented a GIS system in 2012 to track outages internally and facilitate reporting. BUP staff report that this system updated and made accurate the County's streetlight GIS layer.
Crosswalk Restriping	In FY09, BUP created a photo inventory and ratings of crosswalks to assist DOT with crosswalk restriping. At the end of FY13, the Department of Transportation restriped many of the identified crosswalks.
Pothole Repair and Road Maintenance	BUP has an informal arrangement with the Department of Transportation to repair potholes in the Bethesda Urban District. The County supplies BUP with materials, and BUP maintenance staff repair potholes as part of their regular duties. When the County does not supply BUP with materials, BUP reports potholes to DOT, and DOT repairs them. BUP does not receive any funding specifically for this service. BUP also works with DOT to address emergency road maintenance issues, for example sinkholes, by assisting with monitoring and maintenance of temporary repairs.
Recycling Collection with Bethesda Green	Bethesda Green aims to promote environmentally friendly, or "green" practices in downtown Bethesda. To this end, Bethesda Green has provided recycling cans to be used in the public right-of-way in Bethesda, and BUP currently empties the cans.
Bethesda Metro Bus Bay Maintenance	In recent years, several members of the community have expressed concerns about the condition of the Bethesda Metro Bus Bay. BUP has communicated with WMATA staff regarding the cleaning of the bus bay and participates in the Bethesda Metro Improvement Task Force along with the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce, the County Government, WMATA, and the Bethesda Hyatt Regency.
Graffiti Removal	BUP removes graffiti from publicly owned and maintained structures located within the public right-of-way.
Holiday Decorations	In FY09, BUP purchased LED lit garland strands for Bethesda lantern poles and worked with the County to identify which lantern poles were not yet equipped with power outlets.

b. Ambassador Program

The County Code charges urban district corporations with providing “promotion, organization, and support of cultural, recreational, and business activities.”⁵ BUP’s FY13 annual agreement with the County to manage the urban district states that BUP may “conduct...activities to advance the business and residential environment and sense of community in the urban district through such measures as enhanced security...and other community initiatives.”⁶

One way that BUP achieves these purposes is through the ambassador program, more commonly known as the “Ask Me Team.” BUP staff provide directions to Bethesda visitors, offer motorist assistance, and notify other BUP staff or appropriate agencies about emergency maintenance or safety issues. Team members also have first aid, CPR and CERT training.

The Ask Me Team operates Wednesday through Saturday from 1:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. and on Sundays from 11:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Team members rove the downtown area and are stationed at three kiosks where they provide brochures about Bethesda, including maps, restaurant guides, event flyers, and transportation information.

c. Bethesda Circulator

The Bethesda Circulator is a free bus service running through downtown Bethesda with 20 stops. The Circulator runs Monday to Thursday from 7 a.m. to midnight, Friday from 7 a.m. to 2 a.m., and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 a.m. Appendix B provides a map of the Circulator route.

The service first started in FY01 as the “Bethesda 8 Trolley.” From FY01-FY06, Montgomery County Ride-On operated the trolley, which was funded through subsidies from the State of Maryland and the County’s Mass Transit Fund.

The County Code authorizes urban district corporations to offer “specialized transportation services, including jitney service.”⁷ In September 2006, the County added the Bethesda Circulator to the services specified in BUP’s Bethesda Transportation Management District contract, and transferred the funding source to the Bethesda Parking Lot District.

In FY09, the County made the Circulator service part of BUP’s annual agreement with the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services Center. BUP staff and representatives from the Division of Transit Services in the Department of Transportation and the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services Center explained that this change was justified because the Circulator primarily serves as a parking garage shuttle and a downtown residential circulator and only incidentally as a commuter service. BUP subcontracts the Circulator’s service operations to a private party, but uses its in-house staff to provide marketing, customer service training for drivers, and maintenance of the signs and benches at Circulator stops.

In 2008, BUP commissioned an evaluation of the Bethesda Circulator, funded with a grant from the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. The consultant’s report, released in October 2008, recommended expanding the Circulator route, seeking additional funding sources including on-board advertising, improving signage and visibility of stops, reducing headways through more effective driver coordination and adding more vehicles, and expanding service hours, in particular to include Saturday

⁵ County Code § 68A-9 (b)

⁶ Article I, paragraph 2

⁷ County Code § 68A-9 (b)(2)

mornings.⁸ Over the past five years, BUP has implemented many of the report’s recommended improvements. For example,

- In July 2008, BUP completed a redesign and upgrade of all Bethesda Circulator signage;
- In July 2010, BUP adjusted the Circulator schedule to include Saturday daytime service; and
- In July 2011, BUP replaced the existing trolley-style vehicles with a fleet of three new buses to address concerns about reliability and rider comfort;
- In July 2012, BUP added a third bus during peak hours to address issues associated with the Lot 31 construction project, in collaboration with the DOT Division of Parking Management, and increased marketing and social media efforts for the Circulator.

Circulator ridership data from 2006 to 2013 provided on Table 3-3 show that average monthly ridership has increased from about 19,000 to 26,000 riders since BUP began managing the Circulator in 2006.

Table 3-3: Average Number of Monthly Circulator Riders, 2006-2013

Year	Monthly Riders	% Change from previous year
2006*	18,907	N/A
2007	23,432	24%
2008	22,608	-4%
2009	21,098	-7%
2010	22,741	8%
2011	22,826	0.4%
2012	25,277	11%
2013**	26,356	4%

Source: BUP Strategic Plan 2014-2019

*2006 data are from September of that year, when BUP began managing the Circulator, to December

**2013 data are for January through May

3. Marketing

BUP’s annual agreement with the County to manage the urban district states that BUP may “plan, coordinate, and manage promotional activities and events that benefit both commercial and residential interests within the urban district.”⁹ The Marketing team includes 5 staff, four full-time and one part-time. BUP’s marketing division coordinates these types of efforts through general marketing activities, special events, and management of the Arts and Entertainment District.

a. General Marketing Activities

⁸ “Bethesda Circulator, Bethesda, Maryland,” Kittelson & Associates, Inc. (October 20, 2008), p. 20 http://www.mwcog.org/transportation/activities/tlc/pdf/Bethesda_Report.pdf, accessed August 22, 2013

⁹ Article I, paragraph 2

The BUP marketing division uses a variety of methods to disseminate information about the Bethesda Urban District, including maintaining a website, conducting social media outreach, interacting with local media, and publishing written materials.

BUP's website, which was redesigned in April of 2010, describes the Bethesda Urban Partnership and provides information about downtown Bethesda, such as a parking map and information on local shopping, dining and lodging facilities. Additionally, BUP uses the website to promote special events they sponsor or events that organized by other Bethesda businesses and organizations. The website also posts press releases for local news media. BUP launched a mobile version of its website in October of 2010.

BUP conducts social media outreach via Facebook and Twitter accounts for both BUP as a whole and for Bethesda Transportation Solutions (BTS), the brand BUP uses to market its transportation management services. BUP reports having over 2,500 "likes" on Facebook and almost 1,500 followers on Twitter. BUP also distributes weekly promotional emails to approximately 8,000 subscribers. Additionally, BUP created a promotional video in 2012 that features 20 local businesses.

The marketing division publishes free booklets and brochures about Bethesda. BUP distributes these to local businesses in a variety of ways, including monthly deliveries to downtown Bethesda's six hotels and through its online ordering system. These publications include:

- *Destination Downtown Bethesda*, which provides telephone and address listings for restaurants, retailers, and services;
- *Eat Here*, a restaurant guide for the downtown Bethesda area;
- *The Art of Downtown Bethesda*, a guide to the arts in Bethesda;
- An events calendar and flyers that advertise individual events; and
- The Bethesda Circulator flyer, a map that shows the Circulator route and hours of operation as well as downtown Bethesda's parking garages and surface lots.

BUP also maintains a database of 200 volunteers to recruit for assistance at events. For example, staff report that they use up to 150 volunteers for events such as Taste of Bethesda (see description below). Finally, BUP has organized focus groups with local businesses, residents and businesses to discuss cooperative marketing opportunities.

b. Special Events

BUP organizes several major events in downtown Bethesda annually. All together, BUP reports that these events attract over 100,000 attendees. Events include:

- *Taste of Bethesda*, an annual October event that allows visitors to sample food from local restaurants;
- *Imagination Bethesda*, an annual children's art festival held each June;
- *Bethesda Outdoor Movies: Stars on the Avenue*, five evenings of free movies shown in the Woodmont Triangle area;
- *Literary Festival*, a three-day event held in a variety of venues that features authors, a writing contest, and poetry events;
- *Summer Concert Series*, free concerts featuring a variety of music on Wednesdays and Thursdays from May through July; and

- *Winter Wonderland*, an annual December event that includes a professional choral concert and performances by children's groups.

c. Arts and Entertainment District

The Bethesda Urban District received State of Maryland designation as an Arts and Entertainment District in 2002. The Arts and Entertainment District is a separate non-profit organization with the ability to raise its own funds. However, BUP's marketing division manages the Arts and Entertainment District as part of its mission to promote commercial interests and program public interest activities.¹⁰

BUP's activities related to the Arts and Entertainment District involve:

- Providing information to artists who are interested in working and living in Bethesda;
- Participating in annual meetings organized by the State of Maryland for all Arts and Entertainment Districts;
- Submitting an annual report of its activities to the State;
- Planning, promoting, and managing arts events and initiatives; and
- Managing Galley B, a space that opened in October 2011 where local and regional artists can display their work at reduced rates, and Studio B, a subsidized studio space for artists set to open in 2013.

Events organized by BUP include:

- *Dance Bethesda*, a weekend event in March that includes a dance concert, dance parties, and master dance classes;
- *Bethesda Fine Arts Festival*, a two-day event in May that allows 150 artists from 25 states to sell their work and participate in a juried competition;
- *Bethesda Painting Awards*, a juried art competition for about 350 regional painters that includes cash prizes and an opportunity to have their work displayed in Bethesda;
- *The Trawick Prize: Bethesda Contemporary Art Awards*, a juried competition for about 400 artists that includes cash prizes and an opportunity to have their work displayed in Bethesda;
- *Bethesda Art Walk*, a monthly event that promotes local art galleries – galleries are open into the evening and attendees can participate in free guided tours;
- *Play in a Day*, an opportunity for playwrights, directors, and actors to write, direct, and perform a play in 24 hours; and
- *Bethesda Film Fest*, a documentary film festival for regional filmmakers that was held for the first time in March of 2013

BUP reports that these events attract over 30,000 people and over 1,000 artists annually. BUP raises money for these events through sponsorships and fees paid by participating artists and organizations. The cash prizes for the Bethesda Painting Awards and the Trawick Prize have been endowed by an individual donor.

In addition, in 2012, BUP collaborated with the County Government to install new lighting and display the work of 12 artists in the pedestrian tunnel that runs under Wisconsin Avenue. This initiative, called "Tunnel

¹⁰ County Code § 68A-3(b)

Vision: Art Under the Avenue, represents the first major fundraising effort of the Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District Board of Directors.” Eighteen sponsors contributed to its support. BUP provides maintenance services in the tunnel as part of its contract to manage the Bethesda Urban District (see page 13).

The Bethesda Arts and Entertainment District was awarded the 2012 Arts and Entertainment Outstanding Achievement Award by the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development for its “success in creating and sustaining high-quality arts and cultural programming, development, and promotions that attract residents, tourists and new business to the area and support the community’s vitality and growth.”¹¹

4. Transportation Management

BUP’s Transportation Management division manages the Bethesda Transportation Management District under a contract administered by the Department of Transportation, Division of Transit Services. BUP has marketed the services provided under this contract as “Bethesda Transportation Solutions.” The division includes six staff, four full-time and two part-time.

a. Monitoring Parking, Pedestrian and Commuter Trends

BUP has a Transportation Management contract with the County that specifies that BUP must:

- Conduct an annual inventory of public and private parking supply, pedestrian facilities, transit services, and utilization of these facilities and services; and
- Complete an annual commuter survey of employees in the Bethesda TMD and seek to attain an 80% participation rate.

Every year BUP must file either a biennial report (in even-numbered years) or an interim report (in odd-numbered years) with the County. BUP submitted and the County approved its FY08-FY09 biennial report in March of 2010. In August of 2013, BUP submitted a draft of its FY10-FY11 biennial report in accordance with their contract. This draft is under review by the Department of Transportation’s Division of Transit Services. BUP reports that they recently completed the FY13 annual commuter survey.

b. Promoting Alternate Modes of Transportation

BUP works with employers and employees in Bethesda to promote alternate modes of transportation. According to BUP’s contract, the organization must:

- Assist employers with 25 employees or more to develop traffic mitigation plans, as required by law;¹²
- Work with businesses that are relocating to Bethesda to help them implement plans to reduce the number of single-occupancy vehicles;
- Market alternate modes of transportation to employers and employees and provide carpool and vanpool ride matching services;
- Monitor the participation of Share-a-Ride District Parking reduction participants and provide the Department of Transportation with information to facilitate billing of participants; and

¹¹ “Bethesda receives 2012 Arts & Entertainment Outstanding Achievement Award,” Maryland State Arts Council, <<http://www.msac.org/431>>, accessed July 16, 2013

¹² County Code § 42A-24

- Track which property owners must pay the TMD fee and provide the Department of Transportation with billing information.

According to BUP's FY10-11 biennial report on transportation management, the percent of commuters using alternate modes of transportation (i.e., modes other than single occupancy vehicles) reached nearly 37% in FY10; 37% is the mode share goal for Bethesda.¹³ Additionally, BUP's FY10-11 biennial report states that BUP helped 127 businesses prepare Transportation Mitigation Plans.

BUP's contract with the County authorizes BUP to conduct marketing and outreach on alternate modes of transportation to employers in downtown Bethesda and their employees. BUP markets alternate transportation methods using a variety of strategies, described in Table 3-4 below.

Table 3-4: BUP Marketing and Outreach Efforts on Alternate Modes of Transportation

Type	Description
Website	The Bethesda Transportation Solutions website provides information about public transit, biking, parking, and pedestrian safety. It also provides information about a variety of specific programs for commuters, including carpools and vanpools, tax incentives, the guaranteed ride home program, park-and-ride lots, and telecommuting. For employers, the site highlights County laws on transportation management, employer tax incentives, and information on carpools and vanpools.
Commuter Information Days	Transportation management staff make presentations to employees or set up an informational table in a building lobby to distribute information about alternate forms of transportation and commuter programs to businesses in the TMD.
Monthly Newsletter	BUP distributes a monthly transportation management newsletter with information about commuter programs, tips on alternate modes of transportation, and information about events.
Events	BUP coordinates events specific to downtown Bethesda and as part of larger regional initiatives. The annual Walk and Ride Challenge calls on teams of workers in downtown Bethesda to compete to win by walking the most steps over the course of three weeks. BUP's Bike to Work Day "Pit Stop" includes speakers and prizes as part of a regional event encouraging commuters to ride bikes. BUP also coordinates activities around World Car Free Day in collaboration with the Department of Transportation and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. BUP obtains private sponsorship for these events to provide prizes to participants.
Bicycling Classes	BUP works with the Washington Area Bicyclist Association and Montgomery County Commuter Services to provide bicycling classes aimed at individuals interested in commuting via bicycle on city streets.

In the past, BUP's Transportation Management Division provided additional outreach at other BUP events, including Taste of Bethesda, Imagination Bethesda, and the Bethesda Literary Festival. Since FY11, the division has focused its marketing and outreach efforts exclusively on downtown Bethesda employers and employees in accordance with its contract.

¹³ Bethesda CBD Sector Plan, 1994

5. Other Services

a. Enhancing Safety and Security

The County Code states that an urban district should “enhance the safety and security of an area.”¹⁴ BUP’s agreement with the County to manage the urban district states that BUP must “implement a method to service after-hours Police and [Department of Transportation] requests for street cleaning and removal of road blockages within the urban district.”¹⁵

The Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD) District 2 Station and Fire and Rescue Service (MCFRS) Battalion 2 report a high degree of collaboration with BUP. Examples include:

- BUP responds to MCPD requests for assistance with clearing the roadway of debris related to storms or vehicle collisions;
- MCPD and BUP cooperate to close and re-open streets for special events;
- BUP and the District 2 police unit for the Central Business District communicate using mobile phones, which allows them to notify each other when there is a situation that needs attention;
- BUP’s offices are the designated alternative command center for the Montgomery County Police District 2 station, and BUP distributes downtown Bethesda crime statistics from District 2 to the Board and other community stakeholders; and
- BUP supports MCFRS by proactively addressing safety issues such as securing loose objects and clearing storm drains before storms and alerting MCFRS of issues such as car fuel leaks.

In addition, about 10 BUP staff received Community Emergency Response Team training. BUP staff also participate in the quarterly meetings of the Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce’s Public Safety Council with MCPD and MCFRS to coordinate emergency response in Bethesda.

b. Liaising with Business Community

BUP assists County Government departments and other partners by liaising with businesses in downtown Bethesda regarding issues that may affect them. For example:

- BUP assists the Department of Transportation in obtaining input from and providing information to businesses regarding changes to lane markings, time limits on parking meters, and other issues; and
- BUP assists the Fire and Rescue Service and Police in liaising with the business community gas leaks, homelessness, and other safety and security issues.

¹⁴ County Code § 68A-3(b)

¹⁵ Article I, paragraph 6

B. STRATEGIC PLANNING

In 1998, OLO completed an evaluation of the Bethesda Urban Partnership. Based on OLO's report and recommendations, the Council requested that BUP prepare a five-year strategic plan for the next reauthorization period. BUP has prepared strategic plans for 2003-2007, 2008-2012, and 2014-2019. This section describes BUP's progress on the strategic goals in the 2008-2012 Strategic Plan as well as the strategic goals and strategies in the 2014-2019 Strategic Plan.

1. Progress on the 2008-2012 Strategic Plan Goals

BUP's 2008-2012 Strategic Plan established a set of strategic goals and objectives for three areas: maintenance, marketing, and transportation. Table 3-5 on the following page lists these goals along with the major actions BUP has taken to accomplish these goals since 2008. The plan also included specific requests for Council action with potential legal and contractual impacts, described on page 8 of this report along with the Council's response.

While BUP's major responsibilities have not changed since 2008, its actions show that it has expanded its services or worked to meet changing community needs. See Appendix C for BUP's 2014-2019 Strategic Plan; a full status report of BUP's actions to implement its strategic goals and objectives begins at page X.

Table 3-5: Bethesda Urban Partnership Strategic Goals, 2008 – 2012 and Major Actions Taken

Maintenance Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Continue to develop and maintain Bethesda Urban District’s public spaces, sidewalks and plazas at a first class standard. B. Develop and maintain public spaces, sidewalks, and plazas adjacent and contiguous to the Urban District at a first-rate standard, and consider expanding to include maintenance of public parks. C. Make navigation of downtown Bethesda more user-friendly. D. Provide feedback, as requested, to Montgomery County’s Department of Park and Planning during Development Review Committee meetings. <p>Actions Taken</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2009, BUP began emptying recycling cans provided by Bethesda Green in the public right-of-way. • In 2009, BUP redesigned all gateway and pedestrian signage to make it consistent with Bethesda branding. • In 2012, BUP began providing maintenance services in the tunnel next to the Bethesda Metro Station. • In 2013, BUP entered into an agreement with the National Institutes of Health to maintain a green space at the corner of Woodmont and Wisconsin Avenues, which is adjacent to the Bethesda Urban District.
Transportation Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Expand public transportation options to decrease traffic congestion in downtown Bethesda. B. Increase pedestrian friendliness of downtown Bethesda. C. Collaborate with Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority on an improved appearance of Metro Bus Bay. D. Increase business community outreach of Bethesda Transportation Solutions. <p>Actions Taken</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BUP changed the Bethesda Circulator hours to include Saturday daytime service in 2010, replaced the existing trolley-style vehicles with three new buses in 2011, and provided an additional bus to the route during peak hours in 2012 to mitigate issues related to the Lot 31 development project. • BUP has participated in the Bethesda Metro Improvement Task Force since 2010 and has communicated with WMATA staff regarding cleaning of the bus bay. • BUP created a bicycle map in 2009 and new “Biking to Bethesda” brochure and, since 2012, is working with Montgomery College and the Washington Area Bicyclists Association to provide bicycle safety classes.
Marketing Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Increase marketing of BUP’s responsibilities so that residents, customers, and employers have a clearer understanding of BUP’s authority and mission. B. Increase outreach to local retail businesses, restaurants, and arts and entertainment venues. C. Increase the presence of Bethesda’s Arts and Entertainment District. <p>Actions Taken</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BUP launched a Facebook page in 2010, a mobile website in 2011 and a Twitter account in 2012. • In 2012, BUP completed a promotional video featuring 20 local businesses and made it available on YouTube and BUP’s website. • In 2011, BUP opened Gallery B, a nonprofit gallery for artists to display their work at a low cost. • In May of 2012, BUP completed “Tunnel Vision,” an initiative to display art in the tunnel next to the Bethesda Metro. • BUP plans to open Studio B in late fall of 2013 to provide a low-cost studio space for local and regional artists.

Sources: Bethesda Urban Partnership, Strategic Plan 2008 and Strategic Plan 2014-2019

2. 2014-2019 Strategic Plan

In July 2013, BUP submitted its strategic plan for 2014-2019 to the County Council. Association Laboratory, Inc. assisted the BUP Board of Directors with its year-long strategic planning process. As part of the process, the consultant obtained feedback from a set of focus groups and conducted an online survey that was distributed to 5,300 contacts identified by BUP and the Bethesda Chevy-Chase Regional Services Center.

BUP's 2014-2019 strategic plan is attached at Appendix C. Similar to the previous strategic plan, BUP has identified strategic goals for maintenance, marketing and communications, transportation, and the Arts & Entertainment District. For each goal, BUP has also identified strategies and several action items. Table 3-6 lists the goals and accompanying strategies.

Table 3-6: Bethesda Urban Partnership Strategic Goals and Strategies, 2014 – 2019

Maintenance
Strategic Goal: Create a State of the Art Appearance and Easier Customer Navigability for Downtown Bethesda <u>Strategies</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Create a Unified and Attractive Downtown Bethesda Streetscape B. Improve Wayfinding in Downtown Bethesda C. Use Technology to Manage Downtown Bethesda's Infrastructure D. Improve Appearance of Bethesda Metro Station and Bus Bay
Marketing and Communications
Strategic Goal: Create and Implement a Successful Marketing Plan to Ensure that Bethesda is at the Regional Forefront of Attracting Customers and Businesses <u>Strategies</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> E. Enhance and Build Downtown Bethesda's Brand F. Promote the Economic Viability of Downtown Bethesda G. Improve Communication to Constituents H. Develop Relationships with Nearby Constituents
Transportation
Strategic Goal: A Transportation System that has Complementary Vehicular and Non-Vehicular Options <u>Strategies</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Improve Pedestrian Safety J. Improve Non-Single Occupancy Vehicular Options K. Ease Traffic Congestion L. Monitor Development and Traffic Plans that Impact Downtown Bethesda
Arts & Entertainment
Strategic Goal: Ensure that Bethesda is a Vibrant Arts & Entertainment District that Attracts Artists, Arts Patrons and Arts Organizations <u>Strategies</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> M. Support Individual Arts & Entertainment Organizations N. Facilitate Events to Appeal to Bethesda's Many Audiences O. Add More Art Elements to Downtown Bethesda

Source: Bethesda Urban Partnership, Strategic Plan 2014-2019

CHAPTER IV. The Bethesda Urban Partnership's Finances

This chapter describes BUP's revenues and expenditures for the five year period since the last Council reauthorization (FY09-FY13). The chapter is organized as follows:

Section A describes BUP's expenditures from FY09-FY13;

Section B presents BUP's County and non-County revenue sources from FY09-FY13;

Section C explains the Bethesda Urban District Fund and Bethesda Parking Lot District Fund, which fund BUP's contracts with the County; and

Section D discusses BUP's Arts and Entertainment District budget and BUP's status with regard to the County's Living Wage law.

A. EXPENDITURES

In FY13, BUP's expenditures were \$4.3 million dollars and fell into six general categories: 1) field operations; 2) marketing and special events; 3) Arts & Entertainment District activities; 4) transportation management; 5) internal operations; and 6) reserve for equipment replacements. As shown in Exhibit 4-1, field operations account for over 50% of BUP's FY13 expenditures.

Exhibit 4-1: FY13 Bethesda Urban Partnership Expenditures by Category (Actual)

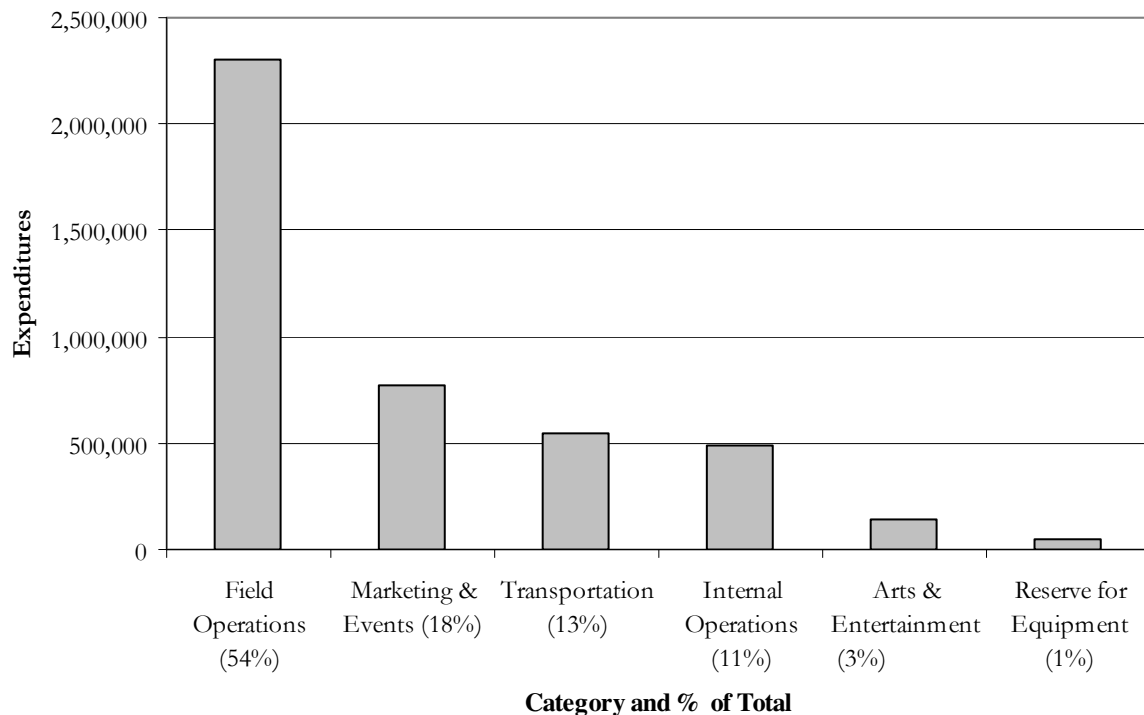


Table 4-1 (on the next page) summarizes BUP's expenditures by category between FY09 and FY13, and provides a detailed breakdown of the three largest categories. The data show that:

- Total BUP's expenditures decreased by 4%, from \$4.5 million to \$4.3 million, from FY09 to FY13;
- In each fiscal year, the primary expenditure items within the field operations category were overhead, including salaries, benefits, occupancy and administration, and the Bethesda Circulator bus service.

Table 4-1: Bethesda Urban Partnership Expenditures, FY09 – FY13 (Actuals, \$000s)

	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13
Field Operations					
Total	2,273	2,254	2,205	2,305	2,306
Overhead	802	815	814	813	863
Bethesda Circulator	745	701	695	777	818
Streetscape/Landscape Maintenance	443	462	412	421	372
Ambassador Program	192	179	186	195	153
Sidewalk Repairs and Maintenance	53	59	61	60	59
Tree Care and Special Maintenance Projects	38	38	37	40	40
Marketing and Special Events					
Total	841	816	806	774	769
Overhead	391	401	425	408	416
Events	244	238	234	243	240
Communications	206	178	147	123	113
Transportation Management					
Total	604	593	560	545	549
Overhead	530	533	514	510	504
Direct Services	74	60	45	35	45
Internal Operations	525	531	490	492	486
Arts and Entertainment District	191	159	140	154	146
Reserve for Equipment Replacements	50	50	50	50	50
TOTAL	4,484	4,403	4,250	4,321	4,306

Source: Bethesda Urban Partnership

B. REVENUE

The Bethesda Urban Partnership receives revenue from County and non-County sources. This section describes BUP's revenue sources and shows how they have changed over the last five fiscal years. As Table 4-2 shows, BUP received \$4.4 million in revenue in FY13 with 93% of that total (\$4.1 million) from County sources. The County Attorney has determined that funding received outside of the County contracts may be retained in a reserve account established for the replacement of capital assets.

Table 4-2: Bethesda Urban Partnership Revenue by Type, FY09 – FY13 (Actuals, \$000s)

BUP Revenue	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13
County Contracts					
Bethesda Urban District	3,269	3,155	3,208	3,271	3,358
Bethesda Transportation Management District	614	624	567	557	563
Streetsweeping in Wheaton and Silver Spring	78	65	43	40	46
Trash Removal in Wheaton and Silver Spring	138	139	128	116	117
Groundskeeping at Public Parking Lots and Garages	33	28	27	31	25
Subtotal	4,133	4,011	3,971	4,014	4,110
Non-County Revenue					
Event Income/Sponsorship	315	228	259	219	222
Circulator Advertising	60	23	-	8	15
Maintenance on State Roads	26	26	26	20	13
Miscellaneous	74	83	107	69	73
Subtotal	476	362	393	315	323
Total BUP Revenue	4,609	4,372	4,365	4,329	4,433
County % of Total	90%	92%	91%	93%	93%
Non-County % of Total	10%	8%	9%	7%	7%

Source: Bethesda Urban Partnership

1. County Revenue

BUP receives funding from the County via five contracts to provide specific services in Bethesda and other urban districts.

Contract to manage the Bethesda Urban District. BUP's largest source of revenue is a contract to manage the Bethesda Urban District. The County funds this contract with money from the Bethesda Urban District fund (described beginning on page 30). This contract provides funding for maintenance and landscaping services, generally promoting the Bethesda Urban District, and operating the Bethesda Circulator. In FY13, BUP received \$3.4 million in revenue from this contract. Money not spent by the end of the fiscal year must be returned to the County.

In BUP's contract to manage the Bethesda Urban District, the County specifies a funding allocation for the Bethesda Circulator. This amount was \$808,000 in FY13. Each year between FY09 and FY13, BUP's expenditures to operate the Circulator exceeded the County's specified funding allocation, ranging from an 11% deficit in FY09 (\$744,664 in expenditures compared to \$671,844 in revenue) to a 1% deficit in FY13 (\$818K in expenditures compared to \$808K in revenue). The contract permits BUP to raise additional revenue to enhance the Circulator service through the sale of advertising space on Circulator vehicles (summarized on the next page). BUP uses this revenue to fund the costs of operating the Circulator that exceed the County's funding allocation.

Contract for Transportation Management. BUP also holds a contract with the County to manage the Bethesda Transportation Management District. In FY13, BUP received \$563,000 for Transportation Management under this contract and expended \$549,000.

The source of funding for this contract is parking fee revenue (transferred from the Bethesda Parking Lot District fund, described beginning on page 32) and transportation management fees charged by the County on new and existing development.

Contracts for Street Sweeping and Trash Collection in the Silver Spring and Wheaton. BUP holds two joint contracts with the County to provide services in the Wheaton and Silver Spring Urban Districts: one to collect trash from the public trash cans located in the urban districts and another to perform street sweeping. In FY13, revenue from the trash removal contract was \$117,000 and revenue from the street sweeping contract was \$46,000. Together, these contracts accounted for 4% of BUP's County revenue.

The funding for these contracts comes from the Wheaton and Silver Spring Urban District Funds. For the street sweeping contract, the urban districts pay BUP based on a fixed rate per linear curb mile of street cleaned. For the trash collection contract, the urban districts pay BUP based on a fixed amount per receptacle serviced.

Contract for Groundskeeping at Public Parking Lots and Garages. BUP holds a contract with the County to provide groundskeeping services at public parking lots and garages in Bethesda. In FY13, this contract generated about \$25,000 in revenue for BUP, accounting for less than 1% of BUP's County revenue. The money to fund this contract comes from Bethesda PLD funds.

2. Non-County Revenue

Event income and sponsorships. BUP earns revenue from events it manages, such as Taste of Bethesda, Imagination Bethesda and the Bethesda Fine Arts Festival through private sponsors. Some events also raise income from event participants. BUP's financial statements for FY09 through FY12 attribute changes in event income and sponsorship to economic conditions as well as weather conditions affecting event attendance in some years.

Bethesda Circulator advertising. Private businesses pay to have their logo on the Circulator bus and publicity materials. As noted above, BUP uses this revenue to fund Circulator operating costs that exceed the County's allocation for this service.

Maintenance on State roads. BUP holds a Memorandum of Understanding with the State Highway Administration to provide maintenance services on State roads in "gateway areas." The contract with the State Highway Administration was suspended in March of 2012, leading to a halt in this source of revenue and decreased funding in FY13. A new Memorandum of Understanding with the State Highway Administration was established in March of 2013.¹

Miscellaneous. Miscellaneous revenue includes interest income and the contracts that BUP holds with other entities (Imagination Stage) to provide services.

¹ Bethesda Urban Partnership, Inc. Financial Statements and Management Discussion and Analysis for the Year Ended June 30, 2012, p. 5

C. SPECIAL DISTRICT FUNDS

This section describes the Bethesda Urban District Fund and the Bethesda Parking Lot District Fund, which provide most of the revenue for the County's contracts with BUP. Significantly, the Bethesda Parking Lot District Fund is the largest source of revenue into the Bethesda Urban District Fund.

1. Bethesda Urban District Fund

The County's Bethesda Urban District Fund finances BUP's contract with the County to manage the Bethesda Urban District. Table 4-3 shows the revenues into and expenditures from the Urban District Fund for FY09 through FY13.

Table 4-3: Bethesda Urban District Fund Revenues and Expenditures, FY09 – FY13 (\$000s)

	FY09 Actual	FY10 Actual	FY11 Actual	FY12 Actual	FY13 Est.
Beginning Fund Balance	69	43	181	25	110
Revenues					
Transfer from the Bethesda Parking District	2,775	2,835	2,593	2,865	2,815
Urban District Tax	461	478	485	463	446
OMD Maintenance Charges	138	123	150	144	150
Investment Income	4	0	1	0	0
Total	3,369	3,428	3,220	3,457	3,397
Expenditures					
Urban District Contract with BUP	3,269	3,155	3,208	3,271	3,358
Miscellaneous Urban District Expenses*	127	112	172	99	59
Transfer to the General Fund	8	9	8	16	15
Bethesda Streetlighting CIP Project	0	23	0	0	0
Total	3,396	3,290	3,380	3,370	3,417
Year-End Fund Balance	43	181	25	110	90

*OLO calculated this using the Urban District Appropriation/Expenditure from the Operating Budget and subtracting the amount of BUP's contract.

Source: Approved Operating Budgets, FY07, FY08, and FY09; BUP financial reports

Revenue. The Bethesda Urban District Fund receives funding from several sources:

- a. Urban District Tax.** The County Code authorizes the Council to levy a tax on all assessable real and personal property in the urban district, at a rate not to exceed 30 cents per \$100 of assessed value.² Since FY09, the tax rate in the Bethesda Urban District has been 1.2 cents per \$100 of assessed value for real property and 3 cents per \$100 of assessed value for personal property.
- b. Transfers from the Bethesda Parking Lot District (PLD).** County law allows the County Council to transfer revenue from Parking Lot District parking fees to the fund of any urban district from which the fees are collected. The amount of this transferred revenue must not exceed the number of parking spaces multiplied by the number of enforcement hours per year multiplied by 20 cents.³ In

² Montgomery County Code § 68A-4(a)(1).

³ Montgomery County Code § 68A-4(a)(2) and § 60-16(c).

FY13, approximately \$2.8 million was transferred from the Bethesda Parking Lot District to the Bethesda Urban District (Table 4-3, page 30).⁴

- c. **Maintenance Charges Paid by Optional Method Developers (OMD).** The County Code authorizes the County Executive to charge optional method developers for the cost of maintaining off-site amenities for that development.⁵ BUP assesses a fee for each service provided to an optional method developer and submits an invoice to the County, which then charges the developers. BUP receives payment for these services through their contract with the County to manage the urban district.
- d. **General Fund Transfer.** In FY05, the Bethesda Urban District Fund received \$29,000 in revenue from the County's General Fund. In FY06, the Council decided to eliminate the General Fund transfer to the Bethesda Urban District and replace it with additional funds from the Bethesda PLD.

In FY13, PLD transfers accounted for 83% of Urban District Fund revenue. Table 5-5 presents actual and estimated revenue and expenditures for the Bethesda Urban District Fund. From FY09-FY13, revenue increased less than 1%.

Tax and Fee Requirement. County law limits the relative proportion of urban district revenue that can come from either the urban district tax or the parking fee transfer. Specifically, the law states that neither the urban district tax nor the parking fees transferred into an urban district may exceed 90% of their combined total.⁶

Table 4-4 shows that this requirement has been followed: from FY09-FY13 urban district tax revenue ranged from 14% to 16%, while transfers from the PLD Fund ranged from 84% to 86% of the combined total. These percentages represent increases in the proportion of funding from the PLD compared with previous years. In FY09, transfers from the PLD Fund increased to 86% of the combined total from 79% in FY08 due to a reduction in the urban district property tax rate and the addition of the Bethesda Circulator to BUP's contract to manage the urban district.

Table 4-4: Urban District Funding, Tax and Fee Requirement (\$000s)

	FY09 Actual	FY10 Actual	FY11 Actual	FY12 Actual	FY13 Estimated
Urban District Tax	461	478	485	463	446
Parking Fees Transfer	2,775	2,835	2,593	2,865	2,815
<i>Total Tax and Fee</i>	<i>3,236</i>	<i>3,313</i>	<i>3,078</i>	<i>3,328</i>	<i>3,261</i>
Tax as % of Total	14%	14%	16%	14%	14%
Parking Fee as % of Total	86%	86%	84%	86%	86%

Source: Approved Operating Budgets, FY11, FY12, FY13, and FY14

Expenditures. As shown in Table 4-3 (page 30), Bethesda Urban District funds are used to fund the County's contract with BUP to manage the urban district. In FY12, the Council appropriated \$3.3 million (97% of expenditures) for BUP's contract to manage the urban district. The Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services Center uses the remaining funds for an urban district manager who oversees the contract with BUP, streetlight knockdowns, and other miscellaneous expenses for the urban district. Also, in FY10, the Bethesda Urban District Fund paid for a streetlight CIP project in downtown Bethesda.

⁴ The Executive's Recommended FY14 Operating Budget, p. 48-10.

⁵ County Code § 68A-1(h).

⁶ Montgomery County Code § 68A-4 (c).

2. Bethesda Parking Lot District (PLD) Fund

The Bethesda Parking Lot District funds several BUP contracts: the urban district contract with BUP (through the Urban District Fund), the contract to manage the Bethesda TMD, and a contract for groundskeeping at public lots and garages in Bethesda. The Bethesda PLD also funds parking lot construction and operation. This section describes PLD revenue and expenditures.

Revenue. The Bethesda Parking Lot District has four revenue sources:

- **Property taxes** on commercial and non-commercial property in the PLD⁷
- **Parking fees** collected in the Bethesda PLD from parking meters and parking permits
- **Parking fines** for non-moving violations within the Bethesda PLD
- **Investment Income**

Expenditures. The County Code states that PLD funds may be used for the construction, operation, and maintenance of parking lots and garages in the district where the revenue is generated. Parking fees can also fund urban districts and transportation management activities.⁸

In the case of the Bethesda PLD, the largest expenditures are for CIP projects and operating costs for parking lots and garages. Currently, Bethesda PLD revenue funds CIP projects such as ongoing renovations in existing garages and it contributes part of the funding for new parking garages – such as Bethesda Lot 31, which began construction in FY12.⁹ Operating costs include the ongoing maintenance and security of public parking lots and garages managed by the Department of Transportation. Other expenditures include transfers of parking fine revenues to the Mass Transit Fund. The remaining expenditures are the following two transfers related to the Bethesda Urban Partnership:

- **Transfer to the Bethesda TMD** to fund BUP’s contract to run the Bethesda TMD and administrative costs for DOT.
- **Transfer to the Bethesda Urban District** to fund BUP’s contract to run the Bethesda Urban District and other miscellaneous expenses in the urban district.

As Table 4-5 shows, these two activities accounted for between 7% and 17% of Bethesda PLD expenditures from FY09 to FY13.

Table 4-5: Bethesda PLD Fund Expenditures, FY09 – FY13

	FY09 (Actual)	FY10 (Actual)	FY11 (Actual)	FY12 (Actual)	FY13 (Estimated)
Expenditures for the Bethesda Urban District/TMD	17%	15%	13%	15%	7%**
Bethesda Urban District *	12%	12%	11%	13%	6%
Bethesda TMD *	4%	3%	2%	2%	1%
Other PLD expenditures/transfers	67%	71%	74%	71%	87%
Total PLD expenditures and net transfers* (\$000s)	22,624	24,558	23,522	22,767	49,877

* Include the County’s contracts with BUP and other Urban District/TMD costs

** In FY13, the percentage of expenditures for the Bethesda Urban District/TMD decreased in FY13 due to a significant increase in PLD expenditures, primarily due to CIP expenditures for the Lot 31 project

Source: Approved Operating Budgets, FY11, FY12, FY13, and FY14; Office of Management and Budget

⁷ Chapter 60 of the County Code

⁸ Montgomery County Code § 60-16

⁹ Approved FY13-18 Capital Improvements Program, p. 11-29

D. RELATED ISSUES

1. Bethesda Arts and Entertainment District

BUP manages Bethesda's Arts and Entertainment District. The direct costs of Arts and Entertainment District events are primarily funded by BUP's marketing budget, private contributions and event income. Prior to FY10, BUP reported all Arts and Entertainment District revenues and expenditures separately from other BUP expenditures in its audited financial statements. Since FY10 and based on a determination of the County Attorney, event revenue generated and expenditures paid from the BUP marketing budget are incorporated directly in the annual BUP audit. Private contributions and other direct monies to the Arts and Entertainment District and expenditures made directly from the Arts and Entertainment District bank account are no longer included in BUP's annual audit.

2. Living Wage

In 2002, the Council adopted the Living Wage Law, which requires certain contractors and their subcontractors of the County to pay a certain level of wages – known as a “living wage” – to employees who perform work on County service contracts.¹⁰ By executive order, Montgomery County as an employer must also pay the living wage to its merit system employees.¹¹ The Chief Administrative Officer adjusts the wage rate annually based on changes in the cost of living, as measured by the U.S. Department of Labor's Consumer Price Index. The required hourly wage rate for FY14 is \$13.95.

County staff report that the County Attorney has determined that BUP is not legally required to pay the living wage because the County has an agreement with BUP to manage the Bethesda Urban District instead of a contract. The County Attorney has not issued a formal opinion on the matter.

As a matter of policy, beginning in FY09, the BUP Board has advocated for funding to pay its employees the living wage rate. BUP's financial statements for that year reported an increase in employee benefit costs, which reflected an increase in hourly rates for maintenance employees that would have matched the County's living wage rate. BUP's requested increase in County contract funds to cover this adjustment was not approved.¹²

County staff report that, this past summer, the County adjusted BUP's budget to pay BUP employees the FY14 living wage rate. In future years, the Bethesda Chevy-Chase Regional Services Center will notify BUP of living wage rate changes, and BUP's budget request will include an adjustment for those changes.

¹⁰ County Code § 11B-33A

¹¹ Executive Order 91-03, effective date July 1, 2003

¹² Bethesda Urban Partnership, Inc. Financial Statements and Management Discussion and Analysis for the Year Ended June 30, 2009, p. 5

CHAPTER V. Feedback from County Government and Community Representatives

The Bethesda Urban partnership interacts regularly with several governmental and community organizations. These relationships, described in detail in Chapter III, are briefly summarized in the table below. This chapter provides feedback on BUP's performance from a variety of individuals who interact directly with BUP or benefit from the services they provide. It is organized as follows:

Section A summarizes feedback on BUP's performance from County Government and non-governmental entities obtained through OLO interviews; and

Section B presents feedback on BUP's performance from focus groups organized by BUP and Association Laboratory, Inc.

Table 5-1. BUP's Relationship with Government and Community Organizations

Agency/Organization	Nature of Relationship
Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services Center	Administers contract with BUP to manage the urban district and the Bethesda Circulator. The director serves as an ex officio member of BUP's Board of Directors.
Mid-County and Silver Spring Regional Services Centers	Administer contracts with BUP for trash removal and street sweeping in the Wheaton and Silver Spring Urban Districts.
Montgomery County Department of Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administers contract with BUP to manage the Bethesda Transportation Management District. • Administers contract with BUP for groundskeeping services for County parking lots and garages in the Bethesda Parking Lot District. • Provides materials to BUP staff for pothole repair, and solicits BUP's assistance in monitoring road issues in Bethesda. • Receives crosswalk condition assessments and monthly reports on streetlight outages from BUP and coordinates with BUP in managing street closures for events.
Montgomery County Police Department, District 2 Station	Coordinates with BUP to manage street closures and other event logistics, has designated BUP offices as an alternative command center, communicates and coordinates with BUP regarding safety issues.
Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Services, 2 nd Battalion	Coordinates with BUP on emergency preparedness and ongoing safety issues.
Montgomery County Planning Department	Coordinates with BUP on projects in Bethesda that have a public element and obtains input from BUP for the Bethesda Central Business District Master Plan.
Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce	Works with BUP to address issues that arise in downtown Bethesda that have an impact on businesses.
Transportation Management District Advisory Committee	Advises BUP on activities related to transportation management. Appointed by BUP's Board of Directors.
Arts and Entertainment District Board of Directors	Advises BUP on activities related to the Bethesda Arts and Entertainment District. Appointed by BUP's Board of Directors.
Jim and Carol Trawick Foundation	Sponsors the Bethesda Literary Festival; Carol Trawick also provides funding for the Trawick Prize and the Painting Awards.
Bethesda Cares	Coordinates with BUP regarding homelessness issues that arise.
Bethesda Green	Promotes sustainability initiatives in Bethesda and provided recycling bins for public right-of-way in Bethesda that BUP currently empties.

A. OLO INTERVIEWS WITH REPRESENTATIVES FROM COUNTY GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS, COUNTY AGENCIES, AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

OLO interviewed representatives from the County Government and non-governmental entities listed in Table 5-1 to elicit feedback on BUP's performance. Appendix D provides a list of specific individuals interviewed. This section provides a summary of that feedback. Overall, BUP received positive comments about service quality and staff.

Quality of services. Most interviewees reported that BUP's services are very high quality and all interviewees expressed satisfaction with BUP's work. Several interviewees suggested that BUP can serve as a model of best practices, and many highlighted BUP's high level of expertise in urban district management. All interviewees considered their interactions with BUP staff to be positive. Many interviewees emphasized the role of BUP's senior management in ensuring efficiency and effectiveness.

County staff who administer contracts with BUP reported that BUP meets and often exceeds contract requirements. One County partner identified an area for improvement in service delivery, stating that BUP could communicate more proactively regarding interruptions and changes to services.

Coordination with County Government. All County partners reported that they have a positive working relationship with BUP and most reported that BUP communicates and collaborates with their departments extremely effectively.

Public safety representatives stated that they work in close collaboration with both BUP staff on the ground and BUP management to address safety and security issues. They noted that BUP staff "know what to look for," and are able to provide needed assistance without being asked, for example when BUP staff secure loose objects and clear storm drains before major storms. Other County partners also described examples of BUP providing valued assistance to their departments, such as liaising with the business community regarding DOT's changes to parking rules or lane markings and assisting in the monitoring and maintenance of temporary road repairs.

BUP's Responsibilities. When asked whether BUP should do more or less than they already do, most interviewees indicated that they felt that BUP's current responsibilities are appropriate. Many interviewees noted that new development projects in downtown Bethesda will lead to an increased workload for BUP as more residents and visitors arrive. One County partner suggested a number of opportunities for BUP to do more, including providing economic development data on its website and increasing marketing outreach efforts to employees at the National Institutes of Health and Walter Reed Medical Center campuses.

B. FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

As part of its strategic planning process, BUP worked with Association Laboratory, Inc. to organize and facilitate focus group meetings. Between November 2012 and January 2013, Association Laboratory led focus groups with:

- Representatives of property managers or developers with commercial, residential, or mixed-use properties in downtown Bethesda (4 participants)
- Residents of Bethesda (5 participants)
- Representatives from the Department of Economic Development, the Office of Management and Budget, the Police Department, the Department of Transportation, and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (6 participants)
- Visitors to downtown Bethesda (6 participants)

- Representatives of retailers and other businesses in downtown Bethesda (6 participants)
- Representatives of employers with 50 or more employees in downtown Bethesda (5 participants)
- The Bethesda Transportation Management District Advisory Committee
- The Arts & Entertainment District Advisory Board

This section summarizes feedback on BUP's performance provided by the focus groups. Detailed focus group results summarized by Association Laboratory, Inc. are included in Appendix X.

BUP's performance and quality of services. Feedback from the focus groups indicated that participants had a consistently high regard for BUP, its staff, and BUP's role in Bethesda. Focus groups shared specific positive feedback regarding the quality of BUP's website, BUP's ability to effectively promote its events, BUP's role in resolving problems and coordinating with the local arts community, and BUP's positive relationship and effective communication with the County.

BUP's mission. Focus group feedback indicated that most participants view BUP primarily as an information resource and an organizer of community events. Among all of the groups, the County partners group had the highest level of awareness of the full range of BUP's services.

Participants identified several areas for BUP to do more. Non-County groups felt that BUP could communicate more frequently about issues such as traffic related to construction projects and could do more outreach to develop a community network. The TMD Advisory Committee group recommended expanding the Circulator route and conducting more outreach to areas adjacent to the urban district to provide information about visiting Bethesda. The Arts & Entertainment District Advisory Board recommended that BUP work to coordinate the promotion of all arts activities in the urban district beyond BUP's own events, and that BUP could ask other venues and organizations to contribute funds for these marketing activities. They also called for BUP to continue to work on bringing more public art to Bethesda and to provide more activities for children.

CHAPTER VI. Findings

Chapter 68A of the County Code authorizes the County to establish urban district corporations to provide services within the County's urban districts. By law, an urban district corporation exists for five years and can be extended for an unlimited number of additional five-year terms by a resolution adopted by the County Council and approved by the County Executive. Before the Council renews the corporation's term, the law requires the Office of Legislative Oversight to conduct a performance evaluation.

The County Council established the Bethesda Urban Partnership (BUP) in 1993 as the urban district corporation for the Bethesda Urban District. Since BUP's establishment, the Council has reauthorized BUP for three additional five-year terms, most recently in December 2008. This term ends on January 31, 2014.

This chapter presents the findings from OLO's evaluation of BUP:

Section A provides findings related to BUP's responsibilities;

Section B presents findings related to BUP's finances; and

Section C offers a finding related to BUP's strategic plan.

A. RESPONSIBILITIES

Finding #1: The Bethesda Urban Partnership's overall responsibilities have not changed since the Council reauthorized BUP in 2008.

The statutes, governing documents and contracts listed in the table below define BUP's responsibilities. Since 2008, no major changes or additions to the law or other documents have been made.

Statutes, Other Governing Documents and Contracts that Define BUP's Responsibilities

Statutes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of Maryland, Commercial District Management Authorities • Montgomery County Code Chapter 68A, Urban Districts • County Code Chapter 42A, Ridesharing and Transportation Management
Governing Documents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resolution 14-56, Establishment of a Transportation Management District in Bethesda • 1994 Bethesda Central Business District Sector Plan • Bethesda Urban Partnership Articles of Incorporation
County Government Contracts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement to manage the Bethesda Urban District, including the Bethesda Circulator • Contract to manage the Bethesda Transportation Management District • Contracts for Street Sweeping and Trash Collection in the Silver Spring and Wheaton Urban Districts • Contract for Groundskeeping at Public Parking Lots and Garages in Bethesda

BUP's major areas of responsibility continue to be to:

- Maintain and enhance streetscape amenities;
- Program public interest activities, including promotion, organization, and support of cultural, recreational, and business activities;
- Advance the business and residential environment and sense of community;

- Enhance safety and security in public areas;
- Provide specialized transportation services; and
- Increase the number of people using alternative modes of transportation.

Finding #2: The Bethesda Urban Partnership’s services continue to fulfill the organization’s responsibilities.

The following table provides examples of how BUP achieves the organization’s purposes defined in the law, governing documents and County Government contracts.

Responsibility	Examples
Maintaining and enhancing streetscape amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance and landscaping (including trash/recycling collection, tree maintenance, snow removal, and street sweeping) of Bethesda public rights-of-way, public parking structures, and highway medians • Maintenance of pedestrian tunnel next to the Bethesda Metro Station • Trash collection and street sweeping in Wheaton and Silver Spring Urban Districts
Programming public interest activities, including promotion, organization, and support of cultural, recreational, and business activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance of website, conducting media outreach and publishing written advertising materials • Organization of special promotional events such as Taste of Bethesda, Imagination Bethesda, and Winter Wonderland • Promotion and management of cultural activities and events such as Gallery B and dance festivals
Advancing the business and residential environment and sense of community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing of assistance to Bethesda visitors through the Ask Me Team • Communicating with appropriate agencies about emergency maintenance, safety, or cleanliness issues • Participation in the Bethesda Metro Improvement Task Force
Enhancing safety and security in public areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration with County Police and Fire/Rescue Service to improve safety and security • Serving as alternative command center for the Bethesda police station in an emergency
Providing specialized transportation services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of the free downtown Bethesda Circulator
Increasing the number of people using alternative modes of transportation for commuting to Bethesda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance with the development of traffic mitigation plans for employers • Marketing of alternative transportation options such as public transit, carpools, and vanpools to employers and employees in downtown Bethesda • Completion of an annual survey of employees to monitor changes in transportation use

Finding #3: Since BUP's last reauthorization in 2008, the organization reduced the number of staff slightly and has expanded services in some areas.

Since 2008, BUP's employee complement changed from 33 full-time and three part-time positions to 31 full-time and three part-time positions. During this period, BUP's revenues decreased by 4% as a result of reductions in both non-County revenues such as event income and sponsorships and County contract revenues. At the same time, BUP has added services in some areas:

- In 2011, BUP opened Gallery B, a nonprofit gallery for artists to display their work at a low cost, and in late fall of 2013 BUP plans to open Studio B to provide a low-cost studio space for local and regional artists.
- In May of 2012, BUP completed "Tunnel Vision," an initiative to display art in the tunnel next to the Bethesda Metro Station and began providing regular maintenance services in the tunnel.
- In 2013, BUP entered into an agreement with the National Institutes of Health to maintain a green space at the corner of Woodmont and Wisconsin Avenues, which is adjacent to the Bethesda Urban District.

Several County and community partners interviewed by OLO noted that new development projects in downtown Bethesda will lead to an increased workload in the future for BUP as more residents and visitors arrive.

Finding #4: County and community representatives provided positive assessments of BUP's services and staff.

OLO interviewed County Government representatives and other individuals who work with BUP. All interviewees reported satisfaction with BUP's work. Most interviewees reported that BUP's services are of very high quality and that BUP communicates and collaborates with its partners extremely effectively. Many cited BUP's high level of expertise in urban district management and several emphasized the role of BUP's senior management in ensuring efficiency and effectiveness.

OLO also reviewed focus group feedback on BUP's performance, compiled by Association Laboratory, Inc. during BUP's strategic planning process. The feedback indicated that participants, which included property developers, residents, visitors and employers in downtown Bethesda, had a consistently high regard for BUP, its staff, and BUP's role in Bethesda. Focus groups shared specific positive feedback regarding the quality of BUP's website, BUP's ability to effectively promote events, BUP's role in resolving problems and coordinating with the local arts community, and BUP's positive relationship and effective communication with the County.

B. FINANCES**Finding #5: In FY13, BUP's expenditures were \$4.3 million.**

In FY13, BUP's expenditures were \$4.3 million, reflecting a decrease of 4% from FY09 as shown in the table below. For each year, BUP's largest expenditure categories are field operations and marketing and special events.

Bethesda Urban Partnership Expenditures, FY09 – FY13 (Actuals, \$000s)

	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13
Field Operations and Bethesda Circulator	2,273	2,254	2,205	2,305	2,306
Marketing and Special Events	841	816	806	774	769
Transportation Management	604	593	560	545	549
Internal Operations	525	531	490	492	486
Arts and Entertainment District	191	159	140	154	146
Reserve for Equipment Replacements	50	50	50	50	50
TOTAL	4,484	4,403	4,250	4,321	4,306

Source: Bethesda Urban Partnership

Finding #6: In FY13, the County Government provided 93% of BUP's revenue via five contracts. BUP's contract to manage the Bethesda Urban District provided the majority of funding from the County Government.

In FY13, BUP received 93% of its revenues from the County Government via five contracts to provide specific services in Bethesda and other urban districts. 7% of its revenues came from non-County sources including event income and sponsorships, Bethesda Circulator advertising, and contracts with non-County entities to provide maintenance services.

Bethesda Urban Partnership Revenue by Type, FY09 – FY13 (Actuals, \$000s)

BUP Revenue	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13
County Revenue	4,133	4,011	3,971	4,014	4,110
Non-County Revenue	476	362	393	315	323
Total BUP Revenue	4,609	4,372	4,365	4,329	4,433
County % of Total	90%	92%	91%	93%	93%

BUP's contract with the County to manage the Bethesda Urban District provided \$3.4 million in revenues in FY13, which represents the majority (82%) of revenues from the County.

Finding #7: Bethesda Parking Lot District funds represent the primary source of revenue for the Bethesda Urban District.

The Bethesda Urban District provides the funding for BUP's contract to manage the Bethesda Urban District. The Urban District receives funding from transfers from the Bethesda Parking Lot District (PLD), from the Urban District Tax, and from maintenance charges paid by optional method developers.

In FY13, revenues for the Bethesda Urban District included a \$2.8 million transfer from the Bethesda PLD, \$446,000 in revenues from the Urban District Tax and \$150,000 from charges paid by optional method developers.

Bethesda Urban District Revenues, FY09 – FY13 (\$000s)

Revenue Source	FY09 Actual	FY10 Actual	FY11 Actual	FY12 Actual	FY13 Estimated
Transfer from the Bethesda Parking District	2,775	2,835	2,593	2,865	2,815
Urban District Tax	461	478	485	463	446
OMD Maintenance Charges	138	123	150	144	150
Investment Income	4	0	1	0	0
Total	3,369	3,428	3,220	3,457	3,397

Source: Approved Operating Budgets, FY11, FY12, FY13, and FY14

The Bethesda PLD is funded by a property tax on commercial and non-commercial property in the PLD, parking fees collected in the PLD, parking fines issued within the PLD, and investment income. These funds may be used to operate, construct, and renovate parking facilities in Bethesda and fund the Urban District and transportation management activities in Bethesda.

Finding #8: BUP pays the County’s “Living Wage” rate to its employees as a matter of policy, and the County has adjusted BUP’s budget for this purpose.

In 2002, the Council adopted the Living Wage Law, which requires certain contractors and their subcontractors of the County to pay a certain level of wages – known as a “living wage” – to employees who perform work on County service contracts.¹ County staff report that the County Attorney has determined that BUP is not legally required to pay the living wage because the County has an agreement with BUP to manage the Bethesda Urban District instead of a contract. The County Attorney has not issued a formal opinion on this matter.

As a matter of policy, the BUP Board has advocated for funding to pay its employees the living wage rate. County staff report that, this past summer, the County adjusted BUP’s budget to pay BUP employees the FY14 living wage rate. In future years, the Bethesda Chevy-Chase Regional Services Center will notify BUP of living wage rate changes, and BUP’s budget request will include an adjustment for those changes.

¹ County Code § 11B-33A

C. STRATEGIC PLAN

Finding #9: Unlike previous strategic plans, BUP's recently completed strategic plan for 2014-2019 does not include requests for changes to the law or to the administration of BUP's contracts.

In December of 2008, the Council reauthorized BUP for its fourth five-year term and requested that BUP update its five-year strategic plan before the Council considers reauthorization again in 2014. In July of 2013, BUP submitted its strategic plan for 2014-2019 to the Council.

In the plan, BUP has identified strategic goals for maintenance, marketing and communications, transportation, and the Arts and Entertainment District, along with specific strategies and action items for each goal. BUP's strategic goals for 2014 to 2019 are to:

- Create a state of the art appearance and easier customer navigability for downtown Bethesda;
- Create and implement a successful marketing plan to ensure that Bethesda is at the regional forefront of attracting customers and businesses;
- Achieve a transportation system with complementary vehicular and non-vehicular options; and
- Ensure that Bethesda is a vibrant Arts & Entertainment District that attracts artists, arts patrons and arts organizations.

In previous strategic plans, BUP made specific requests with potential legal or contractual impacts. The 2014-2019 strategic plan includes no such requests.

CHAPTER VII: Recommendations

This chapter presents the Office of Legislative Oversight's recommendations for Council action and discussion related to the Bethesda Urban Partnership. In sum, OLO recommends that the Council:

- Reauthorize the Bethesda Urban Partnership for another five-year term.
- Require BUP to develop a new strategic plan before their next reauthorization.

Recommendation #1: Reauthorize the Bethesda Urban Partnership for another five-year term, and retain the requirement for an OLO evaluation prior to reauthorization.

OLO recommends that the Council adopt a resolution to reauthorize the Bethesda Urban Partnership, Inc. for another five-year term. OLO's review confirmed that BUP's activities continue to fulfill the purposes of the organization as described by State and County law, the 1994 Bethesda Central Business District Sector Plan, and BUP's own Articles of Incorporation.

OLO found that BUP's County Government and community partners are pleased with the quality of BUP's work. Representatives from County Government expressed satisfaction with the services that BUP provides; most indicated that BUP's services are of very high quality and that BUP communicates and collaborates with its partners extremely effectively. In addition, business owners, developers, employers, and residents of Bethesda who participated in focus groups displayed a consistently high regard for BUP, its staff, and BUP's role in Bethesda.

Recommendation #2: Require BUP to develop a new five-year strategic plan before the next reauthorization.

OLO recommends that the Council require BUP to develop a new five-year strategic plan before the next reauthorization. BUP should continue to seek input from constituents, including County Government departments, business owners, employers, developers, residents, and visitors to Bethesda at the beginning of the strategic planning process through surveys or focus groups.

OLO also suggests that BUP should continue to include a status report on implementing objectives identified in the previous strategic plan. This would assist the Council to assess BUP's performance and understand how the new plan differs from the previous one.

CHAPTER X. Agency Comments

The Office of Legislative Oversight circulated a draft of this report to the Chief Administrative Officer for Montgomery County and to the Board of Directors the Bethesda Urban Partnership. OLO greatly appreciates the time taken by County Government and BUP representatives to review the draft report and provide comments. OLO's final report incorporates technical corrections provided by County and BUP staff.

The written comments received from the CAO and the BUP Board of Directors are included in their entirety, beginning on the following page.

CHAPTER VIII. Agency Comments

The Office of Legislative Oversight circulated a draft of this report to the Chief Administrative Officer for Montgomery County and to the Board of Directors the Bethesda Urban Partnership. OLO greatly appreciates the time taken by County Government and BUP representatives to review the draft report and provide comments. OLO's final report incorporates technical corrections provided by County and BUP staff.

The written comments received from the CAO and the BUP Board of Directors are included in their entirety, beginning on the following page.



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

MEMORANDUM

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

Timothy L. Firestine
Chief Administrative Officer

October 23, 2013

TO: Chris Cihlar, Director, Office of Legislative Oversight
FROM: Timothy L. Firestine, Chief Administrative Office *Timothy L. Firestine*
SUBJECT: OLO DRAFT Report 2014-1
2013 Evaluation of the Bethesda Urban Partnership

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Draft OLO Report No. 2014-1, regarding the evaluation of the Bethesda Urban Partnership (BUP). Your comprehensive review of the Bethesda Urban Partnership confirms our long-held opinion of the BUP as a high-performing, forward-thinking organization. I am very pleased to read that Executive Branch staff and the community continue to hold BUP in high regard. BUP is a critical partner in providing services in the Bethesda Urban District, a key economic engine for Montgomery County.

In response to the report's recommendations, I offer the following comments:

OLO Recommendation #1

Reauthorize the Bethesda Urban Partnership for another five-year term, and retain the requirement for an OLO evaluation prior to reauthorization.

CAO Response to OLO Recommendation #1

We concur with OLO's recommendation to reauthorize the BUP with another OLO evaluation and Council Reauthorization in five years. We feel the five-year timeframe provides an important opportunity for the Executive Branch and County Council to reacquaint ourselves with the issues important to the continued success of the Bethesda Urban District.

OLO Recommendation #2

Require BUP to develop a new five-year strategic plan before the next reauthorization.

CAO Response to OLO Recommendation #2

We concur with the recommendation to require the development of a new five-year strategic plan before the next reauthorization. The strategic plan, updated regularly, is a critical exercise not only for BUP but for the County as a whole as we seek to enhance the economy and livability of our urban centers.

Chris Cihlar, Director, Office of Legislative Oversight
October 23 2013
Page 2

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this draft report and look forward to participating in the Council's review. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Ken Hartman, Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services Center Director, at 240-777-8206 or ken.hartman@montgomerycountymd.gov.

TLF:kh

cc: Fariba Kassiri, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer
Ken Hartman, Director, Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services Center

**Business, Residents and
Government Working for
a Better Bethesda**

Bethesda Urban Partnership, Inc.
7700 Old Georgetown Road
Bethesda, MD 20814-6126

(301) 215-6660
(301) 215-6664 Fax
www.bethesda.org



Oct. 24, 2013

Chris Cihlar, Ph.D., Director
Office of Legislative Oversight
Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Dr. Cihlar,

The Board of Directors of the Bethesda Urban Partnership (BUP) has reviewed the draft of the OLO Report for 2013. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the technical aspects of the report and your acceptance of these comments. The findings in the report reflect what we also feel are the strengths of our organization, and we are very appreciative that you are recommending re-authorization of the Bethesda Urban Partnership.

We greatly value your time and effort in reviewing our Strategic Plan, talking to key constituents and thoroughly reviewing our efforts in downtown Bethesda.

The BUP Board again wishes to thank the Office of Legislative Oversight for their efforts in producing this, OLO's fourth recommendation for reauthorization. It is the goal of our Board and staff to continue to provide downtown Bethesda with the most efficient and effective maintenance, marketing and transportation management services through the reinvestment of the fees raised in the Urban District.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew T. O'Hare".

Andy O'Hare
Chair

cc: Natalia Carrizosa, Research Associate, OLO

List of Appendices

Office of Legislative Oversight Report 2014-1 2013 Evaluation of the Bethesda Urban Partnership

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A	February 8, 1995 memorandum from Asst. County Attorney Melnick	©1
B	Bethesda Circulator Map	©3
C	2014-2019 Bethesda Urban Partnership Strategic Plan and Attachments	©4
D	List of OLO Interviews	©116

MEMORANDUM

February 8, 1995

TO: Virginia Baxter, Acting Director
Office of Procurement

VIA: Marc P. Hansen, Acting County Attorney *MPH*

FROM: Richard H. Melnick, Assistant County Attorney *RHM*

RE: Bethesda Urban Partnership- Status as a "Public Entity" for Procurement Purposes

This memorandum is to follow-up on a request from John Polletto, of the Division of Parking, regarding whether the Bethesda Urban District ("BUD") is a "public entity" for purposes of the Montgomery County Procurement Regulations. After reviewing the circumstances surrounding this case, we conclude that the BUD is a "public entity" as envisioned by the Regulations.

Factual Background

The Division of Parking is interested in entering into a contract with the BUD, wherein the latter would perform landscape and maintain grass and tree areas in County owned parking lots located in the BUD. The County's Department of Transportation ("DOT") currently has a similar contract for the BUD to provide streetscaping of medians and streetsweeping inside of curbs, on roadways which the County otherwise maintains.

Issue

The question arises whether the proposed contract may be entered as a non-competitive "public entity procurement", thereby eliminating the need for public solicitation.

Analysis

The BUD is established pursuant to Chapter 68A of the Montgomery County Code, which delineates the purposes and functions of urban districts in the County. The BUP is a non-stock corporation created by the County Council, and is subject to the County Code. Montg. Co. Code, Sections 68A-9; -12. Urban districts were created by the County Council to address the concern that certain areas of the County are becoming "intensely developed communities containing diversified commercial, institutional, and residential development." Montg. Co. Code, Section 68A-2(a). As a result, the Council created the BUD as a special taxing district to provide an administrative and financial framework for this area to: increase the maintenance of the streetscape and its amenities; provide additional public amenities such as plantings, seating, shelters, and works of art; promote the commercial and residential interests of the area; and, program cultural and community activities. Montg. Co. Code, Sections 68A-2, -3(a), -8.

Urban districts are created to provide public services and facilities that primarily benefit property and persons within the urban district. Montg. Co. Code, Section 68A-3(e). By definition, an urban district corporation "is a public instrumentality"...which "performs tasks of benefit to the government." Montg. Co. Code, Section 68A-9(a). In addition to enhancement, maintenance and provision of the streetscape and its amenities, the BUD may provide other initiatives to advance the business and residential communities. Montg. Co. Code, Section 68A-9(b).

The limited extent to which the Code permits urban districts to compete with the private sector includes entering into contracts for maintaining streetscape amenities on public or private property. Montg. Co. Code, Sections 68A-11(b)(7); -11(c). Perhaps most importantly, the BUP is expressly not subject to the requirements of the County Procurement Regulations (except to make a good faith effort to comply with MFD requirements). Montg. Co. Code, Section 68A-11(d). The BUP is also considered a "local government" as that phrase is used in the Local Government Tort Claims Act. Montg. Co. Code, Section 68A-11(e).

The BUD fits within the Procurement Regulations' definition of "public entity", which includes:

(1) the federal, state and local governments or their agencies; (2) boards, commissions, or committees established by a federal, state, or local law; (3) government organizations or associations of the federal government, state governments, or political subdivisions of state governments; or (4) any other entity that both qualifies as a not-for-profit corporation under the provisions of the United States Internal Revenue Code and which is incorporated by one of the preceding entities for the exclusive purpose of supporting or benefiting a public entity.

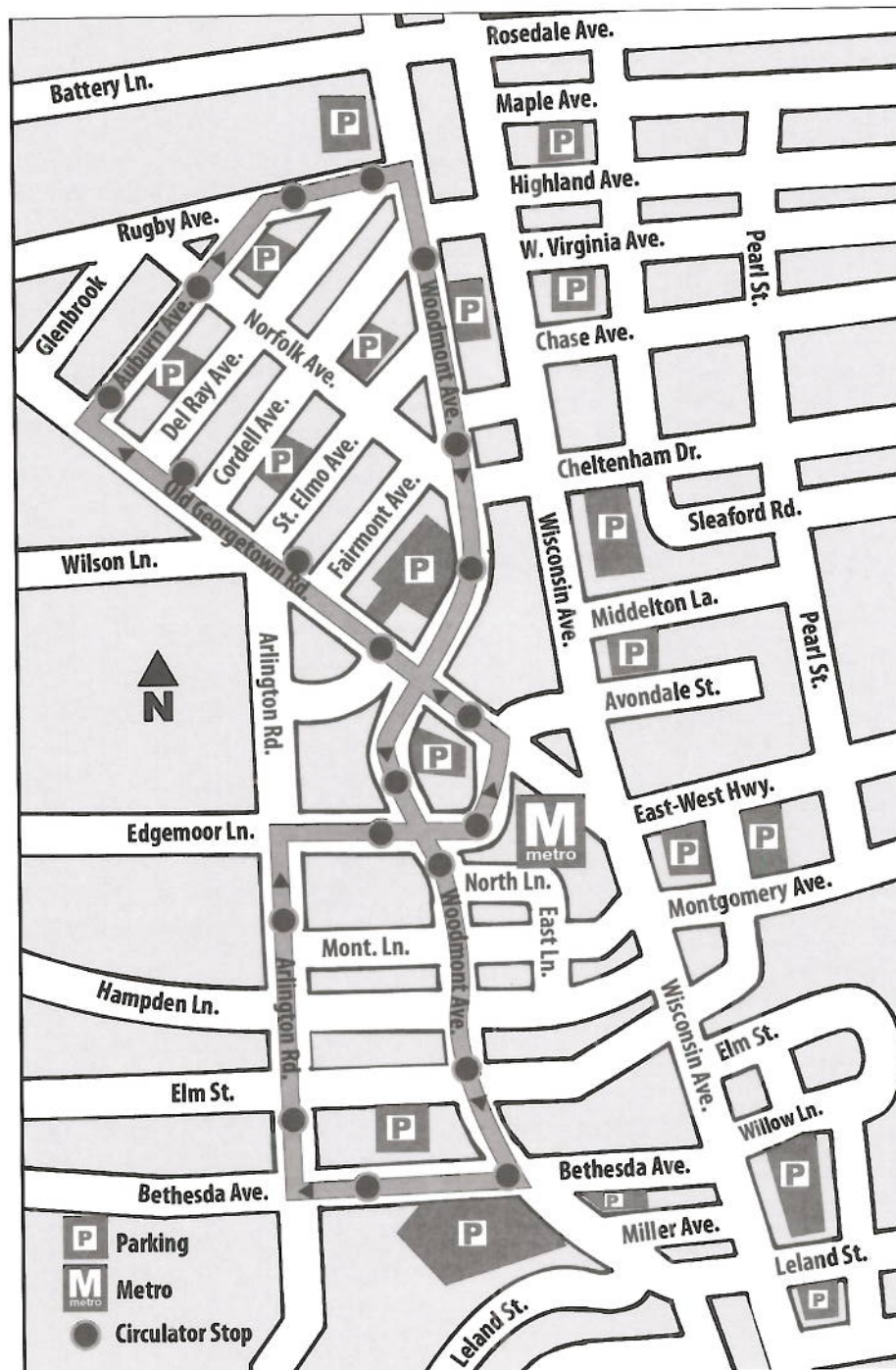
Montg. Co. Proc Regs., Section 2.4.81.

Since the BUP is a "public entity", the contract for the services described above requires neither public solicitation nor justification as a non-competitive procurement. Montg. Co. Proc. Regs. 4.1.12.1; 4.1.14.1. DOT has stated this contract is in the best interests of the County, both from a cost effectiveness and resources standpoint, and allows the BUD to provide services permitted by the Code at parking facilities located within that urban district. Montg. Co. Code, Section 11B-41.

Conclusion

The DOT Division of Parking may contract with the BUD in a non-competitive procurement for the above-described landscaping services in parking facilities located in the BUD.

Appendix B. Map of the Bethesda Circulator



Source: Bethesda Urban Partnership

BUP, FIN &
ECON DEV

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a Better Bethesda

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7700 Old Georgetown Road
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(301) 215-6664 Fax
www.bethesda.org

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July 19, 2013



Nancy Navarro
Council President
Montgomery County
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

ENCLOSURE

RE: Bethesda Urban Partnership, Inc. Strategic Plan

Dear Council President Navarro,

In 2008, the County Council Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) issued a performance evaluation of the Bethesda Urban Partnership, Inc. (BUP) that recommended reauthorization of BUP for an additional five years. The report also recommended that prior to the next reauthorization in 2013, BUP should complete a new five-year Strategic Plan.

A Strategic Planning Committee of the BUP Board of Directors led the year-long Strategic Plan Project, and attached for your review is the 2014 – 2019 Bethesda Urban Partnership Strategic Plan.

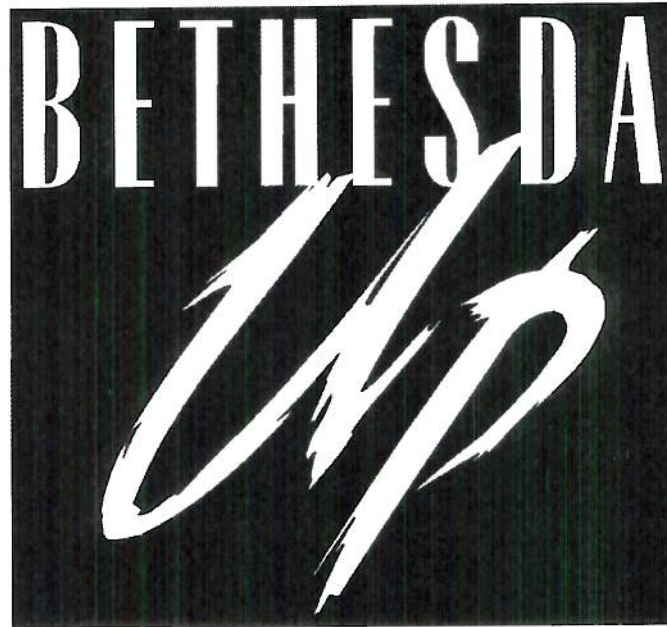
The Bethesda Urban Partnership has successfully managed downtown Bethesda through its maintenance, marketing, transportation management and arts and entertainment efforts for nearly 20 years. Within the last five years, BUP has continued to successfully manage and increase ridership on the Bethesda Circulator, opened a non-profit art Gallery, Gallery B, created a public art project, Tunnel Vision, in the Metro pedestrian tunnel and continues to maintain downtown Bethesda at the highest level.

We believe that BUP has proven itself as an efficient and effective downtown management organization. Downtown Bethesda is one of the most successful downtowns in the state of Maryland. Because of BUP, downtown Bethesda is a clean, vibrant and attractive community to the thousands of employees, residents and visitors to downtown Bethesda.

We respectfully seek your support in our request for the Montgomery County Council to reauthorize the Bethesda Urban Partnership for another five-year term.

Sincerely,

Anne Mead
Strategic Planning Chair and Immediate Past Chair
Bethesda Urban Partnership Board of Directors



URBAN PARTNERSHIP INC.

**BETHESDA URBAN PARTNERSHIP
STRATEGIC PLAN 2014-2019**

**REPORT TO
OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE
OVERSIGHT**

MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL

Executive Summary

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3	Bethesda Urban Partnership Summary of Services
4	Bethesda Urban Partnership Five-Year Strategic Plan, 2014-2019
5	Conclusion
6	BUP Board of Directors and Senior Staff
7	2012 Annual Review
8	Attachments

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1

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2008, the County Council Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) issued a performance evaluation of the Bethesda Urban Partnership, Inc. (BUP) that recommended reauthorization of BUP for an additional five years. The report also recommended that prior to the next reauthorization in 2013, BUP should complete a new five-year Strategic Plan as well as provide updates from the 2008 Strategic Plan. *(See Attachment 1 for the Status Report on the strategic initiatives from the 2008 Strategic Plan.)*

A Strategic Planning Committee of the BUP Board of Directors led the year-long Strategic Plan Project. Beginning in summer 2012, the committee conducted a search for a consultant that would facilitate the focus groups, write the online survey and summarize all data and strategic recommendations. Association Laboratory, Inc. was selected as the consultant for this process.

Between November 2012 and February 2013, Association Laboratory, Inc. led group meetings with the Bethesda Urban Partnership Board of Directors, the Transportation Management District Advisory Committee, the Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District Board and BUP staff. Association Laboratory also led focus groups with the following constituent groups: County partners, downtown Bethesda retail business owners, downtown Bethesda residents, customers, developers and downtown Bethesda employers. In total, 75 people provided feedback during the focus group meetings. The information gathered from these sessions comprised the qualitative data that was used to create the questions for the online survey to collect the quantitative data.

Additionally, the Bethesda Urban Partnership has met with the Montgomery County Council District representative for the Bethesda area, Roger Berliner, since our last Strategic Plan to discuss the Bethesda Urban Partnership priorities. We have also facilitated a County focus group to receive feedback and kept this year's goals and strategies more limited than in 2008 to items that do not require legislation or are fully dependent on other County agency actions.

In March 2013, the online survey was sent to 5,300 contacts of the Bethesda Urban Partnership and the Bethesda Chevy Chase Regional Services Center. The survey received a total of 562 responses, or a 10.6% response rate.

Overall, the focus groups shared a highly positive regard for downtown Bethesda which include: central location with access to transportation options (e.g., Metro), the nation's capital, convenience, quality of life ("livability" factor is high due to easy access to services, shops, and restaurants on foot or via the Bethesda Circulator), potential for strong business and business growth.

According to Association Laboratory's final report *(See Attachment 7)*, there is a consistently high opinion of BUP, its staff, and their role as a resource and advocate. County partners had the highest awareness of BUP and feel they have a strong working relationship with the staff. Overall, the Bethesda Urban Partnership received accolades and positive feedback for its work in maintaining and marketing downtown Bethesda. Constituent groups were very familiar with the work of BUP and gave BUP high marks for its positive work in downtown Bethesda.

Association Laboratory facilitated a Board retreat that reviewed the feedback from the focus groups and helped set the priorities for the Bethesda Urban Partnership five-year Strategic Plan. The five-year plan consists of Strategic Goals in all five areas of BUP's legislation: Maintenance, Marketing, Transportation, Arts & Entertainment and Internal Operations. *(Please see sections II and IV for the Strategic Plan Goals.)*

Bethesda is projected to grow from 101,982 total households in 2010 to 110,885 in 2015, according to the Montgomery County Planning Department Center for Research and Information Systems. In the Bethesda Central Business District alone, the total number of households is expected to grow from 13,837 in 2010 to 18,127 in 2015. This is a household population increase of 31% in downtown Bethesda. While the Bethesda Urban Partnership is poised and tactically prepared for the additional population increase and potentially changing demographics of our downtown, we are aware that an increase in the residential population may pose a strain on our current staff and services provided to the downtown. *(See Attachment 2 for Bethesda's Future Developments.)*

As this presentation highlights, the Bethesda Urban Partnership has researched local and national consumer trends, reviewed constituent feedback, and successfully worked together to complete a Strategic Plan that takes into consideration the growth of downtown Bethesda and the surrounding community. We feel strongly that we have created a Plan that will continue to keep downtown Bethesda and the Bethesda Urban Partnership at the forefront of nationally recognized downtowns. BUP has proven its sense of fiscal responsibility and team management over the last 20 year and is confident we can continue our success.

The BUP Board strongly believes that the recommendations in this report, derived in great part from Bethesda's constituents, will greatly enhance downtown Bethesda and that BUP will continue to play a significant role in the economic viability of downtown Bethesda. We respectfully request that you reauthorize the Bethesda Urban Partnership for another five years to continue our work in downtown Bethesda.

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II. SUMMARY OF BUP FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Goal and Vision

National Recognition of Downtown Bethesda as a Model Urban Community

Maintenance Goal

Create a State of the Art Appearance and Easier Customer Navigability for Downtown Bethesda.

Strategies

- Create a Unified and Attractive Downtown Bethesda Streetscape
- Improve Wayfinding in Downtown Bethesda
- Use Technology to Manage Downtown Bethesda's Infrastructure
- Improve Appearance of Bethesda Metro Station and Bus Bay

Marketing and Communications Goal

Create and Implement a Successful Marketing Plan to Ensure that Bethesda is at the Regional Forefront of Attracting Customers and Businesses.

Strategies

- Enhance and Build Downtown Bethesda's Brand
- Promote the Economic Viability of Downtown Bethesda
- Improve Communication to Constituents
- Develop Relationships with Nearby Constituents

Transportation Goal

A Transportation System that has Complementary Vehicular and Non-Vehicular Options.

Strategies

- Improve Non-Single Occupancy Vehicular Options
- Ease Traffic Congestion
- Monitor Development and Traffic Plans that Impact Downtown Bethesda

Arts & Entertainment Goal

Ensure that Bethesda is a vibrant Arts & Entertainment District that attracts artists, arts patrons and arts organizations.

Strategies

- Support Individual Arts & Entertainment Organizations
- Facilitate Events to Appeal to Bethesda's Many Audiences
- Add More Art Elements to Downtown Bethesda

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III. BETHESDA URBAN PARTNERSHIP SUMMARY OF SERVICES

The Bethesda Urban Partnership, Inc., (BUP) is the organization responsible for the management and marketing of downtown Bethesda which is home to numerous retailers, arts organizations, a thriving restaurant community and an expansive downtown workforce. Established by Montgomery County in 1994, BUP fulfills the landscaping and maintenance needs and creates cultural events and exciting festivals for the community. In our 19-year operation, BUP created Bethesda Transportation Solutions in 2000, established the Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District in 2002, took over management of the Bethesda Circulator in 2006 and has grown from two full-time staff members to more than 35 employees working in maintenance, marketing, transportation and administration.

BUP is operated by an 11-member Board of Directors comprised of residents, businesses and developers appointed by the County Executive. BUP is funded primarily by revenue generated from the Bethesda Parking Lot District fees, in addition to the commercial Urban District property tax, revenue from outside maintenance contracts and sponsorship dollars. BUP *does not* receive any general tax dollars. *(See Attachment 3 for a breakdown of PLD revenues, BUP's revenue sources and BUP's budget.)*

Downtown Bethesda is a thriving urban community consisting of the following features within the 300 acres of the downtown:

- 25 arts and entertainment organizations
- 200 restaurants
- 500 retail shops and services
- 1,500 hotel rooms
- 45,000 employees who commute daily into downtown Bethesda

Four program directors (Marketing and Communications, Deputy Director/Operations and Maintenance, Finance/Administration and Bethesda Transportation Solutions) report to the Executive Director.

With the exception of the addition of the Bethesda Circulator to BUP's management entities, the Bethesda Urban Partnership has expanded its services and staff with minimal increase in budget over the last 10 years. The costs of additional programs and services have been offset by bringing more contracts and staff in-house and by reaching out to corporate partners to serve as sponsors.

A. MAINTENANCE SERVICES

Clean and safe streets, tree-lined streetscapes and beautiful flowers are a signature of Bethesda's vibrant community. Bethesda's walkable downtown is managed by a dedicated maintenance team who works seven days a week keeping Bethesda a vibrant and attractive place to live, work and visit. There are 20 employees in this department.

Monday through Saturday, BUP's landscaping and urban beautification squads handle the following maintenance tasks:

- Street sweeping

- Removing litter three times daily
- Sidewalk repairs and maintenance
- Planting 32,000 flowers in two annual rotations
- Trimming 1,200 trees
- Maintaining 188,000 square feet of turf and Bethesda's sidewalks.

BUP's maintenance team has also been designated by the state of Maryland and Montgomery County to take on special projects within and outside of downtown Bethesda. In addition to daily duties, BUP's maintenance team is charged with maintaining the median strip along Wisconsin Avenue, removing trash and street sweeping in downtown Silver Spring and Wheaton and repairing potholes on Urban District's county roads. Additionally, in 2012, BUP entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to maintain NIH's green space located at the corner of Woodmont and Wisconsin Avenues thereby enhancing another gateway into downtown Bethesda.

BUP's maintenance team is certified in First Aid, CPR and AED use. Employees are also provided English as a Second Language classes at no cost to them.

The Bethesda Urban Partnership's "Ask Me" Team assists residents and visitors, fields questions about the community, provides motorist assistance and offers first aid and quick response in emergency situations during afternoons and weekends, Wednesday through Sunday. BUP is particularly proud of these employees who have received numerous thank you letters from individual community members for their assistance.

The red-shirted "Ask Me" Team can be found roving the streets of downtown Bethesda or stationed at Bethesda's three Ask Me information kiosks. Kiosks are located in Veterans Park, at the corner of Woodmont and Norfolk Avenues; at the Bethesda Metro Center, at the corner of Wisconsin Avenue and Old Georgetown Road and at the corner of Woodmont and Bethesda Avenues.

B. MARKETING SERVICES

BUP's marketing plan targets downtown Bethesda's residents, visitors and employees. BUP's marketing and communications team creates cultural, artistic and entertaining events that attract patrons into downtown Bethesda throughout the year. BUP's annual event series highlights Bethesda's diverse restaurants and retailers, as well as entertains attendees with music, theatre, dance, film, literature and children's activities. There are four employees in this department.

BUP events annually attract over 100,000 attendees into downtown Bethesda with the following special events:

- Taste of Bethesda
- Bethesda Fine Arts Festival
- Imagination Bethesda
- Bethesda Literary Festival
- Winter Wonderland
- Summer Concert Series
- Bethesda Outdoor Movies: Stars on the Avenue

The marketing department also operates BUP's online presence, including downtown Bethesda's website, www.bethesda.org, which receives over 25,000 visits per month, as well as active Facebook (more than 2,500 likes) and Twitter (nearly 1,500 followers) accounts. Additionally, BUP produces and distributes free brochures that detail Bethesda's restaurant, retail and arts organizations. Brochures are distributed at Bethesda hotels, large-scale festivals, Bethesda Urban Partnership's three information kiosks, via BUP's mailing list and BUP's website.

C. TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Bethesda Transportation Solutions (BTS) was established in 2000 to help reduce single occupancy vehicle trips in downtown Bethesda by marketing local, state and federal commuter benefits programs and tax incentives to employers. BTS has marketing campaigns, a website and several brochures to promote alternative transportation options such as rail, bus, carpools and biking with the goal of reducing the number of Bethesda employees who drive alone to work. BTS has five employees.

BTS handles the following transportation management initiatives:

- Participation in the annual Walk & Ride Challenge to encourage downtown Bethesda employees to walk or ride a bike to work. In 2012, 226 Bethesda employees participated.
- Administration of the annual Commuter Survey to determine commute patterns in Bethesda. The most recent survey numbers show that more than 36 percent of Bethesda employees are not drivers of a single-occupancy vehicle and are using other transportation options.
- Management of Bethesda employers that are required to file Traffic Mitigation Plans and assisting them in filing Annual Reports of their activities.
- Promotion of numerous transportation alternatives through its website and weekly Commuter Information Days held in Bethesda's commercial buildings.
- Matching of ride share participants
- Management of Bethesda's Bike to Work Day pit stop which, was the region's third largest in 2013 and had more than 709 participants.
- Distribution of more than 2,500 monthly electronic newsletters.
- Social marketing campaigns directed to commuters on Facebook and Twitter.
- Participation in networking events produced by The Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce to reach more downtown Bethesda employees.

D. BETHESDA ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT

The state of Maryland designated downtown Bethesda as an Arts & Entertainment (A&E) District effective July 1, 2002.

Special tax incentives are in place that benefit artists, arts enterprises and developers located within the Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District. Bethesda Urban Partnership is the manager of Bethesda's Arts & Entertainment District, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. BUP's marketing team works with A&E's 13-member Board of Directors, as well as a creative committee consisting of local artists and arts business representatives, to produce arts and cultural programming that benefits residents, businesses and tourists, and supports the community's growth and vitality.

Events produced by the Arts & Entertainment District highlight local artists, writers and performers, and provide them a venue to show their work in the community. These programs also promote the variety of artistic and cultural resources in the community and attract nearly 1,000 artists and more than 30,000 attendees each year.

In 2012, Bethesda was re-designated as an Arts & Entertainment District. Also that year, the Maryland Department of Economic Development awarded the Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District the Arts & Entertainment District Outstanding Achievement Award.

Over the past 10 years, the A&E District has expanded arts initiatives in the community, with several new programs including *Gallery B*, a nonprofit art gallery managed by the A&E District; *Tunnel Vision: Arts Under the Avenue*, which installed new lighting and artwork by 12 local artists in the Bethesda Metro pedestrian tunnel; and *Bethesda Film Fest*, a short documentary film festival highlighting the work of regional filmmakers. Initiatives of the Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District that have reached over 10,000 participating artists since 2002 include:

- The Trawick Prize: Bethesda Contemporary Art Awards
- Bethesda Art Walk
- Bethesda Fine Arts Festival
- Bethesda Artist Market
- Dance Bethesda
- Bethesda Painting Awards
- Play in a Day
- Gallery B
- Tunnel Vision
- Bethesda Film Fest

E. BETHESDA CIRCULATOR

In 2006, the Bethesda Urban Partnership took over the management of the Bethesda Circulator, formerly the Bethesda 8 Trolley, which had been managed by Montgomery County since 1999. The Bethesda Circulator is a free bus service that provides transportation to Metro, public parking garages, restaurants and shopping in downtown Bethesda. In 2008, new signs were designed and are now located at each of the 20 Bethesda Circulator stops. These visual aids provide a detailed map showing the route of the free transportation service along with the hours of operation.

In July 2011, the Bethesda Urban Partnership introduced a new Bethesda Circulator fleet, replacing older trolley-style vehicles with new buses. The new vehicles offer more reliable service, consistent branding and a more comfortable ride. Additionally, the Circulator's hours were expanded in 2012 to 7 a.m. to midnight, Monday-Thursday; 7 a.m. to 2 a.m., Friday and 10 a.m. to 2 a.m. Saturday. The new schedule was created to better accommodate riders, with particular attention to those parking in less-used garages after the closing of Lot 31.

With ridership strong at an average of 27,000 - 29,000 riders per month, the Bethesda Circulator remains one of the best ways to get around downtown Bethesda.

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IV. BETHESDA URBAN PARTENRSHIP FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN, 2014-2019

A. SUMMARY OF PROCESS EMPLOYED TO DEVELOP STRATEGIC PLAN

The five-year plan of the Bethesda Urban Partnership was created in several steps.

1. The BUP Board created a Strategic Planning Committee.
2. The committee reviewed proposals from four outside consultants to facilitate internal and external focus groups that would assist BUP in creating its Strategic Plan. Association Laboratory, Inc. was hired to manage these meetings.
3. Association Laboratory served as a facilitator in meetings that included the Bethesda Urban Partnership board and staff; Bethesda A&E District Board and the Transportation Management District Advisory Committee.
4. Association Laboratory facilitated focus groups with six constituent groups: County partners, downtown Bethesda retail business owners, downtown Bethesda residents, customers, developers and downtown Bethesda employers.
5. The Strategic Planning Committee met regularly to evaluate the findings of Association Laboratory.
6. The full BUP Board of Directors held a strategic planning retreat, facilitated by Association Laboratory, in January 2013 to discuss the strategic plan and determine priorities for the five-year plan.
7. The Strategic Planning Committee worked with Association Laboratory on determining the questions for the survey that was distributed to 5,300 individuals. *(See Attachment 8 for the Survey and Responses Spreadsheet.)*
8. Association Laboratory wrote a final report including the significant findings from the focus groups and online survey as well as their recommendations for the Strategic Plan. *(See Attachment 7 for Association Laboratory's Final Report.)*
9. The BUP Board of Directors drafted the final Five-Year Goals, Strategies and Action Items that are the basis of the Five-Year Strategic Plan.

There six focus areas in the BUP Strategic Plan are 1) Maintenance 2) Marketing and Communications 3) Arts & Entertainment 4) Transportation 5) Update on 2008 Plan and 6) Future of the BUP Organization.

BETHESDA URBAN PARTNERSHIP
STRATEGIC GOAL AND VISION
National Recognition of Downtown Bethesda
as a Model Urban Community

B. Maintenance

Goal: Create a State of the Art Appearance and Easier Customer Navigability for Downtown Bethesda

The maintenance strategies and action items reflect the Bethesda Urban Partnership's goal to create a state of the art appearance in downtown Bethesda as well as a downtown that is easy for residents, visitors and employees to navigate. The strategies include a unified and attractive downtown Bethesda streetscape; improved wayfinding signage; use of technology to manage downtown Bethesda's infrastructure and the improved appearance of the Metro station and bus bay area.

Strategy: Create a Unified and Attractive Downtown Bethesda Streetscape

Action Items:

- Improve street lighting.
 - Work with state and county on upgrades.
- Improve streetscape for downtown Bethesda.
 - Complete streetscape on Wisconsin and Norfolk Avenues.
- Improve downtown Bethesda gateways.
- Coordinate and enhance existing public spaces as places for gathering; identify new spaces, as appropriate.
- Improve walkability and connectivity between corridors.
- Unify bike racks, newspaper boxes, etc.

Strategy: Improve Wayfinding in Downtown Bethesda

Action Items:

- Create a task force to review and improve Wayfinding Signage, street blades and mast arm signs; ensure uniform branding.
- Improve signs indicating parking and Metro.
- Add street banners promoting downtown Bethesda and BUP to identify and brand downtown Bethesda.

Strategy: Use Technology to Manage Downtown Bethesda's Infrastructure

Action Items:

- Use GIS technology and mapping to manage street lights, interface with BUP website, etc.

Strategy: Improve Appearance of Bethesda Metro Station and Bus Bay

Action Items:

- Work with WMATA Task Force on completion of proposed improvements to Bethesda Metro station.
- Improve signage and directional information for Metro riders
- Add artwork to the Metro station.

C. Marketing and Communications

Goal: Create and Implement a Successful Marketing Plan to Ensure that Bethesda is at the Regional Forefront of Attracting Customers and Businesses.

The following marketing strategies and action items are necessary to maintain and grow downtown Bethesda's customer base, attract new businesses to the community, communicate effectively with constituents and ensure that downtown Bethesda offers the best restaurants, shops, arts organizations and special events in the region.

Strategy: Enhance and Build Downtown Bethesda's Brand

Action Items:

- Create a marketing campaign featuring downtown Bethesda as the best regional downtown and destination for dining, shopping and the arts.
- Implement more signage/branding within downtown Bethesda promoting Bethesda and the Bethesda Urban Partnership.
- Promote 20th anniversary of Bethesda Urban Partnership in 2014.

Strategy: Promote the Economic Viability of Downtown Bethesda

Action Items:

- Market downtown Bethesda to potential new retail and commercial businesses.
- Add more statistical data about downtown Bethesda to website and marketing materials.

Strategy: Improve Communication to Constituents

Action Items:

- More outreach to local businesses, retailers, property managers and arts and entertainment organizations.
- Increase use of technology and social media.
- Update BUP website; create mobile application for smartphones.
- Increase promotion of parking options, rates and payment options.
- Use interactive maps on BUP's website showing parking, restaurants, shops and more.

Strategy: Develop Relationships with Nearby Constituents

Action Item:

- More outreach to nearby "Bethesda customers" at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, National Institutes of Health, Suburban Hospital, etc.

D. Transportation

Goal: A Transportation System that has Complementary Vehicular and Non-Vehicular Options.

The following transportation strategies and action items were put forth in order to ensure that traffic is mitigated, pedestrians are safe and Bethesda continues to be at the regional forefront of providing non-single occupancy vehicular options. Additionally, BUP will monitor traffic and development plans that will impact downtown Bethesda.

Strategy: Improve Pedestrian Safety

Action Items:

- Improve condition of current crosswalks with more frequent re-striping.
- Work with Montgomery County to ensure enforcement of traffic laws.

Strategy: Improve Non-Single Occupancy Vehicular Options

Action Items:

- Research/Consider expansion of Circulator route; Addition of new vehicles.
- Improve Bicycle Access into downtown Bethesda.
- Market Capital Bikeshare program.
- Encourage car sharing and Flexcar.

Strategy: Ease Traffic Congestion

Action Items:

- Educate public on non-vehicular options.
- Increase marketing efforts of Bethesda Transportation Solutions.
- Increase “connectivity” between all parts of downtown Bethesda.
- Encourage county to do a traffic light study.

Strategy: Monitor Development and Traffic Plans that Impact Downtown Bethesda

Action Item:

- Continue to attend The Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber, Montgomery County Park and Planning and community meetings.
- Monitor and provide feedback on the proposed Bus Rapid Transit plans.

E. Arts & Entertainment

Goal: Ensure that Bethesda is a vibrant Arts & Entertainment District that attracts artists, arts patrons and arts organizations.

The following arts and entertainment strategies and action items are slated to ensure that the Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District continues to attract artists, arts patrons and arts organizations as well as sustains the success of our current arts organizations and initiatives. The strategies include supporting individual arts and entertainment organizations; creating diverse events that appeal to Bethesda’s many audiences and adding more arts elements to downtown Bethesda.

Strategy: Support Individual Arts & Entertainment Organizations

Action Items:

- Promote events held at individual art venues.
- Host networking events for arts venues in the Bethesda A&E District which will connect them to collaborate on shared ideas and marketing efforts.
- Reach out to new, potential arts organizations to open in downtown Bethesda.

Strategy: Facilitate Events to Appeal to Bethesda’s Many Audiences

Action Items:

- Host events that appeal to different age groups and diverse audiences.
- Market events to specific age groups and audiences.

Strategy: Add More Art Elements to Downtown Bethesda

Action Items:

- Add more public art in public spaces and on private commercial buildings.
- Open artist studio spaces in downtown Bethesda
- Open a community theatre where local dance and theatre companies can rent the space to host events.
- Support other arts groups in producing and hosting arts and entertainment events.
- Continue to host monthly visual art exhibitions.

F. Update from 2008 Strategic Plan, Initiatives to Discuss with Montgomery County

In 2008, the Bethesda Urban Partnership put forth the following strategic items for follow up with Montgomery County: 1) Obtain a longer term authorization by Montgomery County, from a five-year authorization to a ten-year authorization; 2) Administration of all County contracts for BUP, BTS and the Bethesda Circulator should be organized and processed via the Bethesda Chevy Chase Regional Services Center; 3) Implementation of a bi-annual budget review cycle, with a change from a fiscal year to a calendar year that still allows for an annual review of funds; 4) Expansion of route and increased hours for the Bethesda Circulator; and 5) Expansion of BUP's responsibility in the implementation of lighting and crosswalk repair.

The Bethesda Urban Partnership Staff and Board representatives met with the Montgomery County Council District representative for the Bethesda area, Roger Berliner, as well as continually sought feedback from our B-CC Regional Services Center partner and contract manager, Ken Hartman, to discuss the steps necessary to implement these strategic items from 2008 and to review current Bethesda Urban Partnership priorities. While still worthy initiatives, the BUP Board decided to not pursue items 1, 2 and 3 as strategic plan goals or current priorities since they are dependent on other agency action or legislation and not as pertinent to the primary mission of the Bethesda Urban Partnership to maintain and promote downtown Bethesda. These are more administrative and/or efficiency items for future Boards and County agencies to consider and pursue when appropriate.

G. Future of the Bethesda Urban Partnership Organization

In addition to the external strategies and action items, the Bethesda Urban Partnership Strategic Plan includes several internal items for consideration as we plan for the next five years. These include:

- 1) Maintain current operations and manage growth
- 2) Maintain financial stability
- 3) Optimize staff
- 4) Plan for succession
- 5) Optimize technology
- 6) Participate in Bethesda's new Master Plan

The Bethesda Urban Partnership was established in 1994. The organization began with only two full-time staff. Today, there are 35 employees working in maintenance, marketing, transportation management and administration. We have been able to effectively grow our team and budget with the support of Montgomery County, and through effective budget, time and staff management have taken on more responsibilities within downtown Bethesda since our creation. We are poised to take on additional duties within the downtown with the continued support of the county and our community partners. We also need the sustained support of the Bethesda Parking Lot District (PLD) funds so that we can continue to provide the highest level of service to downtown Bethesda which attracts the many patrons and residents who park in our garages to keep the PLD healthy.

In order to achieve our goals, BUP needs to optimize our current staff workload as well as plan for succession. We have many things that we want to accomplish in the next five years and need to be able to maintain a top quality team as well as effectively bring in new talented staff members as necessary. We have found that our valued team leaders and staff are our most significant resource and our goal is to maintain a strong and motivated team. While Association Laboratory, Inc. specifically recommended the addition of an executive staff member for strategic initiatives, the BUP Board did not conclude that such position was necessary for the successful pursuit of the Strategic Plan goals or the most efficient use of staff resources, but agreed that reviewing staffing needs and optimizing current staff talents is an integral part of monitoring the Strategic Plan implementation.

Another one of our goals is to optimize technology in order to keep our downtown on the cutting edge of maintenance, marketing and transportation management. For example, we are currently using GIS mapping technology to map streetlights, trash cans, trees, etc. in downtown Bethesda which enables us to more effectively manage outages, repairs and more. Additionally, our social media numbers have climbed considerably as we have Facebook and Twitter followers and will soon launch a new website with more interactive mapping to help Bethesda visitors more easily find parking, restaurants, shops and more.

Bethesda will soon have a new Master Plan. Montgomery County's Park and Planning Division will begin work on the new Plan in early 2014. The Bethesda Urban Partnership intends to review and comment on the plan as appropriate as well as closely examine the plan to ensure that our strategic goals and action items are in line with the County's plan for downtown Bethesda.

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V. CONCLUSION

Since 1994, the Bethesda Urban Partnership, with the support of Montgomery County, has successfully maintained and marketed downtown Bethesda. We have taken on significant new initiatives such as the Transportation Management District, Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District and the Bethesda Circulator because of our management expertise and experience in downtown Bethesda.

We are eager to continue our work in the downtown and provide valuable services to our many constituents. We greatly value the County, focus group and survey feedback we have received over the last several months that was used to create this Strategic Plan.

We believe our Strategic Plan, which covers the next five years, will not only maintain our current level of service and success in downtown Bethesda but also raise the bar and increase our regional and national reputation as a model urban community. We respectfully ask that you reauthorize the Bethesda Urban Partnership to continue our mission of maintaining and marketing downtown Bethesda.

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FY'14 BOARD OF DIRECTORS ROSTER

Executive Committee

<p><u>Chair</u> <u>Andy O'Hare</u> Residential Rep. from Neighborhood in Close Proximity to Urban District 8002 Kentbury Drive, Bethesda, MD 20814 (W) 202-270-0094; (H) 301-718-1925 Email: aoharc@cement.org Term 2 ending: October 2015</p>	<p><u>Vice Chair</u> <u>Mark A. Kramer</u> Small Business Rep. 7960-D Old Georgetown Road, Bethesda, MD 20814 (W) 301-652-5700 (F) 301-913-9254 Email: kramerarch@att.net Term 2 ending: October 2015</p>
<p><u>Treasurer</u> <u>Jane Mahaffie</u> Optional Method Developer Rep. 4733 Bethesda Avenue, Suite 800, Bethesda, MD 20814 (W) 301-913-9610 (C) 301-529-4489 Email: mahaffie@stonebridgeassociates.com Term 2 ending: October 2015</p>	<p><u>Secretary</u> <u>Marc Korman</u> Citizens Advisory Board Rep. 7104 Exeter Road, Bethesda, MD 20814 (P) 240-447-1175 Email: morkorman@gmail.com Term 1 ending: October 2013</p>

Board Members

<p><u>Christopher Bruch</u> Optional Method Developer Rep. 2101 Wisconsin Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20007 (W) 202-625-8400; (F) 202-625-8414 Email: chrish@donohoe.com Term 2 ending: October 2013</p>	<p><u>J. Dawn Elder</u> Residential Rep. from Planning Area 4701 Willard Avenue, #305, Chevy Chase, MD 20815 (W) 443-455-0907 Email: jdawn.arrington@gmail.com Term 1 ending: October 2014</p>
<p><u>Peter M. Hodgson</u> Optional Method Developer 7501 Wisconsin Ave., Suite 400E, Bethesda MD 20814 (W) 301-652-9100 Email: peter.hodgson@reznickgroup.com Term 2 ending: October 2013</p>	<p><u>Elaine Joost</u> Residential Rep. within the Urban District 4801 Hampden Lane, Apt. 803, Bethesda, MD 20814 (C) 202-378-3987; (H) 301-657-1690 Email: econojoost@msn.com Term 1 ending: October 2014</p>
<p><u>Anne Mead</u> BCC Chamber of Commerce Rep. 7200 Wisconsin Avenue, #800, Bethesda, MD 20814 (W) 301-961-5127; (F) 301-654-2801 Email: amead@linowes-law.com Term 2 ending: October 2013</p>	<p><u>Patrick O'Neil</u> BCC Chamber of Commerce Rep. 3 Bethesda Metro Center, Bethesda, MD 20814 (W) 301-657-0738 Email: ploneil@lercheearly.com Term 1 ending: October 2015</p>
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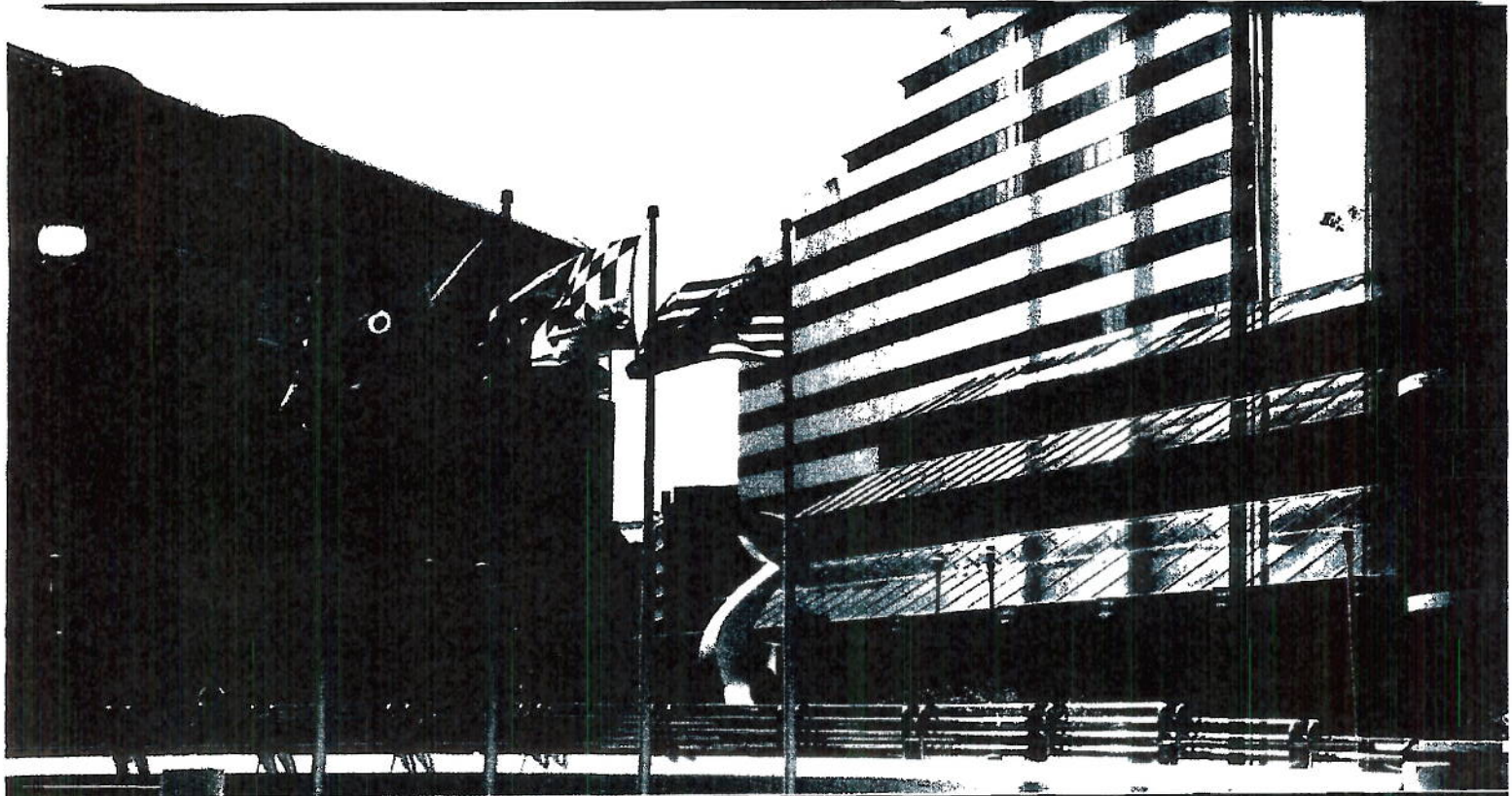
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2012 ANNUAL REVIEW

Bethesda Urban Partnership, Inc.



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LETTER FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This year our Board of Directors, in concert with our team of dedicated professionals, embarked on several new initiatives that we are very excited to bring to downtown Bethesda, including **Gallery B** and **Tunnel Vision: Art Under the Avenue**. We also unveiled a new fleet of **Bethesda Circulator** vehicles that will provide increased visibility, while improving overall service. Additionally, Bethesda was granted re-designation as an Arts & Entertainment District by the state of Maryland. We will carry this designation for an additional 10-year period. BUP also played a significant role in working with state and county officials to secure grant funding from the state of Maryland for a soon-to-be introduced Capital Bikeshare program.

We kicked off our fiscal year in July 2011 by unveiling a new fleet of Bethesda Circulator vehicles. The new-low floor design buses replaced the older trolley-style vehicles and they offer more reliable service, consistent branding and a more comfortable ride. With the redevelopment project at the corner of Woodmont and Bethesda Avenue taking away some of the parking inventory, the FREE Bethesda Circulator service provides a direct connection to the Bethesda Metro and several underutilized parking garages on the route.

Our two new arts initiatives reinforce Bethesda's reputation as a regional destination for the arts. Gallery B, a new nonprofit art gallery spearheaded by the Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District and made possible through the generous support of the Polinger Tower Corporation, was opened in a previously vacant gallery space in October 2011. This nonprofit gallery space ensures that local and regional artists will continue to have a place to exhibit their work in downtown Bethesda.

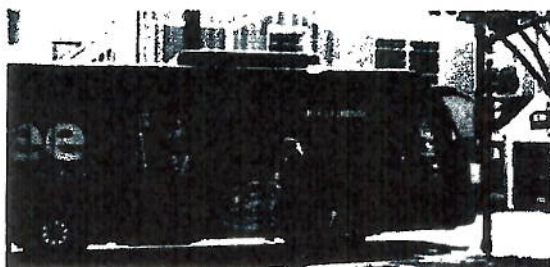
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Tunnel Vision: Art Under the Avenue transformed the dim, uninviting pedestrian tunnel in the Bethesda Metro Station into a public art gallery. We worked with Montgomery County to install new lighting and artwork by 12 local artists in the pedestrian tunnel that runs under Wisconsin Avenue. The Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District raised private funds and 16 local businesses provided financial support for this initiative.

With the re-designation of Bethesda as an Arts & Entertainment District for another 10 years, special tax incentives for artists, arts enterprises and developers located within the district will continue. Additionally, the state of Maryland awarded the Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District the *Outstanding Achievement Award* in 2012.

Downtown Bethesda's special events and festivals, which are produced by the Bethesda Urban Partnership marketing team, attract more than 100,000 attendees and visitors into downtown Bethesda. We are proud that the **Bethesda Literary Festival**, **Bethesda Fine Arts Festival**, **Imagination Bethesda**, **Taste of Bethesda** and more bring people to our wonderful events as well as into downtown Bethesda's restaurants, hotels, retail shops and art venues.



"[BUP] helps to market Bethesda, but more importantly it is the glue that brings together the restaurants, the entertainment, the people, all of the amenities that we have right here. We have this local connectivity that markets Bethesda in a way that the entire region understands. It is a wonderful place to live, to work and to be entertained." — *Isiah Leggett, Montgomery County Executive*

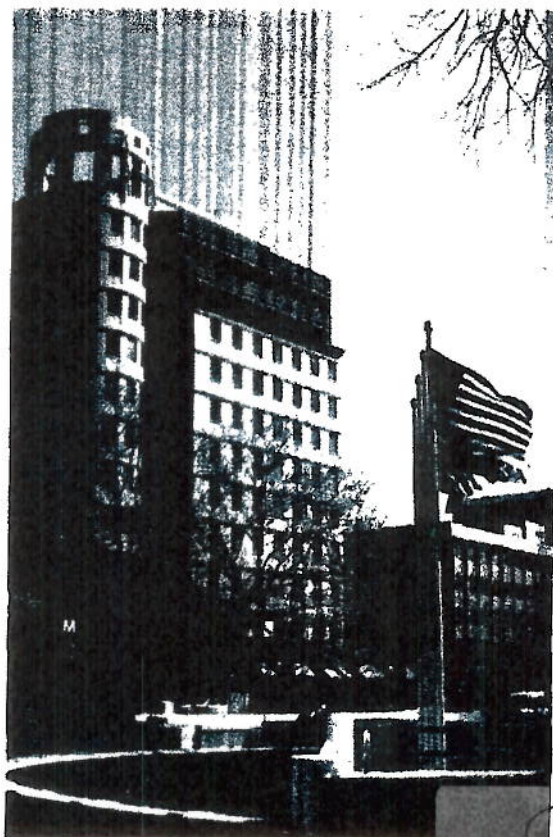
Bethesda Transportation Solutions (BTS) continues to work toward the goal of reducing the number of employees who drive alone to work in Bethesda by promoting alternative transportation. This year, BTS hosted the third largest **Bike to Work Day** event in the region, with more than 550 bicyclists attending. Maryland State Delegate Ariana Kelly served as Master of Ceremonies and BTS received proclamations from Governor Martin O'Malley, Maryland State Comptroller Peter Franchot and Montgomery County Executive Isiah Leggett. With the introduction of the Capital Bikeshare program next year, Bethesda will be linked to Washington, D.C., Arlington, Silver Spring and Friendship Heights.

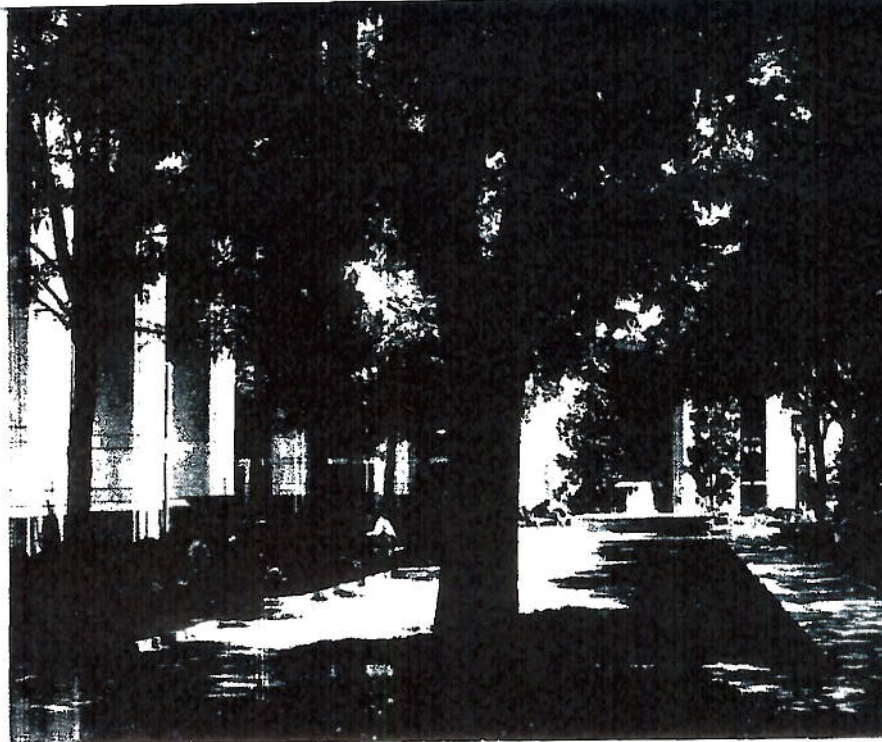
Our indispensable maintenance team is responsible for the beautification and care of downtown Bethesda's streetscapes. These dedicated individuals rotate flowers and plantings several times each year, prune trees, sweep streets and sidewalks and collect litter. The maintenance team also repairs potholes, sidewalks, median strips and assists police in traffic and weather-related emergencies.

Putting a friendly, helpful face on the community is our team of "Ask Me" ambassadors. Stationed at three conveniently located BUP kiosks, this team is ready to provide assistance and information to Bethesda visitors.

We hope you will share our excitement about our accomplishments this year as you find through our Annual Review, which covers July 2011 through June 2012. The Bethesda Urban Partnership is dedicated to making Bethesda a welcoming and exciting place to live, work and visit.

David Dabney, Executive Director
Bethesda Urban Partnership, Inc.





Bethesda Urban Partnership Board of Directors July 2011 – June 2012

Executive Committee

Christopher Bruch, Chair
Optional Method Developer Representative

Anne Mead, Vice Chair
The Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce Representative

Peter Hodgson, Treasurer
Optional Method Developer Representative

Andrew O'Hare, Secretary
Residential Representative from Neighborhood Adjacent to Urban District

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Non-voting County Executive Representative

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Citizens Advisory Board Representative

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Small Business Representative

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Director of Marketing & Communications

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Chiqui Laboy
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Walter Hernandez
Field Operations Manager

Lindsay Patterson
Senior Marketing & Communications Manager

Valerie Hillman
Marketing & Communications Manager

Stephanie Siegel Burke
Marketing & Communications Manager

OPERATIONS & FUNDING

The Bethesda Urban Partnership, Inc., (BUP) is the nonprofit organization charged with the management and marketing of downtown Bethesda. Bethesda is home to numerous retailers, arts organizations, a thriving restaurant community and an expansive downtown workforce. Established by Montgomery County in 1994, BUP fulfills the landscaping and maintenance needs and creates cultural events and exciting festivals for the community.

In its 18-year operation, BUP created Bethesda Transportation Solutions in 2000, established the Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District in 2002 and has grown from two full-time staff members to more than 35 employees working in maintenance, marketing, transportation and administration. BUP is evaluated every five years by Montgomery County and has been reauthorized three times by the County's Office of Legislative Oversight to continue its mission of making Bethesda a great place to live, work and play.

BUP is governed by an 11-member Board of Directors comprising residents, businesses and developers appointed by the County Executive. BUP is funded primarily by revenue generated from the Bethesda Parking Lot District fees, in addition to the commercial Urban District property tax. Private sponsors also partner with BUP on community events such as Taste of Bethesda and the Bethesda Fine Arts Festival.



"Today I took the Metro to Bethesda, easily caught the Bethesda Circulator for the first time, and found myself during my excursion directly across the street from the Giant we like so much. I also found that this stop has a shelter roof and most of all a bench to sit on to wait for the Circulator's return. Bethesda now seems more accessible than ever, and I look forward to returning much more often than we have in the past." — Richard J. Schlapia, Washington, D.C. resident

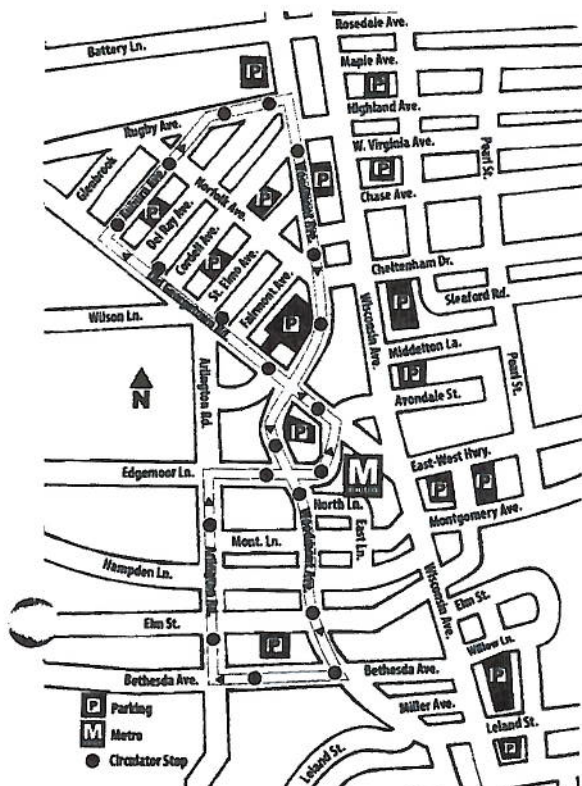
Bethesda Circulator

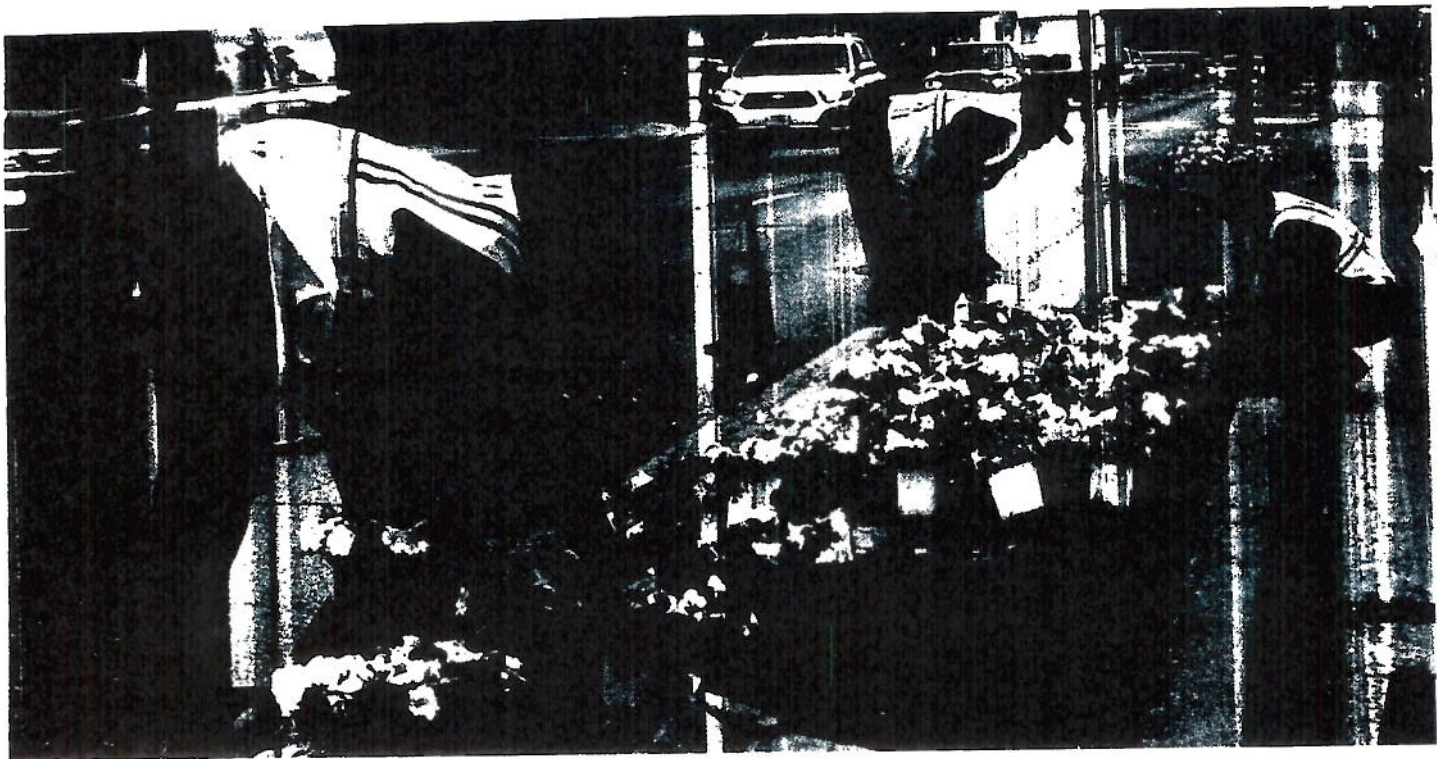
The Bethesda Circulator is a free bus service that provides transportation to Metro, public parking garages, restaurants and shopping in downtown Bethesda. With ridership strong at an average of 29,000 riders per month, the Bethesda Circulator remains one of the best ways to get around downtown Bethesda.

In July 2011, the Bethesda Urban Partnership introduced a new Bethesda Circulator fleet, replacing older trolley-style vehicles with new buses. The new vehicles offer more reliable service, consistent branding and a more comfortable ride.

Additionally, the Circulator's hours were expanded in 2012 to 7 a.m. to 12:00 a.m. Monday-Thursday; 7 a.m. to 2 a.m., Friday and 10 a.m. to 2 a.m. Saturday. The new schedule was created to better accommodate riders, with particular attention to those parking in less-used garages after the closing of Lot 31.

In 2006, the Bethesda Urban Partnership took over the management of the Bethesda Circulator, formerly the Bethesda 8 Trolley, which had been managed by Montgomery County since 1999.





MAINTENANCE & ASK ME TEAM

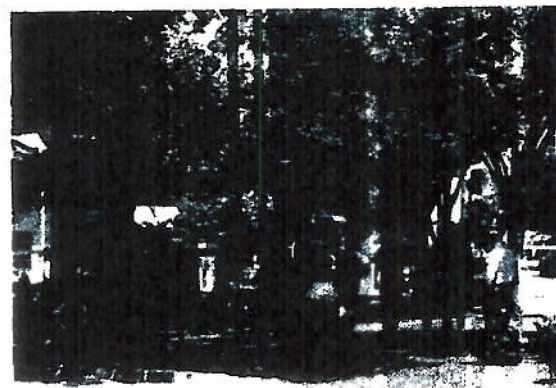
Downtown Bethesda preserves its reputation for clean and safe streets, beautiful flowers and an overall scenic urban landscape thanks to the Bethesda Urban Partnership's hard-working maintenance team.

The BUP maintenance and urban beautification squads work through every season, Monday through Saturday sweeping the streets, removing litter, planting 32,000 flowers in three annual rotations, trimming 1,200 trees, maintaining 188,000 square feet of turf, removing leaves, and maintaining Bethesda's signature brick sidewalks. The team maintains the median strip on Wisconsin Avenue from the Capital Beltway to Friendship Heights, repairs potholes on county roads to ensure a smooth ride for daily commuters and assists with trash pickup and more.

In addition, Bethesda's signature festivals and special events rely on the help of the maintenance team. Arriving during pre-dawn hours for set up, the team manages road closures, assists with traffic control and handles event tear down of BUP's many street festivals. Team members also assist on-site during events providing trash removal, safety assistance, emergency assistance and more.

Additionally the maintenance team cleans and prepares Gallery B, BUP's nonprofit arts exhibition space, between exhibits. The team was also instrumental in scrubbing and readying the Bethesda Metro pedestrian tunnel for the installation of a new public art exhibit there.

The maintenance team and entire BUP staff are certified in First Aid, CPR and AED use in efforts to provide visitors of Bethesda immediate emergency assistance if necessary. They are also provided with English as a Second Language classes.



Ask Me Team

The Bethesda Urban Partnership's Ask Me Team serves as ambassadors of downtown Bethesda, welcoming and assisting visitors and residents. They provide visible assistance for guests, field questions about the community, provide motorist assistance and offer first aid and quick response in emergency situations. The Ask Me Team can be found during afternoons and weekends Wednesday through Sunday along the streets of downtown Bethesda or stationed at Bethesda's Ask Me information kiosks.

The three red kiosks are located in Veterans Park at the corner of Woodmont and Norfolk Avenues; at the Bethesda Metro Center at the corner of Wisconsin Avenue and Old Georgetown Road and at the corner of Woodmont and Bethesda Avenues. Kiosks are open Wednesday through Sunday, displaying free brochures detailing Bethesda's retailers, restaurants, art galleries, theatres, community services, upcoming events, and parking and transportation options.

"I received a stream of pictures today of a heavy footed driver at the Bethesda Court Hotel making a mess of Wisconsin Avenue. I understand that BUP was on the scene within minutes to help clear the debris. Our entire team was amazed at how quickly and professionally BUP came and helped out with the situation. They said the assistance was an enormous help getting things cleared out and safe for pedestrian and vehicular traffic on Wisconsin Ave. We feel very lucky to have BUP as partners and very much appreciate all that you do in Bethesda."

— Gregory Rooney, Vice President, Development, The Bernstein Companies

Maintenance and Ask Me Team Members

Felipe Bermudez, *Ask Me Team Supervisor*

Leo Cardona, *Landscape Crew Leader*

José Castro, *Maintenance Supervisor*

Tito Castro, *Landscaper*

Datrell Childers, *Ask Me Team*

Adan Diaz-Reyes, *Trash Removal*

Callum Fraser-Sharp, *Ask Me Team*

Jose Gaitan, *Urban Beautification Squad*

Dustin Geist, *Ask Me Team*

Florentino Govea, *Urban Beautification Squad*

Jorge Hernandez, *Landscaper*

Walter Hernandez, *Field Operations Manager*

Albert Lamquaye, *Ask Me Team*

Melvin Munoz, *Landscaper*

Celio Pena, *Landscaper*

Rommel Reyes, *Street Sweeper*

Jaime Villanueva, *Trash Removal*

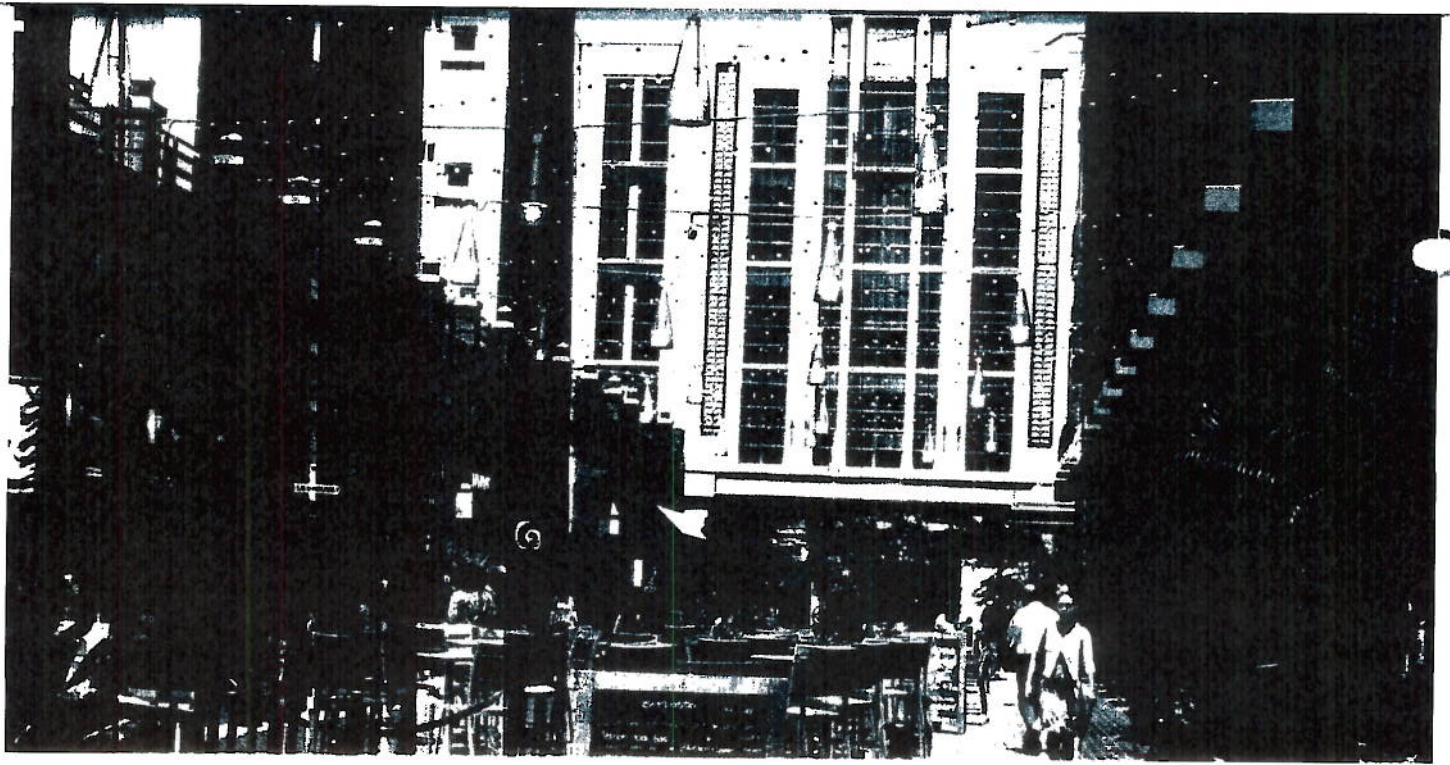
Jules Villegas, *Trash Removal*

Guillermo Yataco, *Urban Beautification Squad*

Veterans Park

Veterans Park is a 2,800-square-foot respite in the heart of downtown Bethesda. The brick-paved park, located at the corner of Norfolk and Woodmont Avenues is maintained by the Bethesda Urban Partnership. The park features flowering cherry trees, potted plants and a fountain with a granite memorial dedicated to the "men and women of the Bethesda-Chevy Chase area who gave their lives in the defense of our country." Many events take place in Veterans Park including the Summer Concert Series, and Bethesda's Winter Wonderland.





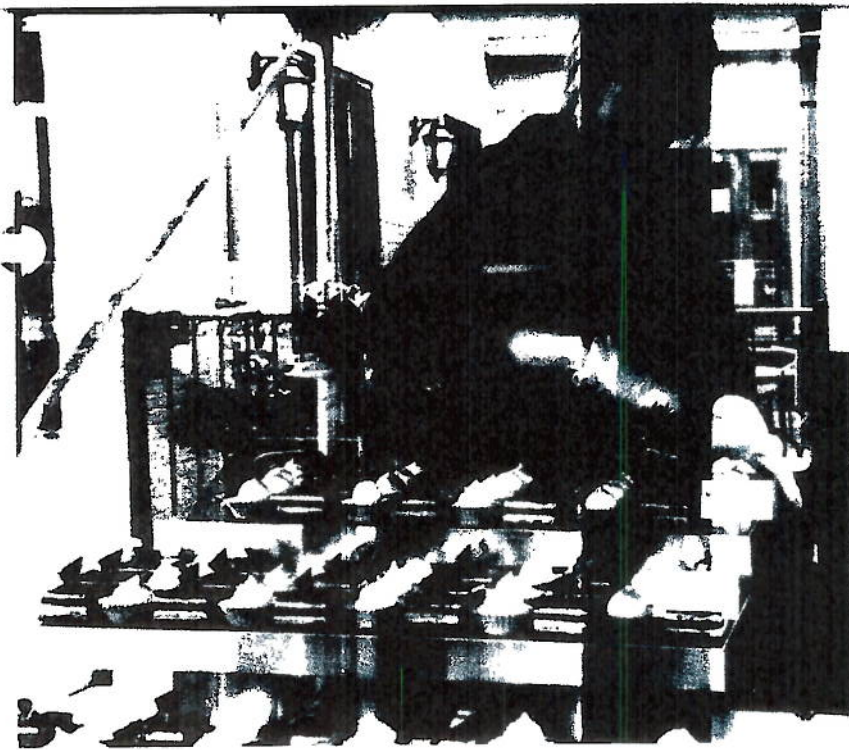
MARKETING

BUP's four-person marketing team plans, implements and manages special events and Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District initiatives for the Bethesda Urban Partnership. BUP's annual event series highlights restaurants, art, music, theatre, dance, film, literature and children's activities. Additionally, BUP produces free brochures that detail Bethesda's restaurant, retail and arts organizations as well as operates downtown Bethesda's website, www.bethesda.org. The efforts of BUP's marketing team target downtown Bethesda's residents, tourists, visitors and employees.

2012 Imagination Bethesda Participants

Adventure Theatre
 American Plant
 Artworks
 Be With Me Playseum
 Beanstalk Montessori
 Bethesda Green
 Bundles of Cookies
 Glen Echo Park
 Gymboree Play & Music
 Imagination Stage
 Iran Cultural & Educational Center
 Joy of Motion Dance Center
 Kidville
 Language Fundamentals
 Language Stars
 MusiKids
 Plaza Artist Materials
 Round House Theatre
 Strathmore
 Tea with Mrs. B
 Waygoose Redux





2011 Taste of Bethesda Participants

American Tap Room	Louisiana Kitchen & Bayou Bar
Bangkok Garden	M & N's Pizza
Bangkok One Thai	Mamma Lucia of Bethesda
The Barking Dog	Matuba Japanese Restaurant
Bethesda Crab House	Morton's
BGR The Burger Joint	Naked Pizza
Bistro LaZeez	Nest Café
BlackFinn American Saloon	Olazzo
Bold Bite	Original Pancake House
Brasserie Monte Carlo	OZ Restaurant & Wine Bar
Bundles of Cookies	Passage to India
California Tortilla	Penang Malaysian Cuisine
Caribou Coffee	Quartermaine Coffee Roasters
Chef Tony's	Ri Ra Irish Pub
Daily Grill	Rock Bottom Brewery
Divino Lounge & Restaurant	Ruth's Chris Steak House
Flanagan's Harp & Fiddle	Saveur India
Fresh Grill	Shangri-La
Georgetown Cupcake	Smoothie King
Haagen Dazs	Spring Mill Bread Company
Haandi Indian Cuisine	Sweet Basil Gourmet Thai Cuisine
Hanaro Restaurant & Lounge	Taylor Gourmet
Hard Times Café	Tout de Sweet
Honest Tea	Uncle Julio's
Jaleo	Union Jack's Bethesda
Jiffy Shoppes	Uptown Deli
Just Cakes	Yamas Mediterranean Grill
Kabob Bazaar	Zen Tara Tea
Lebanese Taverna	
Lilit Cafe	

Taste of Bethesda is downtown Bethesda's signature food and music festival that has celebrated Bethesda's robust restaurant community since 1989. The 22nd annual Taste of Bethesda, held October 1, 2011, featured nearly 60 outstanding restaurants offering delicious dishes prepared by some of the best kitchens in the Washington, D.C. area. In addition to the restaurants, five stages of cultural and musical performances and a children's activity area were enjoyed by attendees.

Taste of Bethesda is an excellent business opportunity for both old and new restaurants. Restaurants that have been in downtown Bethesda for many years value the event as a way to attract new customers and consider this festival one of their best annual marketing initiatives. Newly opened restaurants view the Taste of Bethesda as an exciting chance to introduce themselves to the community. Taste of Bethesda is one of the longest running food and music festivals in the region.

Imagination Bethesda, held annually on the first weekend in June, is a street festival that celebrates children and the arts. Geared toward the 12-and-under crowd, the 18th annual Imagination Bethesda, held June 2, 2012 featured hands-on arts and cultural activities including crafts, planting flowers, street chalking and foreign language games hosted by local businesses and arts organizations. Professional children's performers, including magician Paul Hadfield, Alex & The Kaleidoscope Band, Rockin' Railroad, Rocknoceros, and Joy of Motion dancers were featured along with street performers, face painters and balloonists. Nearly 15,000 children and families took to the streets of Norfolk and Auburn Avenues to participate in the fun, free and "imaginative" festival.

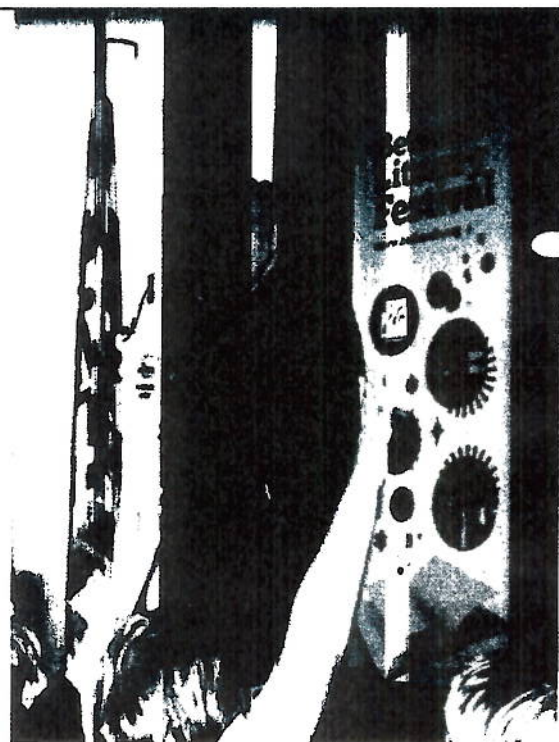


The Bethesda Literary Festival is a three-day celebration of literature where downtown Bethesda's bookstores, art venues and community organizations overflow with poetry, prose and political enthusiasts. The 13th annual Bethesda Literary Festival was held April 20–22, 2012. The festival featured an array of national and local authors and journalists, as well as writing contests for adults and children.

Only in its second year, the Bethesda Literary Festival Poetry Contest received more than 150 entries. Additionally, essay and short story contests, produced by the Bethesda Urban Partnership in a joint venture with *Bethesda Magazine* and supported by The Jim & Carol Trawick Foundation, received a record number of entries. The winners of both contests saw their work published in *Bethesda Magazine*.

The Bethesda Youth Writing Contest received a record number of entries, with more than 700 county students answering the question: "What Would You Do If You Were a Grown-up for a Day?" The contest was held in partnership with *Washington Parent* magazine and the winning essays were printed in the June 2012 edition.

The festival featured Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and bestselling author Thomas Friedman, co-author of *That Used to be Us*; bestselling biographers Walter Isaacson, author of *Steve Jobs* and Sally Bedell Smith, author of *Elizabeth the Queen*; former NPR host and current Sirius XM Radio host Bob Edwards, author of *A Voice in the*

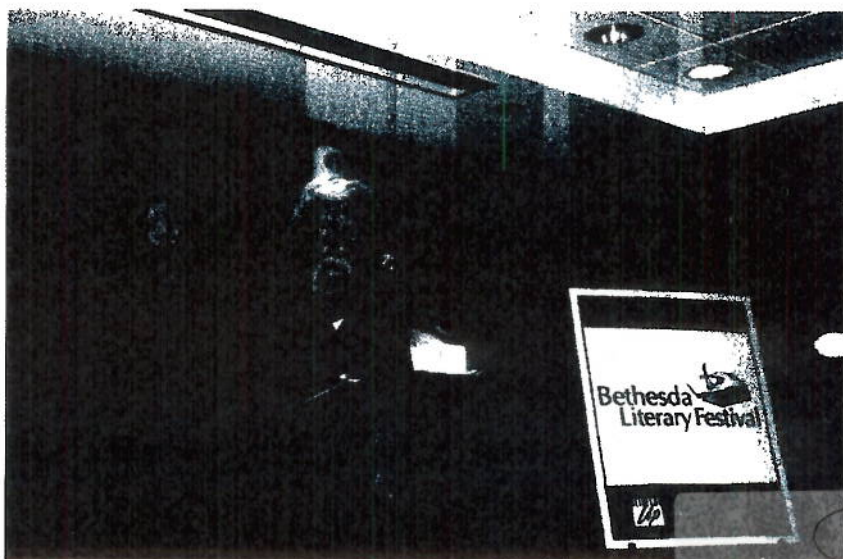


Thanks to our community partners and local merchants for their support

Artery Plaza
Barnes & Noble Booksellers
Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services Center
BlackFinn American Saloon
Caribou Coffee
DoubleTree Bethesda
Haagen Dazs
Hilton Garden Inn
Hyatt Regency Bethesda
Imagination Stage
The JBG Companies
Joy of Motion Dance Center
Mamma Lucia
Potbelly Sandwich Works
Residence Inn by Marriott
Round House Theatre
Starbucks
Whole Foods
The Writer's Center

Box: My Life in Radio; and distinguished journalists Marvin & Deborah Kalb, co-authors of *Haunting Legacy: Vietnam and the American Presidency from Ford to Obama*.

Other participating authors included Pulitzer Prize-winning national security reporter with The Washington Post, Joby Warrick, author of *The Triple Agent: The Al-Qaeda Mole who Infiltrated the CIA*; bestselling fiction author most well-known for *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*, Judith Viorst; bestselling author of the *Goosebumps* children's book series, R.L. Stine; and Maryland Poet Laureate, Stanley Plumly.





"Thank you so much. We happened upon a copy of the magazine at the Bethesda Public Library, and I was moved to tears, to think that I'm the mother of a published author!! Thank you again for everything. This was a very meaningful experience for Rosa. Her confidence in her writing has just soared, and she spends a lot of time writing in the journal that she received in her gift bag."

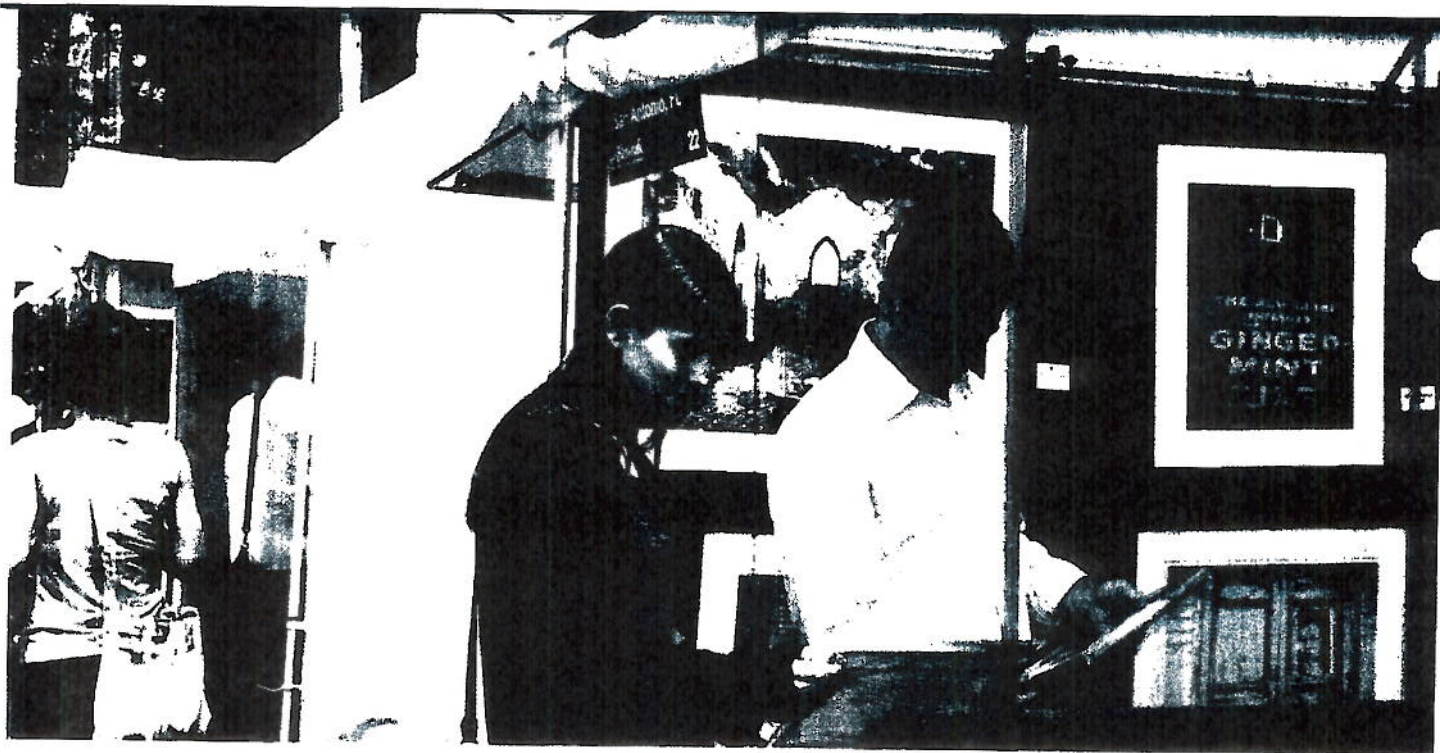
— Anne Marie Cammisa, mother of a Youth Writing Contest winner

Bethesda Outdoor Movies: Stars on the Avenue is downtown Bethesda's annual film festival that allows movie goers to experience major motion pictures under the stars in Bethesda's Woodmont Triangle. The seventh annual event, held July 26-30, 2011, showcased five nights of blockbuster hits including popular new releases, musicals and classic films. More than 1,700 visitors enjoyed the 2011 Bethesda Outdoor Movies: Stars on the Avenue, which featured *The Breakfast Club*, *Bye Bye Birdie*, *The King's Speech*, *The Social Network* and *Rocky*.

Winter Wonderland stages musical performances and ice sculpting presentations to spread holiday cheer in the downtown each year. The annual winter festival, held December 2 & 3, 2011, warmed up the season with a free professional choral concert at Imagination Stage. Nearly 400 attendees enjoyed the musical stylings of the American University Gospel Choir, Capital Blend, The Capital Hearings and Vox Pop DC.

The magic continued on Saturday afternoon with a variety of holiday entertainment in Veterans Park including a live ice sculpting demonstration and performances from Academy of the Holy Cross, Garrett Park Elementary School, Our Lady of Lourdes, Seneca Valley High School and Watkins Mill High School. The afternoon was completed with a special visit from Santa Claus.





Ongoing Events

The **Summer Concert Series** brings live music to downtown Bethesda including swing, rock, reggae, pop, blues and soul. These free outdoor concerts are held Thursday evenings from 6-8 p.m. in Veterans Park from May through July.

Bethesda's Woodmont Triangle is home to the **Bethesda FRESHFARM Market**, held Saturdays, May through October. The flavorful market features a variety of fresh fruits, vegetables, organic meats, baked goods and artisan cheeses. Produced by the Bethesda Urban Partnership partnered with FRESHFARM Markets, the market has become a weekly stop for many Bethesda residents.

Promotional Materials

BUP's marketing team produces free publications and brochures that detail Bethesda's restaurant, retail and arts communities. Nearly 100,000 free brochures and 200,000 Events Calendars are circulated annually and distributed at large-scale festivals, at Bethesda Urban Partnership's three information kiosks, via BUP's mailing list, on BUP's website, at local businesses and through building and hotel concierges.

Destination Downtown Bethesda is a must-have "yellow pages" guide produced annually that lists downtown Bethesda's many businesses by category. Destination Downtown Bethesda is distributed to 35,000 residents and visitors annually.

Special thanks to our 2011-2012 sponsors

97.1 WASH-FM
ABC7
Barwood Transportation
Bernard Family Foundation
Bethesda Magazine
The Bethesda Center / The Bernstein Companies
Brookfield Office Properties
Chevy Chase Land Company
The Clark Building
Comcast
The Donohoe Companies, Inc.
EagleBank
Equinox Fitness Clubs
Imagination Stage
The Jim and Carol Trawick Foundation
Jane Fairweather Team, Coldwell Banker
The JBG Companies, Inc.
L'Academie de Cuisine
Martens Volvo
Mid-Atlantic Federal Credit Union
MIX 107.3
Montgomery County, MD
My Eye Dr.
The New York Times
News Channel 8
Renewal by Andersen
Stage 2 A/V Productions
StonebridgeCarras
Union Hardware
Vamoose Bus
Washington Parent

Eat Here is a comprehensive list of Bethesda's many multi-cultural restaurants that includes cuisine type, location and price range as well as highlighting evening destinations and parking options in the downtown.

The **Art & Soul of Bethesda** details art galleries and studios, arts education organizations, public art, cinemas and live theatre within downtown Bethesda's Arts & Entertainment District.

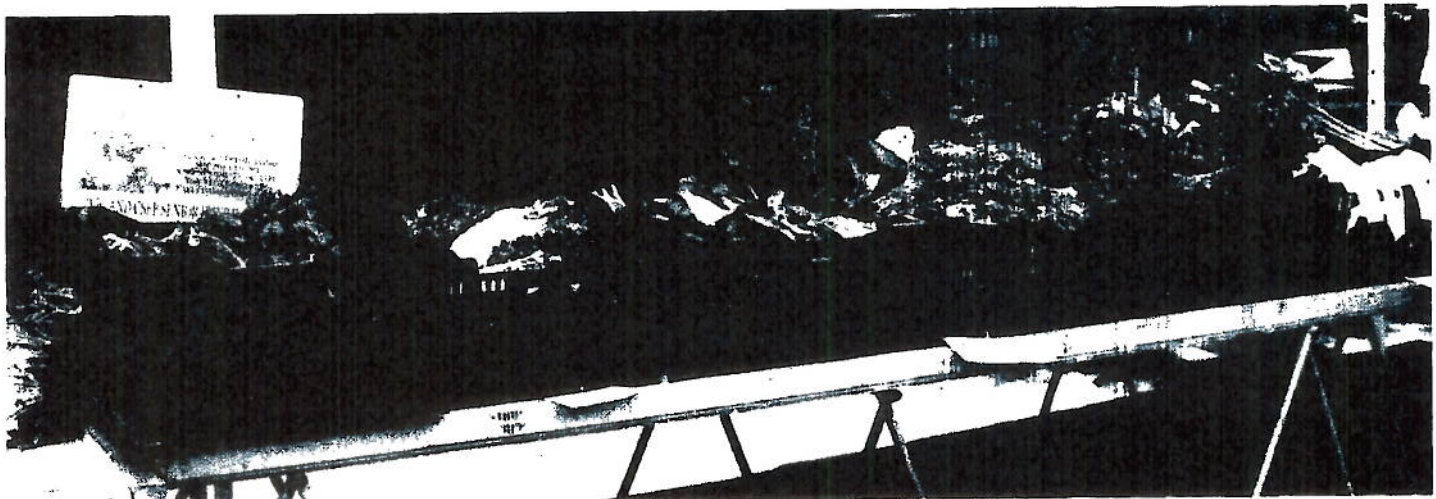
Bethesda's Events Calendar is a bi-monthly publication mailed to 30,000 Bethesda area households featuring local and large-scale community events.

The **Bethesda Circulator map** details the Circulator route and hours of operation as well as downtown Bethesda's parking garages and surface lots.

The **Downtown Bethesda Promotional Video** is a resource for residential and commercial real estate developers and organizations attracting new companies to Bethesda. The video highlights downtown Bethesda's amenities, cultural venues, transportation options and urban appeal.



"They (BUP) put on the best event in the area, the Taste of Bethesda, as well as other events. It can't be measured how much they do for the area."
— Roberto Pietrobono, Owner of Olazzo restaurant



Online and Social Media

In the past year, the Bethesda Urban Partnership has expanded its online presence, adding a frequently updated Twitter feed, @BethesdaUp, which has more than 200 followers. Additionally, BUP maintains a website with mobile capabilities, a popular Facebook page with more than 1,300 "likes" and a comprehensive email campaign, which has a continuously growing list of subscribers.

Bethesda.org is the face of the Bethesda Urban Partnership on the internet. The website averages more than 25,000 unique visits per month, helping residents and visitors learn about downtown living, find a great restaurant or specialty boutique, and retrieve information about events or find a local farmers market. To find out about "What's Happening in Bethesda," visit www.bethesda.org and sign up to receive the weekly Bethesda Urban Partnership emails.



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT

The state of Maryland designated downtown Bethesda as an Arts & Entertainment District effective July 1, 2002. Special tax incentives benefit artists, arts enterprises and developers that are located within the Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District. Bethesda Urban Partnership is the manager of the Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

In 2012, Bethesda was re-designated as an Arts & Entertainment District. Additionally, the Maryland Department of Economic Development awarded the Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District the *Outstanding Achievement Award* in 2012.

BUP's marketing team works alongside a 14-member Board of Directors, as well as an advisory committee comprising local artists and arts business representatives, to progressively improve upon the arts representation and initiatives in the downtown and present ideas for future artistic endeavors.

Maryland State Benefits

- Artists who live in Montgomery County and work in the Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District can receive certain income tax breaks.
- Developers who renovate or construct new spaces for arts use can be exempt from paying certain property taxes on the value of the renovations for up to 10 years.
- Arts enterprises that charge the Admissions and Amusement tax are exempt from this tax.

Board of Directors

Phyllis Lieberman, Chair
VP/COO, LIPAM International, Inc.

Jane Galbraith Mahaffie, Secretary
Stonebridge & Associates

Carol Beach
Resident

Cathy Bernard
Resident

Christopher Bruch
President, Donohoe Hospitality

Frank Craighill
The JBG Companies

Jane Fairweather
Jane Fairweather/Coldwell Banker

Ted Goldstock, Of Counsel
Lerch, Early & Brewer

Jack Hayes
Resident

Mark A. Kramer
Kramer Architects

Dr. Jerry Morenoff
CEO, JEMC Associates, LLC

Debra Moser
Resident

Kenneth Hartman, ex-officio
Bethesda Chevy Chase Regional Services Center

Margaret Rifkin, ex-officio
Maryland National Capital Park & Planning Commission

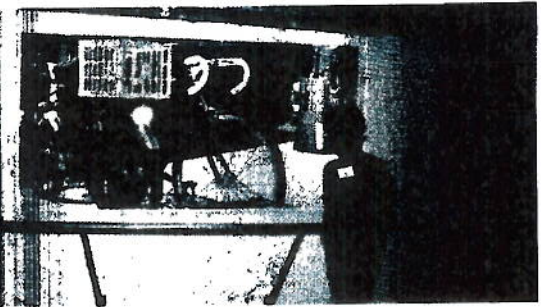
Initiatives

The Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District produces high quality arts and cultural programming that benefits residents, businesses and tourists and supports the community's growth and vitality. Events produced by the Arts & Entertainment District highlight local artists, writers and performers and provide them a venue to show their work in the community. These programs also promote the variety of artistic and cultural resources in the community and attract nearly 1,000 artists and more than 30,000 attendees each year.

Gallery B is a nonprofit art gallery in the heart of downtown Bethesda that provides space for local artists and curators to show their work. In 2011, the Bethesda Arts and Entertainment District and the Bethesda Urban Partnership, with the generous support of the Polinger Tower Company, announced the opening of Gallery B in a formerly vacant commercial space. As tough economic times have forced some galleries to close their doors, Gallery B ensures that Bethesda maintains its reputation as a destination for the arts and that the public continues to have the opportunity to view and purchase artwork by local and regional artists in Bethesda. The Bethesda Urban Partnership and Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District manage the gallery, which artists and curators may rent for one-month exhibitions. Gallery B does not take a commission on any of the artwork sold during exhibitions.

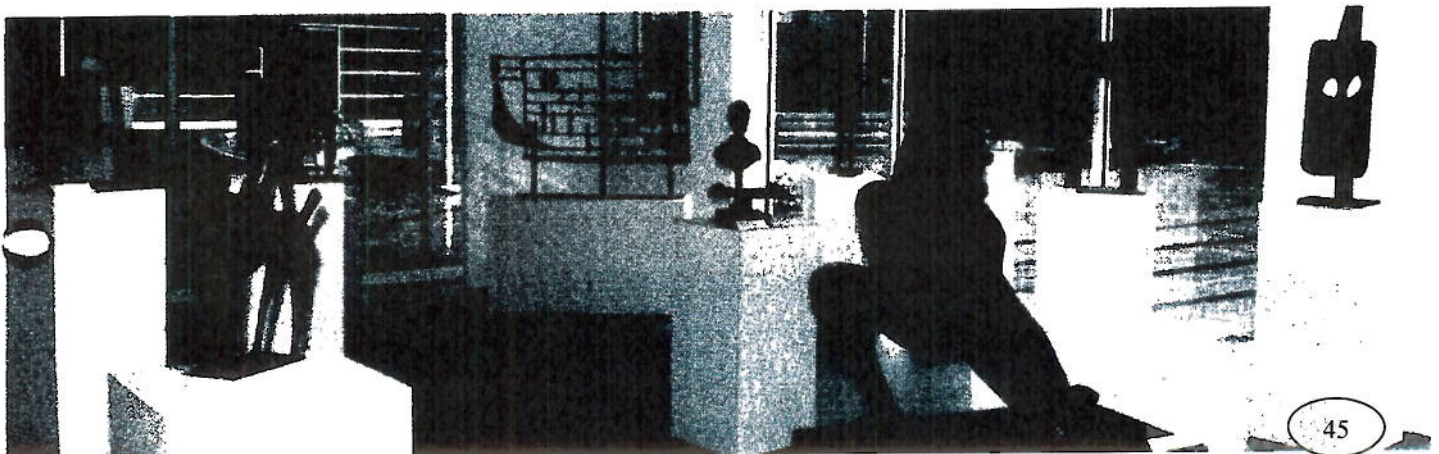


"The A&E District Program helps localities capitalize on the unique cultural and economic landscape of the area. By creating a bustling arts and cultural scene, Bethesda entices its sizeable downtown workforce to 'stay and play' in the area after work." — *Theresa Colvin, Executive Director, Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC)*



Tunnel Vision is a new public art initiative made possible by a partnership between BUP, the Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District and Montgomery County to display artwork in the pedestrian tunnel that runs under Wisconsin Avenue to the Bethesda Metro Station. As part of the initiative, BUP held a regional art competition, inviting artists from Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia to submit five images of their work. Nearly 200 artists working in abstract and realistic painting, photography and digital media submitted artwork. A jury made up of community, business and nonprofit representatives selected 12 pieces of art to be displayed. Images of the selected artwork were printed on poly-metal panels and installed in the tunnel.

Additionally, BUP worked with graphic designers to create unique branding for the initiative and to design four panels that promote downtown Bethesda as an arts and cultural destination. These panels draw attention to the exciting amenities and enriching community experiences Bethesda offers as well as promote Bethesda's visual art, theatre, dance and community events. The Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District secured donations from 16 Bethesda businesses, organizations and individuals to fund the project, which also included installing new LED lighting in the tunnel. An opening reception was held to celebrate the tunnel's transformation on May 17, 2012. More than 100 people attended.





"I'm a resident of Chevy Chase who frequents the arts and entertainment of Bethesda. I just read in Maryland Insights that Bethesda A&E District was named winner of the 2012 Award for Outstanding Achievement by the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development. I want to congratulate you and your colleagues on this wonderful award and wish you a grand rest of the year!"

— Robert Jenkins, Local Resident

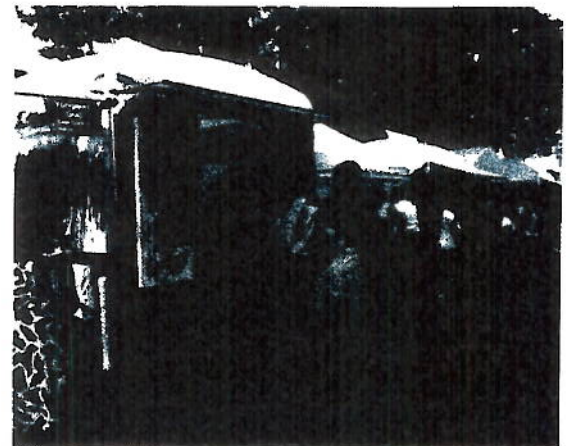
The **Bethesda Fine Arts Festival**, the highest ranked art show in Maryland (Sunshine Artist Magazine, Sept. 2008), features 140 contemporary artists who display and sell their fine art and fine craft along with live entertainment and children's art activities. This marquee arts initiative attracts some of the best artists from throughout the United States and Canada, and draws more than 20,000 attendees per year.

Held on May 12 & 13, 2012 along Norfolk and Auburn Avenues in Bethesda's Woodmont Triangle, the ninth annual Bethesda Fine Arts Festival filled the streets with painting, ceramics, photography, sculpture, furniture and more.

Dance Bethesda is downtown Bethesda's celebration of dance. Friday, March 2, 2012 featured a variety of classes for youth and adults taught by Joy of Motion Dance Center, Dansez! Dansez!, DuShor Dance Studio and Dance Bethesda dance studio.

Dance Bethesda culminated on Saturday, March 3 at Round House Theatre with performances by exciting, renowned, local dance companies, including Alexandra May Ballance and dancers from Joy of Motion Dance Center's Youth Dance Ensemble, Culture Shock DC, Erica Rebollar/Rebollar Dance, Furia Flamenca, Soul in Motion and Tzveta Kassabova.

The 2011 Dance Bethesda concert was nominated for a Metro DC Dance Award.

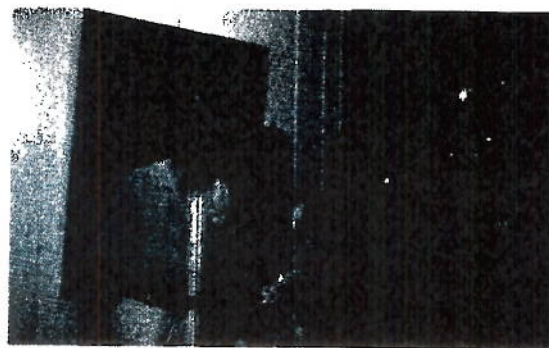
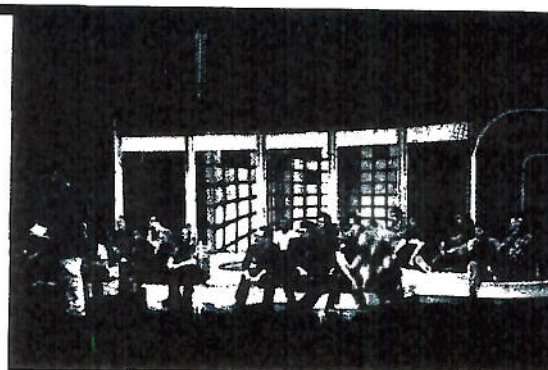


The Trawick Prize: Bethesda Contemporary Art Awards is downtown Bethesda's juried art competition that awards \$14,000 in prize monies to four selected artists. Seven finalists were selected among nearly 300 applicants from Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia to display work from September 1-30, 2011, at Artery Plaza Art Gallery. Founded by local businesswoman and philanthropist Carol Trawick, The Trawick Prize has awarded more than \$100,000 in prize monies and honored more than 100 regional artists in the annual exhibition since its inception in 2003.

Mia Feuer from Washington, D.C. was awarded "Best in Show" with \$10,000; Caryl Burtner from Richmond, VA was named 2nd place and given \$2,000; Ryan Browning from Frederick, MD was bestowed 3rd place and received \$1,000 and the Young Artist Award of \$1,000 was given to Lu Zhang of Baltimore, MD.

Jurors for the 2011 competition included Amy Hauft, Chair of the Sculpture Department at Virginia Commonwealth University; Dr. Sarah Newman, Curator of Contemporary Art at the Corcoran in Washington, D.C. and Sue Spaid, Executive Director of the Contemporary Museum in Baltimore, MD.

Play In A Day is a one-of-a-kind theatrical event that challenges professional local theatre companies to write, direct, rehearse and perform original plays in 24 hours. On February 10, 2012, playwrights took on the task of writing original scripts, given



only a theme, a prop, a line of dialogue and a long night to create a masterpiece. On Saturday, February 11, the directors and actors received the script and spent the day rehearsing their lines, learning stage cues and then, in front of a nearly sold-out audience at Imagination Stage, presented their ten-minute performances.

As an added twist and incentive, \$1,000 in cash prizes was awarded for Best Direction, Best Writing, Best Ensemble/Acting Best and Best Use of Prop. The esteemed panel of judges who selected the winners included Janet Griffin, director of Public Programs and Artistic Producer at Folger Theatre; Leslie Jacobson, chair, Department of Theatre and Dance and Founding Artistic Director at George Washington University's Horizons Theatre and Jojo Ruf, general manager of the National New Play Network.

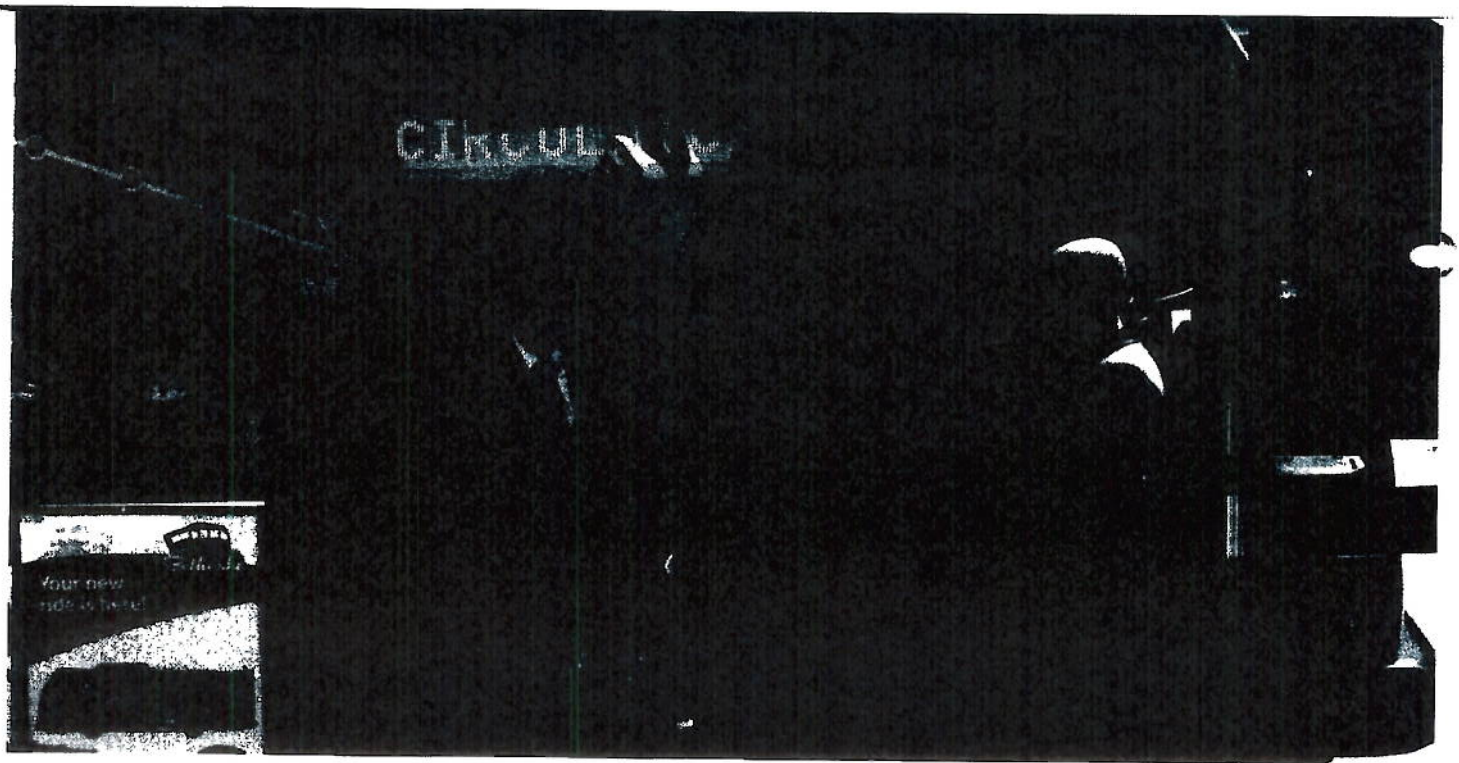
Participating theatres were Adventure Theatre; Flying V; Imagination Stage; Keegan Theatre; Olney Theatre Center and Round House Theatre.

Also founded by Carol Trawick, the **Bethesda Painting Awards**, is downtown Bethesda's juried art competition, which has been awarding regional painters since 2005. Eight finalists were chosen to exhibit their work at Gallery B from June 1-30, 2012 and \$14,000 in prize monies was awarded to the four top artists. The Bethesda Painting Awards is open to painters from Maryland, Virginia and Washington, D.C., and the eighth annual competition received more than 300 applications.

The 2012 award winners were: Ali Miller of Baltimore, MD, Best in Show; Lee Newman of Kensington, MD, 2nd Place; Katherine Mann of Washington, D.C., 3rd Place and Laini Nemett of Baltimore, MD, Young Artist Award. Entries were juried by Walter Bartman, Director and Founder of the Yellow Barn Studio and Gallery in Glen Echo, MD; Maria Karametou, professional artist and assistant professor at George Mason University and William Woodward, Professor Emeritus of Fine Art at George Washington University.

The **Bethesda Artist Market** is a fine art marketplace featuring 25 local and regional artists alongside live entertainment in downtown Bethesda. Starting in 2011, the Bethesda Artist Market neighbored with the Bethesda FRESHFARM Market, creating a blending of craft and cuisine. The artist market features the area's most creative and stylish jewelry, photography, painting, ceramics and fiber, as well as live music in Veterans Park.

The **Bethesda Art Walk** features downtown Bethesda galleries, studios, frame shops and other art spaces that stay open late on the second Friday of every month. The Art Walk invites patrons to enjoy a night out in Bethesda by viewing art before or after dinner at one of the neighborhood's many diverse eateries or by sticking around after work. Participating galleries extend their hours from 6-9 p.m. during the monthly Art Walk.



BETHESDA TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS

Bethesda Transportation Solutions (BTS) was established in 2000 to help manage the traffic in downtown Bethesda by marketing local, state and federal commuter benefits programs and tax incentives to employers. BTS promotes alternative transportation such as rail, bus, carpools and biking with the goal of reducing the number of Bethesda employees who drive alone to work.

Bethesda Transportation Solutions Staff

Kristen Blackmon
Director

Jennifer Zucker
Employer Outreach & Marketing

Anne Kaiser
Outreach & Marketing Associate

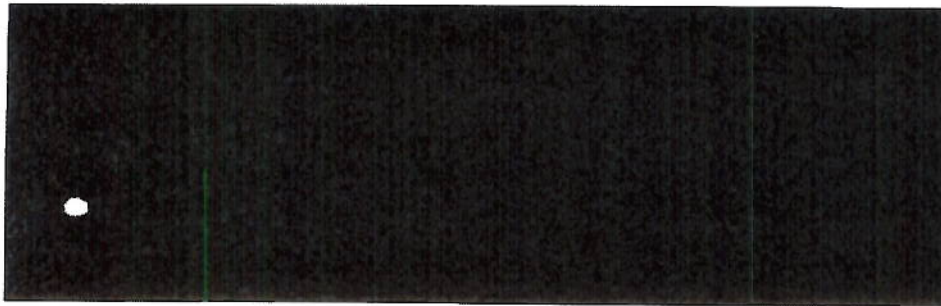
Tom Robertson
Transportation Specialist

Allison Kemp
Customer Service & Data Entry



2011 – 2012 Accomplishments

- BTS hosted the third largest 2012 Bike to Work Day event in the D.C. region, with more than 550 bicyclists attending. Media coverage included Fox 5 News, 9 News Now and 88.5 WAMU. Maryland State Delegate Ariana Kelly served as Master of Ceremonies. BTS received proclamations from Governor Martin O'Malley, State Comptroller Peter Franchot and Montgomery County Executive Isiah Leggett.
- The 2011 Walk & Ride Challenge was expanded to four Montgomery County Transportation Management Districts. A total of 650 employees participated countywide, with 255 Bethesda employees taking part in the Challenge. American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc. (AOTA) was the Bethesda sponsor.
- The Annual Commuter Survey was conducted to determine commute patterns in Bethesda. The most recent survey numbers show that more than 36 percent of Bethesda employees are not drivers of a single-occupancy vehicle and are using other transportation options such as transit, carpooling, bicycling or walking to work. Others work from home by teleworking.
- BTS has helped 125 Bethesda employers file Traffic Mitigation Plans and assists those employers in filing Annual Reports of their activities.



- The BTS monthly Commuter Newsletter, distributed electronically, is sent to 2,584 people, with a 17 percent open rate. Bike to Work Day email blasts are sent to more than 3,000 people.
- BTS has 373 social media followers on Facebook and Twitter, where Bethesda commuters are updated on transit alerts and BTS events. Pictures are posted of BTS events, including staff working in the community.
- BTS continues to host weekly Commuter Information Days in Bethesda office building lobbies and large employer worksites.
- BTS helped promote Montgomery County's 2012 Telework Webinar series, with many Bethesda employers participating in the online seminar and receiving free telework consulting.



BTS Advisory Committee

- Clyde D. Garrett, II, Chair
The Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber representative
- Lisa Fadden
The Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber representative
- David Viertels
The Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber representative
- Maureen Bryant
Western Montgomery County Citizens Advisory Board appointee
- Philip Shar
Western Montgomery County Citizens Advisory Board appointee
- Linda Moreno
Western Montgomery County Citizens Advisory Board appointee
- Deborah A. Michaels
Western Montgomery County Citizens Advisory Board appointee
- Russ Phillips
BUP appointee representing employers of greater than 50 employees
- Lauren M. Lefkowitz, PHR
BUP appointee representing employers of greater than 50 employees
- Charles B. Andrews
BUP appointee representing employers of fewer than 50 employees
- Benjamin Schlesinger
BUP appointee representing employers of fewer than 50 employees
- Mark A. Kramer
Non-voting member, Bethesda Urban Partnership Board
- Kenneth B. Hartman
Non-voting member, Bethesda Chevy Chase Regional Services Center
- Jim Carlson
Non-voting member, Montgomery County Department of Transportation, Commuter Services
- Bill Barron
Non-voting member, Montgomery County Park & Planning





URBAN PARTNERSHIP INC.

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www.bethesda.org

Photo Credits: Sonny Odum and Bethesda Urban Partnership

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2	Bethesda's Future Developments & Employment Growth
3	Parking Lot District and BUP Budget Graphs
4	BUP Maintenance Service Analysis
5	BUP Marketing Program Analysis
6	Bethesda Circulator Ridership Analysis and Route Map
7	Association Laboratory Final Report
8	Online Survey and Responses Spreadsheet

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Status Report on Strategic Initiatives from 2008

Strategic Plan Item	2009 Update	2010 Update	2011 Update	2012 Update
Maintenance				
<u>A. Continue to Develop and Maintain Bethesda Urban District's Public Spaces, Sidewalks and Plazas at a First Class Standard:</u>				
<p>1.) Assume responsibility for certain County Maintenance functions within the Urban District:</p> <p>1a.) Take over the maintenance of county streetlights (repair, painting, replacement).</p>	<p>BUP established a new direct contact at DOT. The new County Contractor is responsive. The County has to bundle all the light repairs into one contract for the whole County and at this time is working with us to be more responsive and efficient.</p>	<p>The County receives from BUP a monthly streetlight outage report. The County has rebid the lighting contract, and contractor will remain the same. The current contractor has been very responsive to our outage reports.</p>	<p>BUP is investigating the phasing in of a ROAM GIS-based lighting system to be installed on current lanterns and lights that would monitor and report street light issues. Software cost is \$6,000; \$100 - \$150/per light for 600 county lights.</p>	<p>Funds not available for ROAM. BUP is implementing an in-house GIS system which will enable us to better plot, track and report light outages. New lantern standard has been accepted and approved by County. It will be phased in as knockdowns occur, and with new development. New standard is less expensive to manufacture and maintain, quicker fabrication time, more efficient and has capability to be upgraded to LED. BUP has been working with SHA and County to get signal poles painted.</p>
<p>1b.) Take over the restriping of county crosswalks and increase frequency to a two-year cycle.</p>	<p>BUP performed a photo inventory/rating of all crosswalks. BUP met with DOT and asked them to prioritize the restriping of all crosswalks and to add crosshatching. DOT began work in December 2009.</p>	<p>Due to budget constraints, all crosswalk restriping has been suspended except for emergency cases until further notice. BUP will continue to monitor and work with DOT as the budget improves.</p>	<p>Status remains the same with the county budget shortfalls. BUP will continue to monitor.</p>	<p>Same. If County decides to increase charges for parking and charge for Saturday parking, BUP or the Chamber should advocate to use funds for these purposes and others like the ROAM technology for street lights. Investigate with help from RSC where TMD fees go, and suggest they should be used in the TMD for like issues.</p>
<p>2. Improve and expand flowers, trees and other landscaping in the Urban District with particular attention to Bethesda Gateways.</p>		<p>The savings plan initiated by the County in FY'10 eliminated landscaping enhancement items by BUP. The Bethesda Chevy Chase Regional Services Center purchased eight new benches to be installed by BUP on Norfolk Ave.</p>	<p>Funding has been restored to FY10 levels, but still does not provide for any expansion.</p>	<p>Status remains the same.</p>

Status Report on Strategic Initiatives from 2008

Strategic Plan Item	2009 Update	2010 Update	2011 Update	2012 Update
3. Purchase new holiday decorations and include all light poles in new decoration layout.	BUP purchased and installed LED lit garland strands for all Bethesda lantern light poles. In FY11, BUP will begin a plan to retro fit all lanterns that currently do not have outlets for garland.	We completed the purchase of new holiday decorations. Approximately 100 lanterns do not have power outlets. Approximate cost to install each outlet is \$150. The plan to retro fit outlets is pending and awaiting funding availability.	Status remains the same.	BUP identified poles needing outlets for the County, and they are currently working on a plan to equip all existing lanterns with outlets.
4. Participate in functions of Bethesda Green such as recycling in the public right-of-way per MOU.	Jeff Burton represents BUP on the Bethesda Green Board. We have partnered with Bethesda Green in a one-year pilot program to study the effectiveness of two styles of public recycling cans. Our major outdoor events have an increased number of recycling containers. As our budget and funding permit, we will add Victor Stanley style recycling cans to BUP's trash can inventory. We currently make one weekly run to the recycling center.	Contamination is less than 3% in our cans; 300 lbs. of recyclables are being collected per month.	Jeff Burton has been elected Vice Chair of the Bethesda Green Board, and will become Chair in 2012. BUP recycles all bottles, cans, cardboard and plastic tablecloths at our three large street festivals.	Bethesda Green is working to expand recycling cans and bike racks in the downtown along with advocating for the Bikeshare program.
5. Provide feedback as requested to MNCPPC during Development Review Committee.	BUP has participated in three DRC meetings for projects in design phase. We have also met with MNCPPC staff as public art elements have been presented for consideration, such as the new Safeway on Arlington.	No projects have gone to the DRC committee since the last Strategic Plan update in January 2010.	BUP has participated in the DRC discussions for two projects (Air Rights/Pearl Street & Woodmont Central). BUP serves on the Woodmont Triangle Action Group (WTAG). BUP, Chamber & County met with Francoise Carrier, Chair of MNCPPC, to discuss the amenity fund and formal recognition of WTAG. BUP continues to work with developers as they plan and implement their streetscape design. BUP has been added to the list of community groups that are to be alerted to any new pre-preliminary plans being presented.	BUP Board member Mark Kramer joined the County's Public Art Review Panel.

Status Report on Strategic Initiatives from 2008

Strategic Plan Item	2009 Update	2010 Update	2011 Update	2012 Update
<u>B. Develop and maintain public spaces, sidewalks, and plazas adjacent and contiguous to the Urban District.</u>				
1. Expand Urban District boundaries and/or enter into MOU's (Examples include Battery Lane Park).	BUP has given MNCPPC proposals to maintain Battery Lane Park and other MNCPPC parks that are inside or border the Urban District. Battery Park's redesign is on hold pending funding. BUP is currently working on a plan to provide services to the White Flint Urban District.	BUP partnered with MNCPPC and the Hilton Garden Inn to maintain the plantings in Elm Street Park during the initial warranty year.	At this time, it appears that the County has decided to manage the White Flint Urban District in house. With Polinger's project on hold, Battery Park expansion is on hold as well.	BUP continues to work with NIH to create and manage a "contemplative" park in the greenspace at the southwest corner of Wisconsin and Woodmont Aves. In 2013, BUP entered into an MOU with NIH to maintain the greenspace.
<u>C. Make navigation of downtown Bethesda more user-friendly.</u>				
1. Improve Wayfinding signage.	BUP has successfully completed the redesign and installation of all gateway and pedestrian wayfinding signage to match Bethesda branding.	Completed.	BUP plans to re-face the "gateway" Wayfinding signs and re-paint all frames.	Completed refacing of all "Welcome to Bethesda" gateway signs and painting of frames of all pedestrian signs to make them more visible. Installed large primary access sign at Regional Serves Center. BUP is working with SHA to update the parking directional system in the downtown to improve its design and functionality. SHA is paying for the entire project including design, fabrication and installation. Our piece will be part of a larger state-wide signage project. A pedestrian wayfinding sign at Metro Bus Bay was added. Working with the Metro Task Force to install an interactive display at Metro Bus Bay.
2. Improve signage at Bethesda Circulator stops	BUP has successfully completed the redesign, upgrade and installation of all Bethesda Circulator signage.	Completed.	Completed.	Completed.

Status Report on Strategic Initiatives from 2008

Strategic Plan Item	2009 Update	2010 Update	2011 Update	2012 Update
TRANSPORTATION				
<u>A. Expand public transportation options.</u>				
1. Increase route and hours of Bethesda Circulator.	BUP implemented a pilot "holiday" expansion of the Circulator Route in December 2008 to include the East side of Wisconsin Ave. The expansion was paid for from advertising dollars. There was a demand for the expansion, and 2,000 additional riders took advantage of the five-week pilot.	BUP put the Bethesda Circulator out for public RFP in order to secure three new, reliable and uniquely branded vehicles for the service. RMA was again awarded the contract. Based on the ridership counts, BUP will modify the hours of the service to shift late night hours to Saturday during the day.	New Circulator Saturday Hours were successfully implemented in July 2010. More than 3,000 riders are utilizing the Circulator per month on Saturdays (up from 800 in Sept. 2006). New vehicles were added to the route and contract. BUP is working with the County DOT to plan for possible expansion of the service in response to the Lot 31 development construction impact.	Three new buses were added to replace the aging trolley-style vehicles in July 2011. Hours extended, additional vehicle on the route during AM and PM peak hours to shorten headways to mitigate issues involving the construction of the Lot 31 project.
2. Increase number of bicycle racks and create a comprehensive map of bicycle racks, routes, etc.	A comprehensive bicycle map was created that encompassed three maps: a 5-mile diameter map, a 1.5 mile diameter map that highlights the Capital Crescent Trail entrances and bike-friendly streets, and a map of the downtown that notes the locations of all bike racks. BTS also assisted in having several new bike racks installed, to include one near the Air Rights building and one outside of Bethesda Green's office.	BTS' comprehensive bicycle map is very popular. BTS, in conjunction with the BCC Regional Services Center, met with WMATA staff to discuss the bike rack situation at the Bethesda Metro Station. The antiquated set of 11 single racks near the Kiss-n-Ride will be replaced with 11 double racks. WMATA may also add an additional 10-20 double racks. A formal request has been submitted to have the bike lockers investigated since they are being used for purposes other than to store a bicycle.	The new Metro Task Force is working to get additional bike racks at Bethesda Metro.	Eight (8) additional bike racks added in 2011, plus additional racks added at Metro Station. Communication with County and WMATA to add more in 2012. "Biking to Bethesda" comprehensive brochure in the process of updates to show additional bike racks and bike lanes/paths into Bethesda. Working with Montgomery College and Washington Area Bicyclists Association to have Cycling Safety classes in Bethesda. BUP/BTS are working with the County on implementing the new BikeShare program in downtown Bethesda.

Status Report on Strategic Initiatives from 2008

Strategic Plan Item	2009 Update	2010 Update	2011 Update	2012 Update
<u>B. Increase pedestrian friendliness of downtown Bethesda.</u>				
1. Increase number of crosswalks.	One new pedestrian crosswalk has been added to the downtown at the Bethesda Metro Station. BTS/BUP photographed and inventoried each of the 72 crosswalks in the downtown. The state of repair of the crosswalks was rated. The county is now working to re-stripe all of the crosswalks in the downtown.	Due to budget constraints, all crosswalk restriping has been suspended except for emergency cases until further notice. BUP will continue to monitor and work with DOT as the budget improves.	A new crosswalk will be added mid-block on Bethesda Avenue. The standing water issue was resolved at the crosswalk at the corner of Wisconsin Ave. & Montgomery Ln. by police station	A new crosswalk was added mid-block on Bethesda Avenue. Crosswalk restriping is still needed and will be discussed again with DOT. Shift in strategy to stress the need for more frequent maintenance and restriping of crosswalk rather than addition of new ones.
2. Increase number of pedestrian timed signals.	There are no new pedestrian timed signals; however BTS has worked to notify the county regarding pedestrian signal outages.	All county crosswalks do not have APS (Audible Pedestrian Signal), nor is there funding available for installation. If monies become available, BTS will work with the county to develop a priority list of intersections. BTS contacted the state regarding the crosswalks along Old Georgetown Road and Wisconsin Avenue. The state has undertaken a 10-year plan to upgrade every intersection in the state with countdown timers and APS. CBDs are considered a high priority, and a review of five intersections to be upgraded was requested. The state will also look into working with the county to provide a partial upgrade of some intersections.	Five additional pedestrian timers have been installed along Wisconsin Avenue.	Additional countdown timers have been installed on Old Georgetown Rd/Woodmont Ave. and Old Georgetown Rd./Arlington Rd. SHA will be installing countdown timers on Wisconsin Ave, Old Georgetown Road and East West Highway within the downtown as part of the repaving project.

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Strategic Plan Item	2009 Update	2010 Update	2011 Update	2012 Update
<u>C. Collaborate with WMATA on the approved appearance of the Metro Bus Bay.</u>				
1. Facilitate meetings with WMATA, Montgomery County and Developers to ensure that this Bethesda "Gateway" is maintained to a high standard.	BUP worked for several months with WMATA staff to get the bus bay cleaned. WMATA Red Line maintenance staff was unaware of their responsibilities. After meeting with their real estate attorney, it was made clear to their staff of their jurisdiction. An immediate improvement was seen. A solid working relationship has been established with WMATA's Maintenance Director.	BUP continues to contact WMATA staff to help ensure that the bay remains clean. BUP is also working to correct a potential problem on the Capital Crescent Trail near East-West Highway, where it is believed that the wrong type of gravel was used during some county construction.	A Task Force made up of the BCC Chamber, Police, Metro, BUP, WMATA, Hyatt and Montgomery County have been meeting since Sept. 2010 to work on the clean up of the Metro Bus Bay area. Additionally, the Task Force and the Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District are reviewing the potential for artwork in the Metro and Wisconsin Avenue tunnel.	WMATA will replace the escalators in the Bethesda Metro Station. They have power washed the station and have committed to a set cleaning schedule for the station. WMATA repaired water leaks this year. WMATA is looking into replacing ceiling tiles and improved lighting. Task force continues to meet on a quarterly basis to work through issues.
2. Serve as liaison with WMATA to place artwork in the Bethesda Metro station like the other Metro stations in various parts of Montgomery County.	BTS met with WMATA staff regarding artwork for the Bethesda Metro Station. BTS was informed that a project for the Bethesda Metro would cost in the range of \$280,000-\$500,000. This is strictly a funding issue. The Meridian project that was recently defeated had offered to invest \$2 million into the Bethesda Metro Station. BTS will continue to search for grant money to accomplish a better art presence in the Metro.		A meeting was held with the Arts in Transit Program Manager to get a comprehensive outline of how Metro facilitates art in their stations and how they partner with the local communities. Metro does not begin a project until the local community has secured funding, and then the collaboration on the selection of artists begins.	A formal process has begun to add artwork to the tunnel at the Metro Station by the Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District. This includes soliciting artwork and sponsors and identifying a specific process for producing and mounting the artwork. The "Tunnel Vision" public art project was completed by the A&E Board and BUP staff in May 2012.
<u>D. Increase business community outreach of Bethesda Transportation Solutions.</u>				
Partner with The Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce, BUP events, and community and local business initiatives to further promote BTS and public transportation option.	BTS participates in many Chamber-related events including meetings, sponsorship at their annual Golf Tournament, where BTS has a tent on the course. BTS also participates in the Chamber's Business Expo. BTS has a high level of visibility at all BUP events such as the Literary Festival, Imagination Bethesda and Taste of Bethesda.	BTS continues to participate in Chamber events, meetings, etc. BTS consistently exceeds the number of required CID's. BTS secured 18 sponsors for Bike to Work Day in 2010. More than 700 bikers registered for Bike to Work in 2010. The Walk & Ride Challenge continues to grow, and North Bethesda	BTS is planning to create a Bike to Work Challenge; a two week event that will lead up to Bike to Work day.	Continuing with business and Chamber partnerships. Focused effort to attend several Chamber events and meetings each month. Additional worksite Commuter Info Events added in 2011 and 2012. Greater partnerships with businesses for Walk & Ride by offering gift certificates to Bethesda CBD businesses as prizes. Greater focus on social media has added

Status Report on Strategic Initiatives from 2008

Strategic Plan Item	2009 Update	2010 Update	2011 Update	2012 Update
		TMD joined the efforts. All BTS services are promoted to individual businesses and employers. BTS is working with the county to develop a new employer pilot program. BTS' monthly newsletter distribution has doubled since 2009. BTS has also launched Facebook and Twitter pages.		more testimonials from commuters on alternative transportation options. Greater outreach and marketing for Bike to Work Day planned involving Bethesda fitness centers, bike to work convoys led by staff, and bike to work stories from Bethesda commuters.
MARKETING				
<u>A. Increase marketing of "areas" that are unclear to BUP's Constituents.</u>				
1. Create a comprehensive marketing campaign to inform the public about downtown Bethesda's parking garages, hours, fees and the Bethesda Circulator.	Downtown Bethesda maps, which include all county garages and lots, can be found in all of our brochures, as well as on our website which details rates, hours, fees, etc. Brochures are distributed at our three information kiosks, at BUP festivals, and at all downtown Bethesda hotels, apartments and commercial buildings.	Increased marketing efforts include: a new website launched in April 2010, Facebook page, and research on a new mobile website that would be accessed via SmartPhones. Additionally, the downtown Bethesda map which includes the Circulator route and parking garages can be found on BUP's website and in all of our printed guides. There is also a specific Bethesda Circulator flyer.	The mobile website was launched in October 2010 so that mobile phone users can access a simpler version of Bethesda.org from their SmartPhones. The mobile site includes parking and Circulator maps and information.	BUP's followers on Facebook have grown to nearly 1,200 people. BUP's Twitter (@BethesdaUp) was launched in December and 3-5 tweets are going out daily. These messages include information on parking and the Circulator, and 20,000 Circulator maps are distributed annually. Also, BUP has been charged with and is managing the Lot 31 updates on www.bethesda.org .
2. Increase distribution of BUP Annual Report which clarifies BUP's mission.	BUP's Destination Guide, in lieu of our Annual Report, has been distributed to all downtown Bethesda businesses since we have proven success in local businesses reading this guide. Annual Reports are given to event attendees, visitors at kiosks, and to all county officials. Additionally, marketing staff visits many local retailers every month with event flyers and Annual Reports. The BUP Annual Report is also available online.	BUP's 2010/2011 Destination Guide and 2009/2010 Annual Report are being worked on and will be ready for distribution in Sept. 2010. The Destination Guide will be distributed to all downtown Bethesda businesses and both guides will be distributed at BUP's large events, at kiosks and throughout downtown Bethesda's hotels and commercial and residential buildings.	The Destination Guides and Annual Reports were distributed in Oct. 2010. There was an increase in Destination Guide distribution by several local businesses that requested guides for their customers.	BUP's Destination guide, Events Calendar, Eat Here guides and event flyers are distributed via local businesses and hotels. Additionally, BUP completed the 2012 Downtown Bethesda promotional video which can be found on our website and YouTube, and nearly 20 local businesses were featured in BUP's new promotional video.

Status Report on Strategic Initiatives from 2008

Strategic Plan Item	2009 Update	2010 Update	2011 Update	2012 Update
3. Increase promotion of BUP's website to educate public about BUP's mission.	BUP's website is currently undergoing a new re-design to be more updated and user-friendly. The current site is receiving an average of 32,500 visits per month with a high in July of 43,000 and in October with 41,000 visits. Our website address appears on all printed materials, banners, Circulator signs, wayfinding signage and on all our vehicles.	BUP launched a new, more comprehensive website in April 2010. The site had not been fully redesigned since 2003.	BUP's internet presence includes emails to our list of more than 5,000 individuals; Facebook page; Mobile website and more. Additionally, all of our marketing materials promote Bethesda.org.	In addition to daily website updates, BUP makes daily posts on Facebook and tweets via Twitter. BUP's email list has grown to nearly 8,000 subscribers and they are reached weekly with promotional emails.
<u>B. Increase Outreach to Local Businesses.</u>				
1. Ensure that local businesses are aware of BUP's marketing brochures and have copies to distribute to their customers.	Guides are provided to all hotels, including the new Hilton Garden Inn, which increases our circulation, as well as to local businesses and apartment and commercial buildings.	The BUP marketing team reached out to business owners while updating the new 2010/2011 Destination Guide. Each business is made aware of our free guides and availability for distribution. Additionally, downtown Bethesda and the Bethesda Urban Partnership were recognized as the "Downtown of the Month" in June 2010 by the International Downtown Association.	Local businesses, residents, conference planners, tourists, etc. can now go online anytime and order the marketing brochures they need. Additionally, local hotels receive a monthly delivery of the Eat Here and Destination Guides.	All BUP guides are now available via online requests for local businesses to order guides when they need them. Additionally, BUP does a monthly delivery to the six hotels in downtown Bethesda of Destination guides, Eat Here's, Events Calendars and Circulator maps. Nearly 300 guide requests were filled via the online ordering system for business and leisure travelers, local residents, etc.
1. Facilitate meetings among merchants that are interested in cooperative marketing opportunities.	Focus groups will be organized in 2010 to hear feedback from local retailers and restaurant owners.		Focus groups with local business have been scheduled for January 2011 to get feedback from local retailers and residents.	Focus groups were held with local residents, visitors and businesses in January and February 2011. We continue to work with local businesses on initiatives such as BUYS, as well as attend retailer meetings with Federal Realty's restaurants and shops. BUP is also involved with the local restaurants in revamping the bi-annual Restaurant Week, and local arts groups that need promotional assistance.

Status Report on Strategic Initiatives from 2008

Strategic Plan Item	2009 Update	2010 Update	2011 Update	2012 Update
<u>C. Increase Presence of Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District.</u>				
1. Manage artist studio space in downtown Bethesda's Arts & Entertainment District.	A management agreement has been signed partnering with Montgomery County for four artist work spaces as part of the Trillium Project. Permits for this project are expected to be applied for in March 2010.	Because several art galleries have closed and more are expected to close in the near future, BUP is exploring options of managing its own non-profit art gallery to maintain and improve the visual arts community in downtown Bethesda.	The Trillium is currently seeking recapitalization for this project.	BUP and the Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District opened Gallery B in October 2011 with the support of Polinger & Co. The gallery provides a space for local and regional artists to show their work for a small rent. BUP is pursuing additional vacancies as possible studio workspace for local artists. There is a vacancy at 7575 Wisconsin Avenue and an agreement is being negotiated with Brookfield Properties for 3 artist studios spaces.
2. Manage a community theatre downtown Bethesda's Arts & Entertainment District.	This initiative is dependent on new development in downtown Bethesda.	This initiative is dependent on new development in downtown Bethesda.	BUP manages the annual Play in a Day and Dance Bethesda events, and we rent Round House Theatre and Imagination Stage to facilitate these productions. We have contacts in the theatre industry and have hired sound, lighting and stage management professionals. Additionally, we rented a vacant retail space in September 2010 to host The Trawick Prize exhibition and were able to manage the space for the month long exhibition which included clean-up and painting, open gallery hours and two opening exhibitions.	The status remains the same. The community theatre is still on the Woodmont Triangle list of potential amenities for new development projects. The Bethesda A&E District facilitated "Tunnel Vision," the public art project in the Bethesda Metro pedestrian tunnel.

2

New Development in Downtown Bethesda

There are currently 18 new mixed-use development projects that are under consideration or approved by the Maryland National Capital Park & Planning Commission in downtown Bethesda.

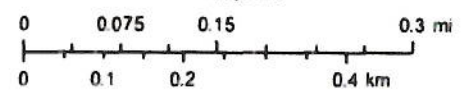
1. **Woodmont East, Bethesda Avenue, between Wisconsin and Woodmont Avenues**
250 residential units, 40,000 sq. ft. retail, 78,000 office space and 225 room hotel
2. **Montgomery County Parking Lot 31 and 31A**
Apartment building with 162 units, condo building with 88 units, 40,000 sq. feet of retail and 940 Montgomery County public parking spaces.
3. **The Gallery of Bethesda, corner of Del Ray and Auburn Avenues**
Apartment building with 234 units, ground floor retail
4. **4850 Rugby Avenue**
Apartment building with 221 units, 14,000 square feet of ground floor retail
5. **4823 Rugby Avenue**
Office building
6. **4901 Cordell Avenue**
3-story renovation set to include restaurants and retail
7. **Bainbridge Bethesda, 4918 St. Elmo Avenue**
Apartment building with 200 units, ground floor retail
8. **The Fairmont, 4900 Fairmont Avenue**
Apartment building with 200 units, 7,000 square feet of retail
9. **4960 Fairmont Avenue**
Condominium with 70 units, proposed artist workspace that would be managed by Bethesda Urban Partnership and Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District
10. **8300 Wisconsin Avenue**
Apartment building with 350 units, 50,000 square feet for grocery store
11. **8280 Wisconsin Avenue**
Office building, 10,000 sq. feet of retail
12. **Wisconsin & Cordell Avenues**
600 residential units, ground floor retail
13. **7100 Wisconsin Avenue**
145 residential units, 7,000 sq. ft. retail
14. **Bethesda Center, 7740 Wisconsin Avenue**
Westin hotel, office building, ground floor retail
15. **4550 East-West Highway**
223,000 sq. ft. office with 13,300 sq. ft. retail
16. **7001 Arlington Road**
140 residential units, 7,000 sq. ft. retail
17. **The Lauren, 4901 Hampden Lane**
25 luxury condominiums
18. **4915 Hampden Lane**
60 residential units

Developments Updated 6/25/13



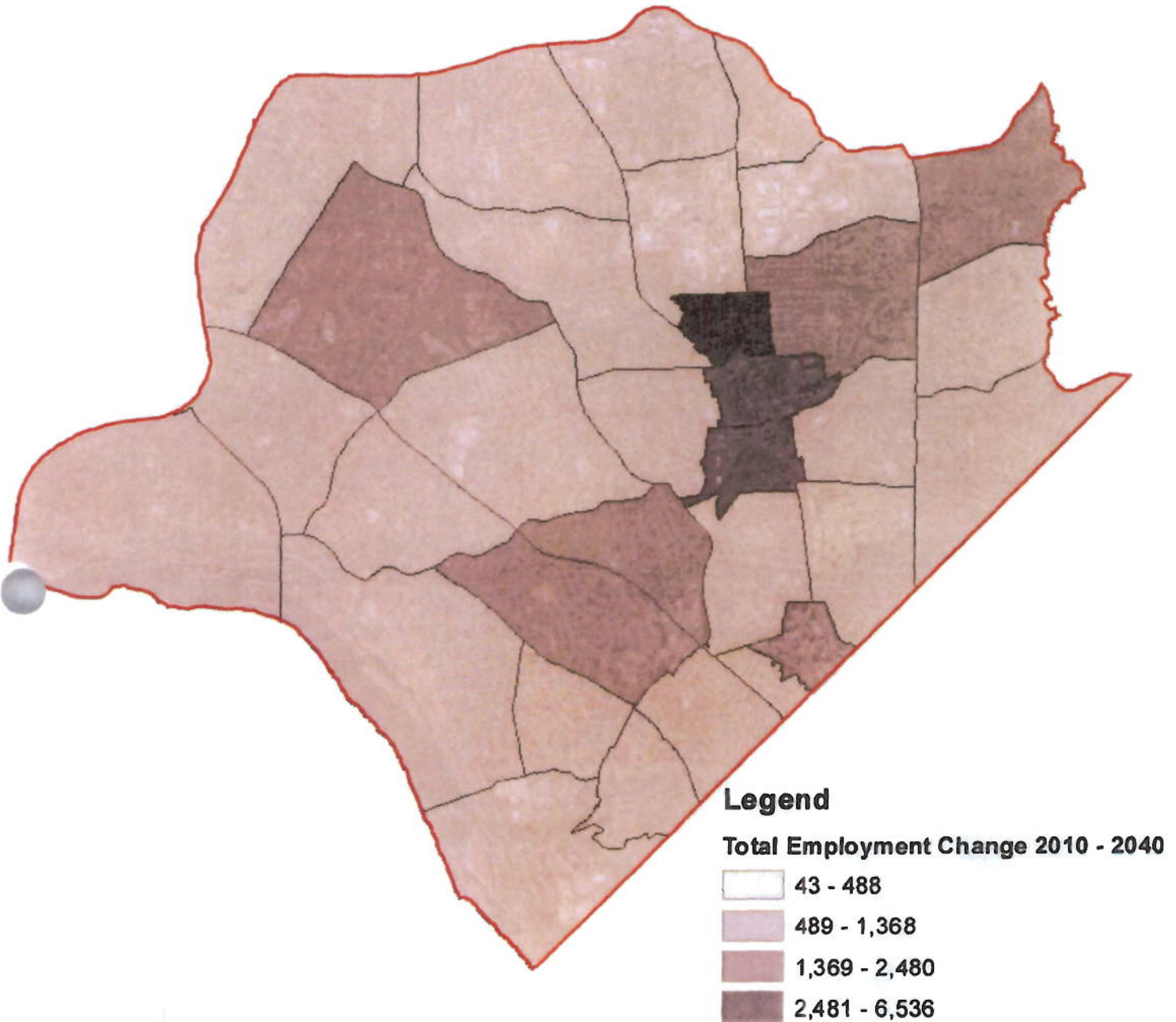
June 25, 2013

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Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community

Bethesda - Forecast (Round 8.2)

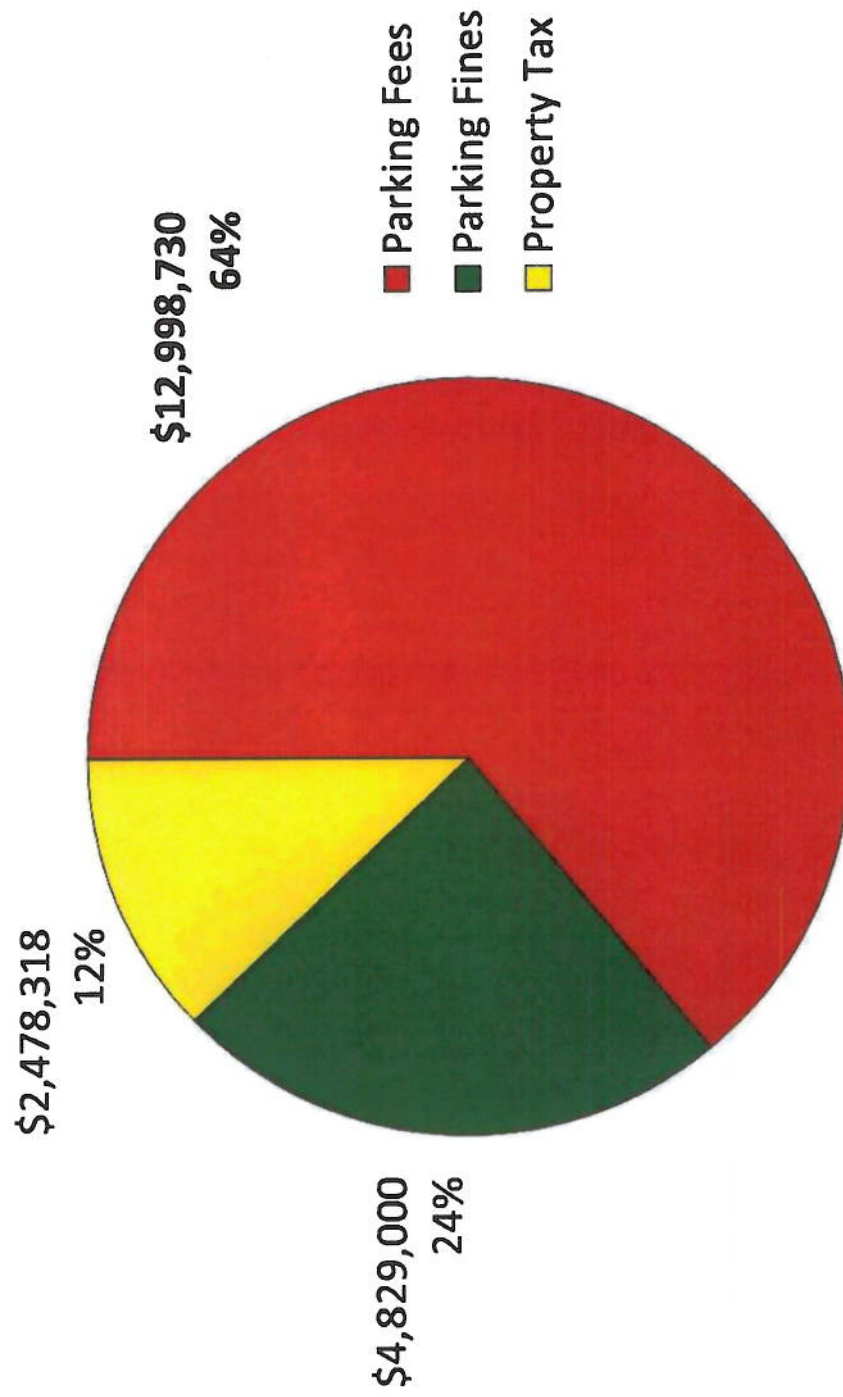


Year	Office	Retail	Industrial	Other	Total Employment
2010	60,100	10,300	4,300	24,900	99,600
2040	75,900	14,800	5,400	26,400	122,500
Difference	15,800	4,500	1,100	1,500	22,900
% Change	26%	44%	26%	6%	23%

3

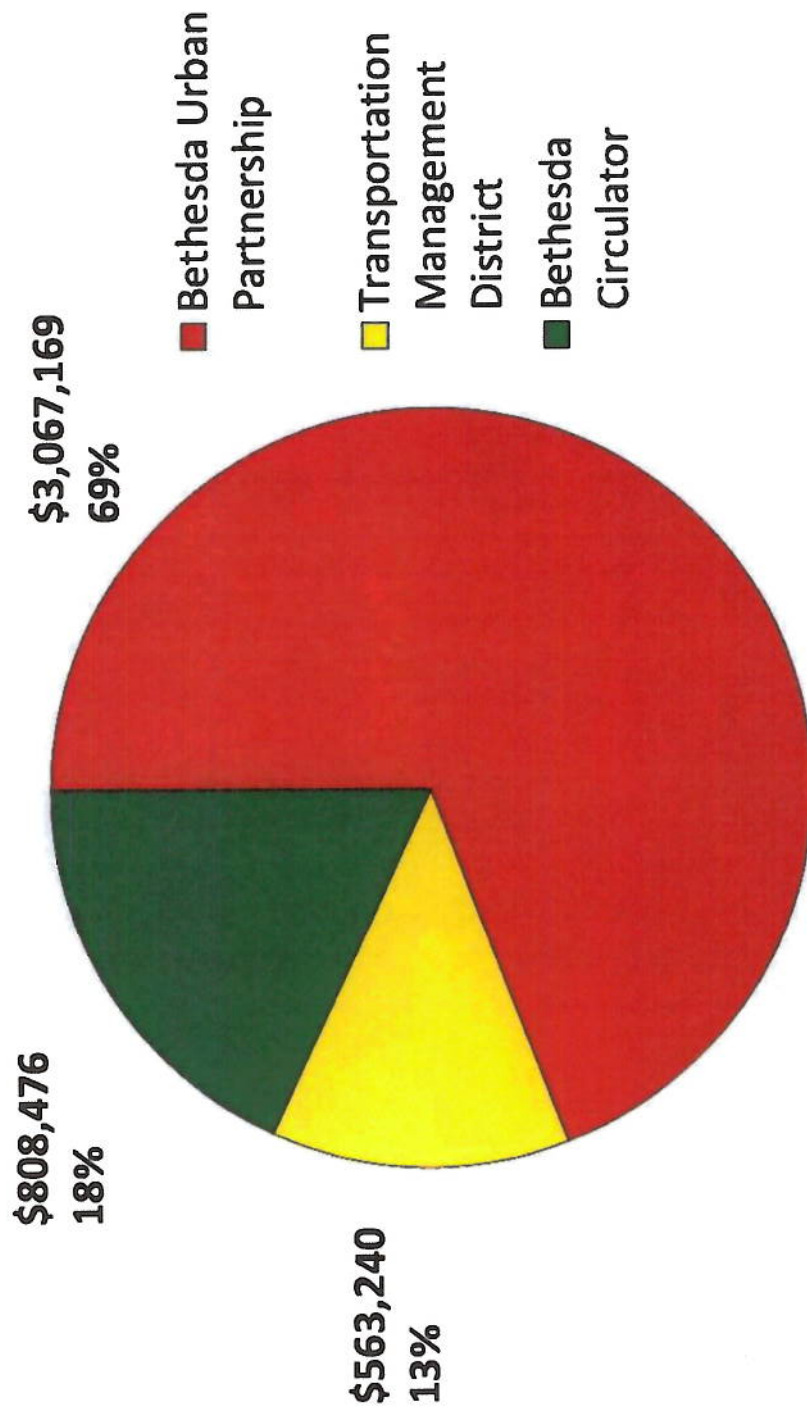
Parking Lot District Revenues – FY'14

\$20,361,348



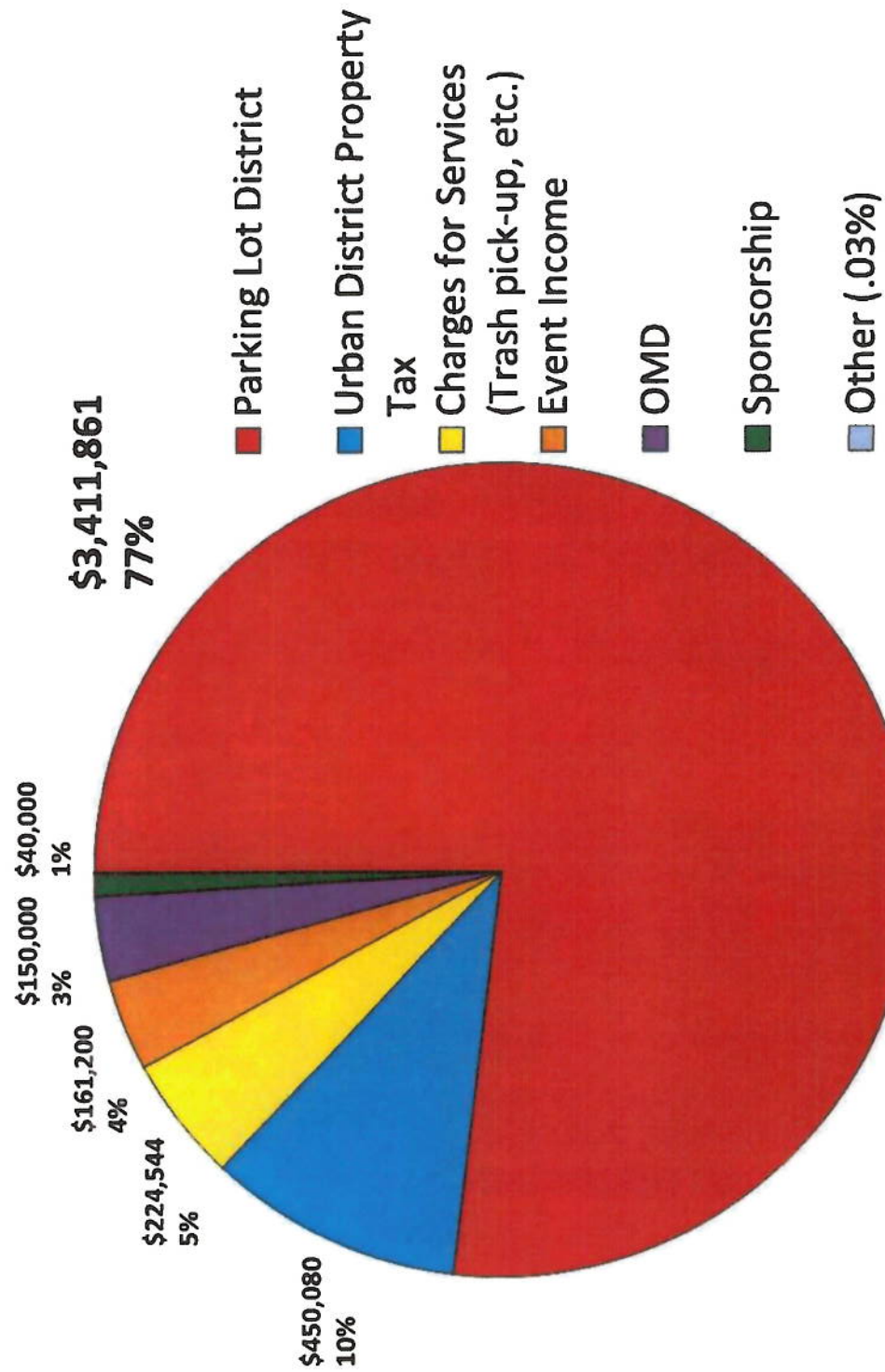
DISTRIBUTION OF BUP'S BUDGET – FY'14

\$4,438,885



BUP FY'14 REVENUE SOURCES

\$4,438,885



4

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Bethesda Urban Partnership Maintenance Service Level Comparisons

	<u>1994</u>	<u>2013</u>
Brick Sidewalks	267,588 sq. ft.	500,000 sq. ft.
Trees	921	1,200
Tree Pruning	Each tree every 6 yrs.	Every tree, every year
Turf	54,000 sq. ft.	180,000 sq. ft.
Turf Care	12 times per year	32 times per year
Flowers	5,000	35,000
Streetsweeping	1 full, 2 half per week	3 full sweeps per week
Trash Collection	2 times per week, 150 cans	6 times per week, 230 cans
Litter Collection	3 times per week, once per day	6 days a week, all day
Recycling	0 times per week	3 times per week, 28 cans (Recycling began in 2008.)
** All Services Outsourced		** All Services In House

5

Bethesda Urban Partnership Marketing Service Level Comparisons

1994 - 2000

Special Events

Taste of Bethesda (30-40 restaurants)
Imagination Bethesda
Bethesda's Winter Wonderland
Summer Concerts

Digital Marketing

BUP website, www.bethesda.org

Marketing Brochures

Destination Downtown Bethesda
Eat Here
Events Calendar

Arts & Entertainment

2000 - 2013

Taste of Bethesda (50-60 restaurants)
Imagination Bethesda
Bethesda's Winter Wonderland
Summer Concerts
Bethesda Literary Festival
Bethesda Outdoor Movies

BUP website, www.bethesda.org
BUP Facebook page
BUP Twitter page
Weekly emails sent to 8,000 on our list

Destination Downtown Bethesda
Eat Here
Events Calendar
Arts Guide
Bethesda Circulator map
Annual Report

*State-designation Arts & Entertainment District, 2002
Bethesda Art Walk
The Trawick Prize: Bethesda Contemporary Art Awards
Bethesda Painting Awards
Dance Bethesda
Bethesda Fine Arts Festival
Play in a Day
Tunnel Vision
Gallery B
Bethesda Film Fest
Studio B, Artist Studios

6



Bethesda Circulator Ridership

	Yearly Total	Monthly Average	% change from previous year (monthly averages)
2006	75,628	18,907	N/A
2007	281,193	23,432	24%
2008	271,305	22,608	-3%
2009	253,183	21,098	-7%
2010	272,897	22,741	8%
2011	205,440	22,826	0.4%
2012	303,328	25,277	11%
2013	126,964	26,356	4%

Please note the following:

1. Bethesda Urban Partnership took over management of the Bethesda Circulator in September 2006, so the ridership numbers in 2006 are from Sept. - Dec. The increase in ridership in 2007, 2008 and 2009 compared to 2006 is due to our increased marketing efforts of the service.
2. Saturday daytime hours were added in July 2010.
3. New Circulator vehicles were introduced in July 2011.
4. The yearly ridership number is lower in 2011 as there were 3 months that ridership wasn't recorded, so the average was calculated for the 9 months that ridership numbers were available.
5. There was a surge in ridership in 2012 due to increased marketing efforts, social media outreach and higher Circulator awareness which increased ridership on the Bethesda Circulator. Additionally, in late 2012, a third Circulator was added to the route during morning and afternoon rush hours to accommodate the closing of Parking Lot 31 and 31A.
6. For 2013, ridership has been calculated for January - May 2013.

7



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Report of Strategic Planning Research

March 2013

Residents

Visitors

Retailers

Employers

County
Partners

Property



URBAN PARTNERSHIP INC.

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Introduction

The Bethesda Urban Partnership, Inc. (BUP) is a non-profit organization established by Montgomery County in 1994. It exists to manage Downtown Bethesda, a 300-acre urban center that includes residential properties, restaurants, retailers, and arts venues.

BUP is responsible for landscaping and maintenance as well as promotion of the downtown through innovative marketing campaigns and large-scale events. Additionally, it manages the Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District and operates Bethesda Transportation Solutions, which includes management of the Bethesda Circulator. The public/private partnership of BUP lends strength to BUP's position and it incorporates public pride.

As BUP approaches its 20th anniversary in 2014, it is time for its five year reauthorization from Montgomery County. In preparation for this, BUP worked with Association Laboratory Inc. to conduct research in support of its five year strategic plan spanning 2014-2019. The reauthorization process is vital as it will continue BUP's charter and provide the necessary funding for its continued operation.

Additional resources will be required during this reauthorization cycle as BUP will need to expand its role to manage the increasing intensity of density in downtown Bethesda.

Methodology

The purpose of this report is to provide strategic guidance as the BUP Board, A&E District Board, BTS Advisory Committee, and Senior Staff prepare the five year plan for reauthorization. During that process, BUP and its leadership will develop tactics and action plans in support of the goals.

The strategic research process included qualitative and quantitative research segments.

Qualitative Segment

The qualitative research included focus groups with targeted market segments. The focus group protocol is attached as Appendix 1.

The following market segments were interviewed via focus group:

Property Managers (Developers)
County Partners
Residents
Visitors
Retailers
Employers with 50 or more employees

BUP works with two boards of directors (BUP and the Arts & Entertainment District) and one Advisory Committee (Bethesda Transportation Solutions). Focus groups and strategy development sessions were

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held with these three groups. The protocol for the Arts & Entertainment District and the Bethesda Transportation Solutions Advisory Committee can be found in Appendix 2.

BUP's board of directors and senior staff participated in a brainstorming session to share their views on current environmental factors and to develop their suggestions for strategic goals. Senior staff held an additional brainstorming session. There are no official protocols for the brainstorming sessions.

A total of ten (10) groups participated in the qualitative segment of this project.

Quantitative Segment

The quantitative survey was developed by staff, Association Laboratory, and the BUP Strategic Planning Committee. The survey was implemented by BUP staff using Constant Contact.

The survey was sent to 5,300 contacts collected by BUP and the Regional Center. BUP's list included 3,800 contacts and the Regional Center list included 1,500 contacts (the Regional Center list represents 28% of total survey universe).

Contacts for the survey self-identified as they had signed up for either the BUP or Regional Center contact list. These contact lists share information about events and news in downtown Bethesda or Montgomery County.

No incentive for participation was offered.

The survey received a total of 561 responses, or a 10.6% response rate.

Qualitative Findings

Qualitative information was gathered from focus groups, the BTS, and the A&E District Board of Directors. This section summarizes key points from this research. Detailed notes are attached in the appendices as noted.

Focus Groups

BUP organized six (6) focus groups between November 2012 and January 2013.

Property Managers (Developers)

There were four (4) participants in this group: two commercial properties; one residential; and one mixed used (residential with commercial space).

Residents

There were 5 participants in this group. Participants were all female; 10 individuals volunteered to participate. Of the 5 volunteers who did not participate, 3 were men. Those who participated fell into the following age ranges:

18-25 years: 1

45-54 years: 2

55-64 years: 2

Bethesda Urban Partnership Report of Strategic Research

County Partners

There were six (6) participants in this group representing the following County agencies or departments: Department of Economic Development, Office of Management and Budget, 2nd District Police, Division of Traffic Engineering & Operations, Park and Planning Commission, Division of Parking Management. BUP's contract administrator attended the focus group as an observer.

Visitors

Eleven (11) individuals volunteered to participate. There were 6 participants in this group. Participants included 5 women and 1 man. Of the 5 volunteers who did not participate, 2 were men, 3 were women. Those who participated fell into the following age ranges:

26-34 years: 2

45-54 years: 1

55-64 years: 1

Over 65 years: 2

Retailers/Businesses

There were 6 participants in this group. Participants were all female; 11 individuals volunteered to participate. Of the 5 volunteers who did not participate, 3 were men. Those who participated have located their businesses here in the following year ranges:

6 to 10 years: 4

less than 5 years: 1

Five of the participants represented shops; 1 participant represented Imagination Stage.

Employers (50+ employees)

There were 5 participants in this group, 4 females and 1 male. Seven (7) individuals volunteered to participate. The 2 volunteers who did not participate were women. Those who participated have located their businesses here in the following year ranges:

More than 35 years: 1

More than 20 years: 1

6 to 10 years: 2

less than 5 years: 1

Four of the participants were Human Resources professionals; 1 participant was a Facilities Management professional. Four of the companies are for profit and one is a non-profit professional association.

Perceptions & Motivations regarding downtown Bethesda

Focus groups share a highly positive regard for downtown Bethesda: central location with access to transportation options (e.g., Metro), the nation's capital, convenience, quality of life ("livability" factor is high due to easy access to services, shops, and restaurants on foot or via Circulator), potential for strong business and business growth.

Perceptions of BUP

While awareness of BUP's full range of services is low among groups other than County Partners, when participants have interacted with BUP in specific areas (information resources, assistance solving problems, working on events) there is a consistent high opinion of BUP, its staff, and their role as a

Bethesda Urban Partnership Report of Strategic Research

resource and advocate. County Partners have the highest awareness of BUP and feel they have a strong working relationship with the staff.

BUP is most often seen as (1) an information resource; (2) an organizer of community events. Focus groups other than County Partners believe that BUP should communicate more frequently about a wider range of issues (such as traffic patterns affected by construction); they would like to see BUP reach out more often and build a community network.

Issues affecting downtown Bethesda

Across focus groups (other than County Partners), the major concern is traffic: congestion; patterns; need for enforcement of laws affecting drivers, bikers, and pedestrians; education of drivers, bikers, and pedestrians; parking issues; costs of parking/tickets; impact of increasing congestion on quality of life and safety.

Focus groups would like to see BUP take the lead as an advocate to resolve these issues as the area will continue to increase in population density.

Most individuals in the focus groups would again choose to live or work or establish a business in downtown Bethesda, but the cited hesitation is the continuing issues caused by traffic.

Bethesda Transportation Solutions (BTS)

Issues affecting downtown Bethesda

BTS holds the opinion that traffic congestion and related issues in downtown Bethesda have gotten worse. This is exacerbated by the increased construction, which will be underway for a number of years.

The group agreed it is not just denser in downtown Bethesda but more aggressive. This opinion supports the call for more commuter education.

This issue highlights the need for more bike lanes and services, especially since bike share is coming to downtown Bethesda. Commuting by car will continue to increase as Metro's service reliability continues to decrease. Metro's increasingly poor performance is negating the intended effects of building communities near metro stations; rather than encouraging public transportation, it is discouraging it.

The decreased reliability of Metro led to the suggestion that the restrictions for using residential streets during rush hours should be lifted. It would relieve traffic congestion on the major arteries like Wisconsin Avenue, and move traffic more quickly, thus clearing traffic jams more effectively.

This is vital since Montgomery County is not planning to expand or improve current infrastructure in downtown Bethesda. The congestion is increasing frustration, leading to a trend of all commuters breaking the rules of the road and crosswalks.

Building bigger roads is not the answer. There needs to be a change of mindset to walk instead of drive. BTS suggests a campaign like BUP's bike to work day or walk/ride program. **This is crucial because of influx of residential properties.**

Bethesda Urban Partnership Report of Strategic Research

The BTS board raised the issue of timing of traffic lights. The group believes a study is needed to examine their current working, its impact, and how changing the timing of lights can help with congestion and decreasing traffic violations. For example, it might help with the issue of drivers running yellow and red lights in order to keep moving and make other lights. It was also noted that crosswalks need to be better marked (improved signage and added lights) because drivers fear being rear ended by the driver behind them if they stop for pedestrians because it is not obvious why a driver is stopping.

The BTS board believes that traffic enforcement in Bethesda is very poor. Police overlook traffic violations, but BTS suggests that enforcement should be consistent across all commuter groups (pedestrians, biker, drivers). One suggestion was adding traffic police on foot or bicycle (Bethesda is currently patrolled by motorcycle police).

Opinion of BUP's relationship with WMATA (Metro) and Montgomery County Department of Transportation

WMATA (Metro): BTS feels that BUP gives a lot to working with Metro but that BUP does not get much in return.

There is a relationship with Metro and there is evidence of constant communication. Every other month there is a Metro improvement task force that BUP participates in. While it seems that not much progress is being made, Metro says it takes time to make change in the system.

Department of Transportation (DOT): BTS sees this relationship as excellent thanks to the work of staff. The BTS is very involved with meeting with DOT on different issues and programs. There are open channels of communication (like on the bike share program).

The Bethesda Circulator

The group suggested holding a "Ride the Circulator Day" to encourage people to take a ride around downtown Bethesda. They suggested offering an incentive like a parking discount, which could help with parking congestion, specifically around Bethesda Row. Another idea is to have a Circulator day for kids – they could get a coloring book that involves the retailers.

The group believes that the Circulator route should be expanded and possibly connected to the bike share program. Another suggestion is to add the Medical Center Metro stop on weekends to bring people to downtown Bethesda and help decrease congestion.

Overall, the BTS thinks the Circulator is a great system and asset to downtown Bethesda. They would like to see it used more often and expanded if possible (such as serving outer residential areas). The BTS does not support charging a fee for the Circulator.

BTS and BUP communication regarding parking and transportation options

BTS feels BUP does a good job communicating to the CBD and local businesses, but communication

Bethesda Urban Partnership Report of Strategic Research

could be improved in adjacent communities, especially about what is available and the parking options. The BTS strongly suggested more outreach to these outer areas, and this outreach could focus on the website, which BTS feels is "fabulous" since it offers detailed maps and information.

BTS noted that if so many residential buildings are being added, communication to these new communities should focus on education for the new and current residents. BUP needs to work with the County on promoting these options and improving communication.

Alternatives to single occupancy transportation options in downtown Bethesda

The group suggested addressing the "green issue" of electric cars and other hybrid vehicles; BTS and BUP should encourage the use of natural gas vehicles and encourage the County to use natural gas for public transportation. For electric cars, the County could add charging stations.

It comes back to education – promote the alternatives to using a car and make downtown Bethesda pedestrian and bike friendly. As part of the education outreach, BTS and BUP should show evidence of what has been done so far: adding bike lanes, improving the Circulator, etc.

The BTS board noted that parking tickets are the one negative heard often. The group suggested adding a message to tickets with suggested alternatives to parking or options other than driving.

Arts & Entertainment (A&E) District Advisory Committee

Most significant challenge for the downtown Bethesda arts and entertainment (A&E) district

Downtown Bethesda has a great arts district but it is not known as a destination for the arts. The A&E Board and BUP need to create the image and perception that downtown Bethesda is a destination for the arts.

Messaging Challenges

A challenge is staying current with art and giving the public the art and entertainment they want today. The problem is finding out what people want.

BUP is doing a great job promoting BUP events, but the other arts groups are left to fend for themselves. An example is Imagination Stage; if they hold an event they have to promote it themselves. BUP should coordinate promotion with the other art venues in the district. Better coordination of marketing events promotion will help promote the arts and help build the image of an A&E district. The marketing should be an umbrella approach, and not BUP and then everyone else.

A&E district should help promote everything in the area; this could be coordinated by BUP staff with all the venues and participants in marketing contributing funds to pay for it. An example of a broader marketing approach is to create a list of everyone in the A&E district, similar to how Bethesda Row promotes its shops and restaurants.

The Board believes there needs to be a branding tool to address what is happening in the A&E district. The coordinated funding will help pay for ads in magazines, and other outlets, and will set the A&E district

Bethesda Urban Partnership Report of Strategic Research

apart and showcase it. This will involve cost, implementation, and planning between the groups.

Streetscape and Demographics Challenges

The A&E District needs to focus on younger people; downtown Bethesda is seen as a place for families and older people. The new rental developments going in will attract the younger people to live here so the marketing and messaging needs to include this demographic.

Downtown Bethesda does not have the street scene that brings people to visit. There needs to be better balance between the different parts of Bethesda – it is like “A Tale of Two Cities” because of the division created by traffic patterns.

Street scape issue: the downtown Bethesda A&E district does not look like a cohesive district; there should be coordinated signage and lighting, similar to other districts.

Montgomery County is not currently targeting money for street scape in downtown Bethesda at this time. However, this needs to be pursued as it is important to create the ambiance of a community feeling.

Opinion of BUP's relationship with local artists, galleries, and theatres

The A&E Board believes that there is awareness of BUP among the art community in downtown Bethesda. Several board members feel that it is excellent; there is a lot of coordination and BUP takes care of problems. The art walk goes a long way for the galleries and the artists, and Gallery B has cast the net wider. It helps local artists to show their work and to connect those who know the district. The film festival is new but that speaks well of what is happening. Most of the artists have some following, and they (the artists' fans) come with the artists to visit the A&E District. This is attracting those from other parts of the DC area.

A&E offerings in downtown Bethesda and suggested changes

The A&E Board is exploring different options for offerings, such as the recently added film festival. The board also supports more public art; the goal is to use public spaces that are unused and under-utilized and to bring art into those spaces. Another suggestion for public art would be to allow artists to put art on public things like electrical boxes (as they did in Colorado). One city allowed the artists to paint the parking meters. The board wants to look at all the cities across the country and see what ideas could be adapted for downtown Bethesda.

It is important to add public art because it adds interest and creates a dynamic local environment while promoting civic engagement. If local artists are invested in the community, it will strengthen the A&E district. The Golden Triangle does a bike rack competition every year; there is a set of criteria the artists follow in order to participate. People send in applications from all over. It creates a lot of excitement and public engagement.

Ten years ago, there was the Bethesda poetry bench project. It needs to be rejuvenated; there are 20 benches and each one is unique. The benches are at the Circulator stops.

A suggestion for public art: identify spots where pedestals can be placed and then solicit artists to donate pieces of public art (sculpture). The art could be displayed for six months to one year (a suggested location is along Norfolk Avenue). It would be a creative thing and could involve the public by getting them to react to the art. The same process as the tunnel would be used except it will be on the street – it would be juried for the selection. This could also encourage developers to hire a local artist to provide art for their new buildings and developments.

Suggested new activities for the A&E district

The A&E board needs to work with BUP to see where capacity ends for resources (staff and money); the issue of staff support is crucial for growth of the A&E district. It is natural to add staff as the activity level grows. This is important to look at strategically with the BUP leaders; while the recently added film festival seemed to work without too much strain, the more projects and events that are added, the more resources are required.

An issue will always be fundraising and increased Montgomery County funding. It is hard to ask for money for the arts. It takes people to make events happen and the administrative costs need to be included in the fundraising “ask.”

There needs to be more children’s activities in addition to children’s theatre. Rockville has an art league and they used to do art shows for youth which included a competition. Hundreds of people came to view the art. Such a competition and show could be handled by volunteers if downtown Bethesda added this sort of competition. It could be grassroots oriented.

Additionally, the arts fair could have a component for students, and additional competitions could be added for putting art on the boards around construction sites. Another venue for art competitions could be held in TunnelVision where the artists would display with their easels in front of the displayed art.

Competitors for the downtown Bethesda A&E

One board member does not feel that there is competition. However, DC has some large and popular events (DC Fringe Festival) and it also has more art galleries.

ArtistSphere in Arlington has everything under one roof and can advertise more things quickly and easily. There is not one physical space in Bethesda that is an umbrella place for the arts. Torpedo Factory is another example of one space with multiple artists.

Art-O-Matic is another type of event; it is done in empty space in an office building in DC and moves from year to year. It lasts for one month. The Eatery in Bethesda is a perfect space for this type of event.

It is not a competition for what the A&E district does; it is competition for people’s time and disposable dollars. Downtown Bethesda has the edge for creating an experience because you can visit an art venue and then have a great dinner.

Survey Results

The survey was sent to 5,300 contacts collected by BUP and the Regional Center. BUP's list included 3,800 contacts and the Regional Center list included 1,500 contacts (the Regional Center list represents 28% of total survey universe).

Contacts for the survey self-identified as they had signed up for either the BUP or Regional Center contact list. These contact lists share information about events and news in downtown Bethesda or Montgomery County.

No incentive for participation was offered.

The survey received a total of 561 responses, or a 10.6% response rate.

BUP staff conducted the survey using Constant Contact. A complete report of the survey results is available from BUP; this report will highlight research data relevant discussion of strategic goals.

Respondent Profile

Demographic information on the survey was not required, but a high enough percentage of respondents provided information that a profile can be created.

A majority of the survey respondents were residents of a neighborhood **outside of downtown** Bethesda. They were predominantly highly-educated women, age 45 and up, employed full-time, with higher income levels. The majority of respondents have advanced degrees, and most of the respondents fall into a household income level of \$100,000 to more than \$250,000.

A majority of respondents no longer have children at home under the age of 18.

Dining and Shopping

The two major area attractions are dining and shopping. This not only serves the businesses in the community; it also supports a high quality of life for those who reside in or near downtown Bethesda by providing easily accessible destinations.

Dining

A majority of respondents dine (47.8%) in downtown Bethesda at least once per week or several times per week.

Shopping

43.4% of respondents shop in downtown Bethesda once per week or several times per week.

See next page for details on respondents' opinions.

Bethesda Urban Partnership Report of Strategic Research

What prompts you to shop or dine in downtown Bethesda? (Select up to three.)

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Location/convenience	331	63.1%
I reside in downtown Bethesda.	108	20.6%
I am employed in downtown Bethesda.	80	15.2%
Past experience	191	36.4%
Diverse dining choices	326	62.2%
Unique establishments	177	33.7%
Word of mouth	50	9.5%
Advertising	13	2.4%
Visiting friends or family	50	9.5%
I do not shop or dine in downtown Bethesda.	4	<1%
Total	524	100%

What is your opinion of dining options in downtown Bethesda?

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Downtown Bethesda offers many dining options for dining out.	441	78.6%
Downtown Bethesda offers an average number of options for dining out.	70	12.4%
Downtown Bethesda does not offer enough options for dining out.	13	2.3%
No Responses	37	6.5%
Total	561	100%

What is your opinion of shopping options in downtown Bethesda?

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Downtown Bethesda offers many options for shopping.	168	29.9%
Downtown Bethesda offers an average number of options for shopping.	244	43.4%
Downtown Bethesda does not offer enough options for shopping.	112	19.9%
No Responses	37	6.5%
Total	561	100%

Transportation

Despite easily walkable neighborhoods with access to public transportation, 63.4% of respondents travel to and from downtown Bethesda by car.

While 77.5% of respondents feel that traffic congestion has gotten worse, only 50.9% believe that commuter behavior has deteriorated.

While awareness of the Bethesda Circulator is very high (88.7%), only 43.6% of respondents have actually ridden it, despite 42% of the respondents having awareness that there is no fee to ride.

Parking

The survey results supported the qualitative finding regarding the perception of parking in downtown Bethesda: it is difficult to find and expensive. 45% of respondents sometimes have trouble finding parking, while 28.8% always have trouble. Only 10.3% take alternative transportation that avoids the need for parking (walking or metro or biking).

When it comes to fees, interestingly 36% find the parking fees too high, but 33.8% find them reasonable. 64.5% of respondents do not want to pay for parking in public garages on the weekend.

This still supports the perception that parking fees are high, but there is also a group of respondents who feel these fees reflect the going rate.

Art & Cultural Events

There is high awareness of the art & cultural events in downtown Bethesda, with 78.9% of respondents responding “yes” when asked if they had visited an artistic venue. A majority of respondents visited a movie theatre or an art gallery.

The highest response rates related to “how did you hear about the event?” were the newspaper, internet, or a friend.

Community Events (BUP sponsored/organized)

There is very high awareness of BUP events, especially the Taste of Bethesda, the Bethesda Painting Awards, the Bethesda Fine Arts Festival, and the Bethesda Outdoors Movies: Stars on the Avenue.

Most respondents heard about BUP events via the newspaper, internet, and the BUP events calendar. A majority of respondents have attended the Taste of Bethesda event and the Bethesda Fine Arts Festival.

BUP: Awareness

BUP has a very high awareness among survey respondents, with 84.8% aware of BUP. However, 67.3% of respondents have never contacted BUP for assistance.

Of those who did contact BUP, 58.4% noted “not applicable” when asked if they received assistance in a timely manner.

When asked to name BUP’s responsibilities, the highest ranked were marketing, event/festival planning, and maintenance of the downtown area.

STRATEGIC GOALS: THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

As it approaches its 20th anniversary, the Bethesda Urban Partnership faces its most exciting and most challenging times. Its significant success in creating a thriving urban area that combines both residential and business environments has led to a realization: the intensity of density is creating tensions not only in lifestyles, but in the infrastructure.

No matter how many buildings are constructed in downtown Bethesda, there will never be more than 300 acres.

This realization requires additional "hard" activities, such as dealing with construction disruptions, dealing with the increase in trash and waste materials that need gathering, and maintaining aging public spaces. However, it also requires a slightly different and expanded role for BUP in the "soft" areas, such as community relations, working with county agencies, and establishing relationships with newer and possibly competing Central Business Districts (CBDs) in other parts of Montgomery County.

While BUP has established itself as a successful manager of its own CBD, its evolving role as a leader in the Bethesda area and the county requires it to revise its view of itself and how it will conduct business over the next five years and beyond.

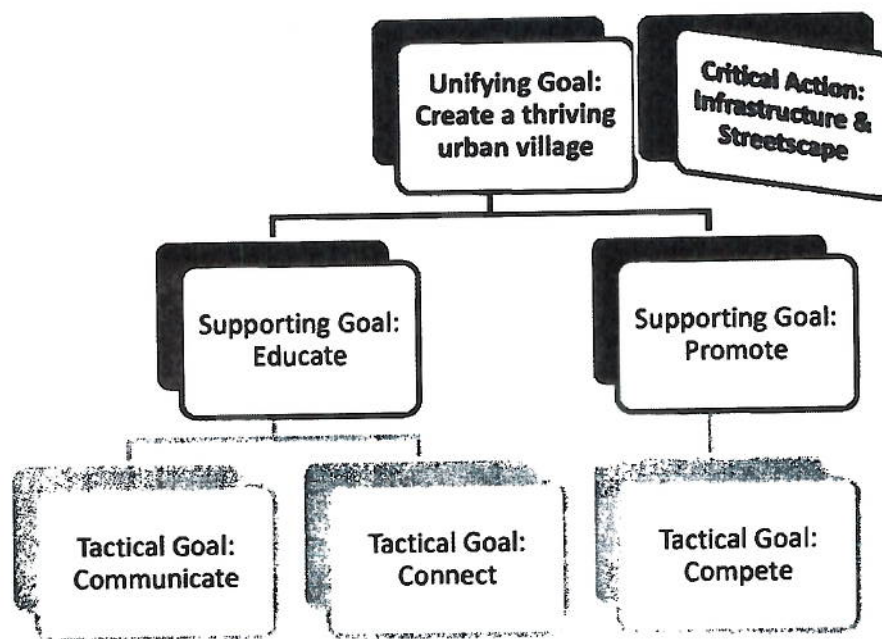
However reluctant it may be, BUP is a leader, and its constituents are looking to it for direction, expanded information, and consensus building in addition to its role as a liaison and advocate between residents and businesses and county agencies.

BUP, meaning its Board of Directors and staff, has set an overall strategic goal of creating a thriving urban village. While this vision must address issues related to the streetscape, it must also expand to include a more complex and multi-layered outreach program to maintain the one thing that makes any community work: relationships.

This will mean a changing role for staff, as they move beyond simply promoting BUP services and organizing community events. The staff will need to step into roles that retain the core of their current responsibilities while they increase their proactive outreach to serve their constituents.

Staff might see this as an unfamiliar role since BUP is not a business improvement district, which would have paying members. Rather, BUP serves a constituency that does not have any formal relationship with the organization, yet depends on it for the care and maintenance of an area with a very high quality of life.

BUP may not be an official government entity, but it does serve at the pleasure of the county government. Therefore, it still has many contributions to make in the planning of downtown Bethesda's future and the creation of a thriving, 21st Century urban village.



UNIFYING GOAL: Create a thriving urban village

CRITICAL ACTION: To create a thriving urban village, the overall issue of infrastructure and its use must be assertively addressed.

The qualitative and quantitative research show that the intensity of traffic congestion is the most visible, and to research participants, serious problem affecting their quality of life as residents and/or employees who are working in downtown Bethesda.

While the intense traffic congestion is an issue of daily living, it is also a long-term infrastructure issue that will make or break the urban village. The number of cars may make travel in and around downtown Bethesda difficult, but the flow of traffic (such as the one-way street of Woodmont Avenue) does more to divide the community than to bring it together. Additionally, the poor timing of traffic lights during peak rush hour times slows the movement of cars that are allowed only to use certain roads since the residential streets are restricted use.

Bringing together the urban village and making it easy for residents, employees, businesses, and visitors to travel to and in the area is a necessary and critical step to support the unifying goal of creating an urban village.

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To do this, BUP must use its strong reputation and strong relationships within the county agencies to work with them to redesign traffic flow, retime the traffic lights, and find safer and faster ways for pedestrians and bike riders to participate as commuters.

ACTION ITEM: Work with Department of Transportation to conduct a traffic study and implement change based on the data gathered. The goal of the changes should be supporting the connection of downtown Bethesda as a unified community.

For an urban village, infrastructure is not just streets for traffic movement. It is sidewalks, walkways, safe pedestrian crossings, and bike paths that support the movement of individuals within the “living” spaces of residences, offices, and businesses (including shops and restaurants).

The issue of pedestrian safety and traffic education are important steps in the next five year plan. These issues directly affect quality of life and were repeatedly mentioned across focus groups and in leadership meetings.

Securing a safe and supportive infrastructure for the urban village will support the additional goals required for creating a community with high quality of life, that includes homes, shops, restaurants, cultural activity, and events that bring people together.

ACTION ITEM: Secure funding and support for improved crosswalks, clearer signage regarding traffic laws and flow, and bike lanes or paths.

Creating an atmosphere of a high quality, exciting, place to live also depends on infrastructure; it is often said “it’s all in the presentation.” This holds true for the presentation of a community as well.

Throughout the research, comments and concerns were shared regarding the appearance of downtown Bethesda as it ages. It is also being affected by the intensity of the density as more and more people take advantage of all the area has to offer.

An example that was brought up several times was the bus bay at the Bethesda Metro. While there will be a major renovation done in this area by WMATA, and any improvements must wait until that project completes, BUP could begin working with WMATA now to put plans in place to make the bus bay a more appealing area to visitors, employees, and residents alike.

Often, this is the first thing a visitor to downtown Bethesda sees, and it should promote the personality of downtown Bethesda (thriving urban village) rather than appearing to be a run-down space with bad lighting.

Additionally, a project to make the Bethesda Metro bus bay more appealing would open opportunities for the Arts & Entertainment District to create more activities for local artists by using the project as a way to promote the arts. An added benefit of one such approach would be raising awareness of the Arts & Entertainment District.

ACTION ITEM: Work with WMATA to redesign the bus bay presentation to make it more appealing and incorporate it as the entrance to downtown Bethesda.

After entering downtown Bethesda, visitors begin to walk around the area. What they see is important to supporting the presentation of a thriving urban village; concerns about the way downtown Bethesda looks were raised during the research by several groups in addition the Arts & Entertainment District Board of Directors.

Many suggestions were made, such as re-launching the “poetry benches” project and tying it to the tenth anniversary of the initial project. Again, this would support the need to revitalize the appearance of downtown Bethesda, while promoting it as a cultural space that includes artists and artists’ audiences. It would show visitors that downtown Bethesda cares about its look and works to keep it attractive.

Other suggestions included placing sculptures from artists along Woodmont Avenue, giving Veterans Park some attention (better signage, better use of space), and better/newer lighting and wayfinding support.

ACTION ITEM: Secure funding for “refreshing” the appearance of downtown Bethesda with improved, more attractive public spaces.

In summary, a thriving urban village needs an infrastructure that is practical (supports the movement of people) and is attractive (creates an atmosphere of beauty and comfort). By providing this important framework, the quality of life continues to improve and blossom.

SUPPORTING GOAL: EDUCATE

Tactical Goal: Communicate

Tactical Goal: Connect

To successfully achieve the unifying goal of creating a thriving urban village, BUP will need to play a vital role during the next five years. Building on its 20 years of outstanding community service, BUP is well positioned to implement the next five year plan.

Throughout the research, it became apparent that outside of County Partners, very few constituent groups have a broad understanding of what BUP is and does. While BUP provides a website, Facebook page, newsletter, and email communications, this plan is dispersed and does not seem to offer enough “touches” for a consistent understanding to be built about BUP and what it does.

Several participants in the research requested more frequent communication from BUP on a variety of topics from construction-related activities and impact to any County news that might be relevant to downtown Bethesda, to the continued communication about community and cultural events.

The perception of communication from BUP to its constituent groups is that it is not enough. BUP staff may feel that their plan is broad and encompassing, there is a disconnect with the audiences.

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During the next five years, BUP's role as an advocate will expand, and its role as a community leader will evolve dramatically.

To alleviate any tension this change may cause, educating the public, county agencies, other CBDs, and the identified constituencies (residents, visitors, county partners, retailers, property managers, and employers) about the services, advocacy, and information resources provided by BUP is crucial.

Association Laboratory predicts that BUP will take on a broader leadership role in downtown Bethesda, acting as a community leader and unifier — but it will also become a leader in Montgomery County, as it uses its experience to assist and lead other CBDs in the county.

Since the research also showed that BUP has high positive regard and high awareness, despite a lack of knowing the full breadth of its duties and contributions, an important step is to build on this positive awareness to educate constituent groups about the varied and responsible role BUP plays in the community.

Well known as an advocate and as a liaison, BUP will now fill the role of community leader that many look to it to perform. This sentiment is very strong among the smaller retailers in downtown Bethesda; they feel that BUP could become a networking leader for them as they do not have another organization that understands their needs or allows them to network with similar businesses.

ACTION ITEM: Revise the BUP communication and marketing plan to address the perception that there is not enough communication to audiences; this will require additional resources for BUP in order to implement (staff and money).

To meet the challenge of its evolving leadership role in downtown Bethesda, BUP will need to connect in a more public and visible way with its target audiences.

Building relationships with other groups in the downtown Bethesda area, such as the local Chamber of Commerce, community associations, and tenant organizations at high-rise apartments, is a necessary first step in connecting with other community representatives.

To build these relationships and connections, BUP staff will need to attend more community-based meetings, possibly join coalitions, and reach out to other arts organizations similar to the Arts & Entertainment District board.

Time is a resource and it is what is needed to build these relationships. Staff will need to be compensated for their time, and volunteers from the boards of directors and advisory committee will need additional support in donating their time and energy to helping with relationship building.

ACTION ITEM: Secure funding and additional staff to create Director of Strategic Relations position for BUP. This staff person would represent BUP to other organizations and support volunteer leaders in their participation in relationship building.

SUPPORTING GOAL: PROMOTE

Tactical Goal: Compete

A thriving urban village needs a vibrant community. Vibrant communities are created by the participation of a variety of individuals from diverse backgrounds.

Promoting downtown Bethesda as a destination for living, working, and attending community events has been very successful. However, the strategic planning research shows that there is a perception that there is not enough variety in activities.

However, the secondary research shows that BUP does an excellent job of developing activities for a broad range of individuals of all ages, with and without families. The “unicorn of the young people” has also been captured, especially through the activities organized to support artists.

This perception has begun to erode downtown Bethesda’s competitive advantage, especially in an environment with “built to order” downtown communities, such as downtown Silver Spring, Rockville, and White Flint. Competition also is rising from northern Virginia communities, such as Arlington and Reston, while Washington, DC, continues its “renaissance of the hip” in areas such as the U Street Corridor.

These areas are becoming stronger competitors for the time, money, and attention of the target audiences valued by downtown Bethesda.

In order to compete successfully against other downtown areas, BUP will require more resources for increased targeted marketing efforts, sponsoring activities for local businesses and residential buildings, and social media tools such as wayfinding apps.

ACTION ITEM: Secure increased resources for BUP (money and staff) to develop and implement more marketing campaigns and to develop social media tools that draw audiences to downtown Bethesda.

Appendix 1: Focus Group Protocol

Bethesda Urban Partnership (BUP): Focus Group Protocol

Draft as of October 31, 2012

1st Revision November 6, 2012

2nd Revision January 4, 2013

Introduction

The purpose of the focus groups is to collect qualitative data that will be used to inform the quantitative survey (to be developed and launched in January 2013) as well as the ongoing work of the Strategic Planning Committee and BUP Staff.

Each focus group will last one hour to 90 minutes, depending on the number of participants and how involved the discussions are.

At the beginning of each focus group, participants will be asked to introduce themselves, share why they are there, and how they are connected to BUP. This will help break the ice and get participants thinking about BUP and how it impacts their lives and businesses.

Questions by Focus Group

November 2012

Property Managers (Developers)

1. How long has your property been in downtown Bethesda?
2. Why did your company choose downtown Bethesda for the location of your development?
3. If you were planning your development today, would you still locate in downtown Bethesda?
Why or why not?
4. Describe your understanding of BUP's mission.
5. Which BUP-provided service do you use the most? Which one the least?
6. When thinking of the service you use the most, is it also the one you value most? If not, which service is most valuable to you?
7. What do you think is missing in downtown Bethesda?
8. What would you like to see BUP do in the future?
9. How do you get information about events in downtown Bethesda?

Additional Questions if Time Permits:

10. Do you believe the BUP planned special events (such as Taste of Bethesda) have an ongoing impact on Bethesda as an urban gathering place?

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11. In your opinion, does downtown Bethesda have a personality? If so, how would you describe it?
12. If you could change one thing about downtown Bethesda, what would it be?
13. If you were encouraging someone to live, work in, or visit downtown Bethesda, what would you tell them?
14. Did you learn something about BUP during this session that you didn't know?

County Partners

1. Does your department or agency partner with BUP on any projects? If so, which ones?
2. Describe your relationship with BUP.
3. How does this partnership support your department or agency goals?
4. What do you think of BUP's performance?
5. What BUP service adds the most value to the county?
6. Do you think BUP's role should expand? If so, why? If not, why not?
7. What factors in the county will affect downtown Bethesda and BUP in the next five years?
8. What would you like to see BUP do in the future that it is not doing now?

Additional Questions if Time Permits:

9. Do you believe the BUP planned special events (such as Taste of Bethesda) have an ongoing impact on Bethesda as an urban gathering place?
10. In your opinion, does downtown Bethesda have a personality? If so, how would you describe it?
11. If you could change one thing about downtown Bethesda, what would it be?
12. If you were encouraging someone to live, work in, or visit downtown Bethesda, what would you tell them?
13. Did you learn something about BUP during this session that you didn't know?

December 2012

Residents

1. How long have you lived in downtown Bethesda?
2. Why did you choose downtown Bethesda as your home?
3. If you were looking for a place to settle today, would you still choose downtown Bethesda? Why or why not?
4. How familiar are you with BUP? Do you interact with BUP regularly?
5. Which BUP-provided service do you use the most? Which one the least?
6. When thinking of the service you use the most, is it also the one you value most? If not, which service is most valuable to you?
7. Do you use the Bethesda Circulator? What are your impressions of the service?
8. What do you think is missing in downtown Bethesda?
9. What would you like to see BUP do in the future?
10. How do you get information about events in downtown Bethesda?

Bethesda Urban Partnership Report of Strategic Research

Additional Questions if Time Permits:

11. Do you believe the BUP planned special events (such as Taste of Bethesda) have an ongoing impact on Bethesda as an urban gathering place?
12. In your opinion, does downtown Bethesda have a personality? If so, how would you describe it?
13. If you could change one thing about downtown Bethesda, what would it be?
14. If you were encouraging someone to live, work in, or visit downtown Bethesda, what would you tell them?
15. Did you learn something about BUP during this session that you didn't know?

Visitors

1. Why do you come to downtown Bethesda?
2. If you were describing downtown Bethesda to others, what would you say?
3. How familiar are you with BUP? Do you interact with BUP regularly?
4. Which BUP-provided service do you use the most? Which one the least?
5. When thinking of the service you use the most, is it also the one you value most? If not, which service is most valuable to you?
6. Do you use the Bethesda Circulator? What are your impressions of the service?
7. What is your opinion of parking options in downtown Bethesda?
8. What do you think is missing in downtown Bethesda?
9. What would you like to see BUP do in the future?
10. How do you get information about events in downtown Bethesda?

Additional Questions if Time Permits:

11. Do you believe the BUP planned special events (such as Taste of Bethesda) have an ongoing impact on Bethesda as an urban gathering place?
12. In your opinion, does downtown Bethesda have a personality? If so, how would you describe it?
13. If you could change one thing about downtown Bethesda, what would it be?
14. If you were encouraging someone to live, work in, or visit downtown Bethesda, what would you tell them?
15. Did you learn something about BUP during this session that you didn't know?

January 2013

Retailers/Businesses [Group will represent a majority of street-front retailers; possibly a few restaurants]

1. How long has your business been in downtown Bethesda?
2. Why did you choose downtown Bethesda for your business location?
3. If you were selecting a location for your business today, would you still locate in downtown Bethesda? Why or why not?

Bethesda Urban Partnership Report of Strategic Research

4. Describe your understanding of BUP's mission.
5. Which BUP-provided service do you use the most? Which one the least? Which service do you value the most?
6. What is your opinion of parking options in downtown Bethesda?
7. What do you think is missing in downtown Bethesda?
8. What would you like to see BUP do in the future?
9. How do you get information about events in downtown Bethesda?

Additional Questions if Time Permits:

10. Do you believe the BUP planned special events (such as Taste of Bethesda) have an ongoing impact on Bethesda as an urban gathering place?
11. In your opinion, does downtown Bethesda have a personality? If so, how would you describe it?
12. If you could change one thing about downtown Bethesda, what would it be?
13. If you were encouraging someone to live, work in, or visit downtown Bethesda, what would you tell them?
14. Did you learn something about BUP during this session that you didn't know?

Employers (50+ employees) [Group will be made up of a majority of HR staff from employers]

1. How long has your company been in downtown Bethesda?
2. Why did your company choose downtown Bethesda for your business location?
3. If your company were selecting a location today, would you recommend downtown Bethesda? Why or why not?
4. Describe your understanding of BUP's mission.
5. Which BUP-provided service do you use the most? Which one the least? Which service do you value the most?
6. What is your opinion of transportation options in downtown Bethesda?
Do available parking choices in downtown Bethesda support these options? Yes or no?
7. What do you think is missing in downtown Bethesda?
8. What would you like to see BUP do in the future?
9. How do you get information about events in downtown Bethesda?

Additional Questions if Time Permits:

10. Do you believe the BUP planned special events (such as Taste of Bethesda) have an ongoing impact on Bethesda as an urban gathering place?
11. In your opinion, does downtown Bethesda have a personality? If so, how would you describe it?
12. If you could change one thing about downtown Bethesda, what would it be?
13. If you were encouraging someone to live, work in, or visit downtown Bethesda, what would you tell them?
14. Did you learn something about BUP during this session that you didn't know? [end document]

Appendix 2: Protocol for BTS and A&E District Board

Bethesda Transportation Solutions (BTS) Advisory Committee

Focus Group Protocol (Final)

January 17, 2013

1. In your opinion, how has commuting in downtown Bethesda changed in the last 5 years?
2. What is your opinion of BUP's relationship with WMATA (Metro) and Montgomery County Department of Transportation?
3. What changes, if any, would you suggest for the Bethesda Circulator?
4. How well do you think BTS and BUP communicate parking and transportation options to its market segments?
5. Thinking back over the last five years, how would you rate BUP and BTS's performance in the area of transportation?
6. What would you do to improve alternatives to single occupancy transportation options in downtown Bethesda? (Transportation includes parking, commuting, traffic patterns, and the Circulator.)
7. What are your thoughts on Pedestrian Safety, Biking and the proposed Bike Share program?
8. What strategic goals do you believe should be set for the next 5 years?
9. What do you think is missing in downtown Bethesda?
10. What would you like to see BUP and BTS do in the future?

Arts & Entertainment (A&E) District Advisory Committee

1. In your opinion, what is the most significant challenge for the downtown Bethesda arts and entertainment (A&E) district?
2. What is your opinion of BUP's relationship with local artists, galleries, and theatres?
3. When you think of A&E offerings in downtown Bethesda, would you make any changes to the *current* mix? If so, what changes would you suggest?
4. What new activities would you suggest for the A&E district?
5. When it comes to competitors for the downtown Bethesda A&E, who do you think is the strongest competition? How would you address competition?
6. How well do you think BUP communicates A&E activities and options to its market segments?
7. Thinking back over the last five years, how would you rate BUP's performance in the area of supporting the A&E district?
8. What strategic goals do you believe should be set for the next 5 years?
9. What do you think is missing in downtown Bethesda?
10. What would you like to see BUP do in the future?

8



Constant Contact Survey Results

Survey Name: Feb 2013 Survey

Response Status: Partial & Completed

Filter: None

7/3/2013 6:43 PM EDT

* Using the following list, please select one option that best describes your relationship with downtown Bethesda.

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
I am a resident of downtown Bethesda.			106	18.8 %
I am a resident of a Bethesda neighborhood outside downtown.			304	54.0 %
I am employed in downtown Bethesda.			60	10.6 %
I am a tourist or visitor from outside the area.			10	1.7 %
I am a visitor from within the Greater D.C. area.			80	14.2 %
No Response(s)			2	<1 %
Totals			562	100%

* How often do you dine in downtown Bethesda?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Several times per week			107	19.0 %
Once a week			163	29.0 %
Once a month			123	21.8 %
A few times per year			101	17.9 %
No Response(s)			68	12.0 %
Totals			562	100%








*How often do you shop in downtown Bethesda?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Several times per week			121	21.5 %
Once a week			124	22.0 %
Once a month			105	18.6 %
A few times per year			144	25.6 %
No Response(s)			68	12.0 %
Totals			562	100%





TextBlock:

Transportation and Commuting

*When visiting downtown Bethesda, what is the transportation option you use most often? (Please select one.)

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Car (drive)			357	63.5 %
Metro			17	3.0 %
Bus			9	1.6 %
Bethesda Circulator			10	1.7 %
Walking			131	23.3 %
Bicycle			12	2.1 %
No Response(s)			26	4.6 %
Totals			562	100%

*In your opinion, over the last five years, congestion in downtown Bethesda:

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
has not changed.			89	15.8 %
has gotten worse (more difficult to move around the area).			436	77.5 %
has improved (it is easier to move around the area).			11	1.9 %
No Response(s)			26	4.6 %
Totals			562	100%

* In your opinion, over the last five years, commuter behavior [respect for traffic laws and signs] in downtown Bethesda:

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
has not changed.			224	39.8 %
has gotten worse (more difficult to move around the area).			286	50.8 %
has improved (it is easier to move around the area).			26	4.6 %
No Response(s)			26	4.6 %
Totals			562	100%

* Are you aware of the Bethesda Circulator?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes			499	88.7 %
No			36	6.4 %
No Response(s)			27	4.8 %
Totals			562	100%







* Have you ever ridden the Bethesda Circulator?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes			246	43.7 %
No			252	44.8 %
No Response(s)			64	11.3 %
Totals			562	100%







* Are you aware that the Bethesda Circulator is free?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes			236	41.9 %
No			16	2.8 %
No Response(s)			310	55.1 %
Totals			562	100%







*For what purpose have you ridden the Bethesda Circulator? (Check all that apply.)

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
To/from work (commuting)			22	8.9 %
From parking to destination			50	20.4 %
From Metro to destination			74	30.2 %
From home to destination			57	23.2 %
Between destinations			155	63.2 %
All of the above			15	6.1 %
Totals			245	100%

*What is your opinion of parking options in downtown Bethesda?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
I never have trouble finding parking in downtown Bethesda.			41	7.2 %
I sometimes have trouble finding parking in downtown Bethesda.			254	45.1 %
I have no opinion of parking in downtown Bethesda.			14	2.4 %
I always have trouble finding parking in downtown Bethesda.			162	28.8 %
I don't park in downtown Bethesda. I take Metro, walk or bike into downtown Bethesda.			58	10.3 %
No Response(s)			33	5.8 %
Totals			562	100%

***What is your opinion of the parking fees in downtown Bethesda? (Parking fees at Montgomery County Public Parking Lots/Garages range from \$.85-\$1.25 per hour.)**

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
I find the parking fees too low in downtown Bethesda.			11	1.9 %
I find the fees for parking reasonable in downtown Bethesda.			190	33.8 %
I have no opinion of the parking fees in downtown Bethesda.			103	18.3 %
I find the parking fees too high in downtown Bethesda.			203	36.1 %
I stopped driving to downtown Bethesda because the parking fees are too high.			22	3.9 %
No Response(s)			33	5.8 %
		Totals	562	100%










***Would you be willing to pay for public parking garage use on weekends?**

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes			166	29.5 %
No			363	64.5 %
No Response(s)			33	5.8 %
		Totals	562	100%

TextBlock:

Activities in Downtown Bethesda



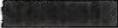

***What prompts you to shop or dine in downtown Bethesda? (Select up to three.)**

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Location/convenience			332	63.2 %
I reside in downtown Bethesda.			108	20.5 %
I am employed in downtown Bethesda.			80	15.2 %
Past experience			191	36.3 %
Diverse dining choices			327	62.2 %
Unique establishments			177	33.7 %
Word of mouth			50	9.5 %
Advertising			13	2.4 %
Visiting friends or family			50	9.5 %
I do not shop or dine in downtown Bethesda.			4	<1 %
Totals			525	100%

***What is your opinion of dining options in downtown Bethesda?**

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Downtown Bethesda offers many dining options for dining out.			442	78.6 %
Downtown Bethesda offers an average number of options for dining out.			70	12.4 %
Downtown Bethesda does not offer enough options for dining out.			13	2.3 %
No Response(s)			37	6.5 %
Totals			562	100%










***What is your opinion of shopping options in downtown Bethesda?**

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Downtown Bethesda offers many options for shopping.			168	29.8 %
Downtown Bethesda offers an average number of options for shopping.			245	43.5 %
Downtown Bethesda does not offer enough options for shopping.			112	19.9 %
No Response(s)			37	6.5 %
Totals			562	100%



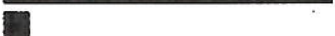








*** Have you ever visited an artistic or cultural venue in downtown Bethesda (theater, art gallery)?**

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes			443	78.8 %
No			82	14.5 %
No Response(s)			37	6.5 %
		Totals	562	100%

*** What venue(s) did you visit? (Select all that apply.)**

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Arts education (ex. art class, dance class, etc.)			79	17.9 %
Art gallery (ex. Waverly Street Gallery)			231	52.5 %
Bethesda Row Landmark Theatre			372	84.5 %
Gallery B			62	14.0 %
Imagination Stage			231	52.5 %
Regal Cinemas Bethesda			335	76.1 %
Round House Theatre			240	54.5 %
The Writer's Center			90	20.4 %
Other			35	7.9 %
		Totals	440	100%

*** How did you hear about this cultural event or venue? (Select all that apply.)**

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
www.bethesda.org website			85	19.3 %
Internet			205	46.5 %
Newspaper			239	54.3 %
Radio			19	4.3 %
Television			7	1.5 %
Facebook (BUP page)			23	5.2 %
A friend			179	40.6 %
BUP Events Calendar			136	30.9 %
BUP Email Newsletter			93	21.1 %
Passing by the event location			150	34.0 %
Other			38	8.6 %
		Totals	440	100%




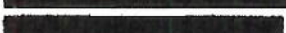




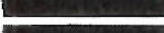




*What is your opinion of entertainment options in downtown Bethesda?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
There are too few options			130	23.1 %
They are geared towards limited age groups			82	14.5 %
They are sufficient			308	54.8 %
No Response(s)			42	7.4 %
		Totals	562	100%













TextBlock:

Events and Festivals















*Which of the following Bethesda Urban Partnership (BUP) events are you aware of? (Select all that apply.)

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Taste of Bethesda			460	89.3 %
Imagination Bethesda (children's festival)			285	55.3 %
Bethesda Fine Arts Festival			331	64.2 %
Bethesda Literary Festival			242	46.9 %
Bethesda's Winter Wonderland			165	32.0 %
Bethesda Art Walk			362	70.2 %
Bethesda Painting Awards			84	16.3 %
Play In A Day			149	28.9 %
The Trawick Prize: Contemporary Art Awards			143	27.7 %
Dance Bethesda			132	25.6 %
Bethesda Outdoor Movies: Stars on the Avenue			327	63.4 %
Bethesda Summer Concerts			286	55.5 %
All of the above			92	17.8 %
None of the above			4	<1 %
		Totals	515	100%

*How did you hear about these event(s)? (Select all that apply.)




Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
www.bethesda.org website			140	27.1 %
Internet			203	39.4 %
Newspaper			244	47.3 %
Radio			53	10.2 %
Television			14	2.7 %
Facebook (BUP page)			39	7.5 %
A friend			115	22.3 %
BUP events calendar			213	41.3 %
BUP email newsletter			182	35.3 %
Passing by the event location			182	35.3 %
Not applicable			7	1.3 %
Other			45	8.7 %
		Totals	515	100%

*Which events have you attended? (Select all that apply.)








Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Taste of Bethesda			396	77.1 %
Imagination Bethesda (children's festival)			150	29.2 %
Bethesda Fine Arts Festival			266	51.8 %
Bethesda Literary Festival			67	13.0 %
Bethesda's Winter Wonderland			61	11.8 %
Bethesda Art Walk			183	35.6 %
Bethesda Painting Awards			21	4.0 %
Bethesda's Play In A Day			42	8.1 %
The Trawick Prize: Contemporary Art Awards			31	6.0 %
Dance Bethesda			29	5.6 %
Bethesda Outdoor Movies: Stars on the Avenue			123	23.9 %
Bethesda Summer Concerts			141	27.4 %
All of the above			14	2.7 %
None of the above			45	8.7 %
Not applicable			1	<1 %
		Totals	513	100%

TextBlock:

***Are you aware of the Bethesda Urban Partnership?**

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes			477	84.8 %
No			35	6.2 %
No Response(s)			50	8.8 %
		Totals	562	100%





***In your opinion, what are the main responsibilities of the Bethesda Urban Partnership? (Select all that apply.)**

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Marketing			377	79.2 %
Event/festival planning (ex. Taste of Bethesda)			407	85.5 %
Maintenance (ex. landscaping, trash pick-up)			328	68.9 %
Legislation			60	12.6 %
Economic development			255	53.5 %
Business membership			149	31.3 %
Other			23	4.8 %
		Totals	476	100%

***Have you ever contacted the Bethesda Urban Partnership for any reason? (Select all that apply.)**

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes, via phone.			81	17.0 %
Yes, via email.			91	19.1 %
Yes, in person at their office.			49	10.2 %
Yes, in person at an event.			48	10.0 %
No, never.			320	67.2 %
		Totals	476	100%

*If yes, did you receive assistance and service in a timely manner?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes			128	22.7 %
No (Please explain.)			20	3.5 %
Not applicable			328	58.3 %
No Response(s)			86	15.3 %
Totals			562	100%

*Do you use www.bethesda.org as an information resource?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes			228	40.5 %
No			247	43.9 %
No Response(s)			87	15.4 %
Totals			562	100%

If you had the opportunity to make one improvement to downtown Bethesda, what would that be?

417 Response(s)

TextBlock:

About You (Optional) Thank you for completing the Bethesda Urban Partnership survey. Please tell us a little bit about yourself. (The following information is not required.)

Gender:

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Male			168	29.8 %
Female			301	53.5 %
No Response(s)			93	16.5 %
Totals			562	100%

What is your age range?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Under 18			0	0.0 %
18 - 25			9	1.6 %
26 - 34			59	10.4 %
35-44			71	12.6 %
45-54			121	21.5 %
55-64			119	21.1 %
65 and over			93	16.5 %
No Response(s)			90	16.0 %
		Totals	562	100%








What is your level of education?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
High School diploma			12	2.1 %
Technical or medical certification program			6	1.0 %
Associate degree (2-year program)			12	2.1 %
Undergraduate degree (4-year program)			169	30.0 %
Advanced degree (master's or doctorate)			270	48.0 %
No Response(s)			93	16.5 %
		Totals	562	100%




What is your employment status?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
I am a student.			5	<1 %
I am retired.			85	15.1 %
I am employed full-time.			277	49.2 %
I am employed part-time.			73	12.9 %
I am not currently employed.			26	4.6 %
No Response(s)			96	17.0 %
		Totals	562	100%

What is your annual household income?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Under \$25,000			7	1.2 %
\$25,000 - \$50,000			25	4.4 %
\$51,000 - \$100,000			68	12.0 %
\$101,000 - \$150,000			95	16.9 %
\$151,000 - \$250,000			77	13.7 %
More than \$250,000			98	17.4 %
No Response(s)			192	34.1 %
Totals			562	100%

Do you have children in your household under the age of 18?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes			149	26.5 %
No			317	56.4 %
No Response(s)			96	17.0 %
Totals			562	100%

List of OLO Interviews

Sandra Brecher, Commuter Services Section, Department of Transportation
Joe Callaway, Wheaton Urban District, Mid-County Regional Service Center
John D'Albora, Bethesda District, Montgomery County Department of Police
Richard Dorsey, Division of Highway Services, Department of Transportation
Dave Feldman, Bethesda Green
Yvette Freeman, Urban District, Silver Spring Regional Service Center
Clyde Garrett, Transportation Management District Advisory Committee
Brady Goldsmith, Office of Management and Budget
Ken Hartman, Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services Center
Elza Hisel-McCoy, Development Review, Maryland-National Capital Area Park and Planning Commission
Ginanne Italiano, Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce
Susan Kirk, Bethesda Cares
Phyllis Lieberman, Arts and Entertainment District Board of Directors
Phil McLaughlin, Division of Transit Services, Department of Transportation
James Resnick, Bethesda Fire Department, Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Services
Ned Sherburne, Bethesda-Chevy Chase Rescue Squad
Rick Siebert, Division of Parking Management, Department of Transportation
Carol Trawick, The Jim and Carol Trawick Foundation
Emil Wolanin, Division of Traffic Engineering and Operations, Department of Transportation