



BUSINESS  
IMPROVEMENT  
DISTRICT

# Dupont Circle BID Strategic Plan

July 2020

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# INTRODUCTION

In mid 2019, the Dupont Circle BID embarked on a process to develop a two to five-year strategic plan and action agenda to help set priorities, focus resources, and direct leadership attention. With over a year of successful programming, the BID leadership decided to engage board members, including those that have come on more recently, in the process. The BID's core functions are a key element in the renewal of the Dupont Circle neighborhood. With the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic, it is clear that the BID's core functions serve to help businesses and the surrounding neighborhood during a public health emergency that was once unexpected. Because the BID had our core functions in place, the organization was able to pivot and double down our efforts to help businesses through our clean and safe and marketing programs, as well as working with D.C. government agencies to create opportunities for businesses to survive through this time.

During the Strategic Planning process, the BID staff and consultant team sought feedback from stakeholders through board surveys and interviews, a perception survey distributed through BID social media channels and mailing lists. The goal of the outreach process was to gain a better understanding of the current conditions and to explore how a variety of players perceive the area's strengths and weaknesses, along with what the challenges and opportunities are shaping its future. Linked here is an overview of this research and its implications for the BID's strategic planning effort. We have incorporated elements into this Plan that take into account the realities and challenges of the public health emergency to get the neighborhood to recovery.

## Developing a Plan

Through two convenings in October and December 2019, the BID board worked with staff and the consulting team to develop a set of strategic priorities over the next 3-5 years guided by themes and core values during the feedback gathering process.

## Dupont BID Values

In addition to gathering information and feedback on Dupont Circle's key attributes and conditions, the planning team identified a set of core values guiding the Dupont Circle BID's activities. These include:

- Environmental responsibility
- Valuing local arts and culture
- Programming that brings people together across difference
- Healthy and unique small and local business ecosystem

## Strategic Plan Focus Areas

Guided by this set of values, the Board honed in on four strategic priority areas:

1. Continuously produce compelling messaging for the Dupont Circle neighborhood.
2. Revive Dupont Circle Park (The Circle) as a world class park and cultural and social gathering place.
3. Revitalize Dupont Circle's streetscapes and public realm.
4. Reinvigorate Dupont Circle's economy to support a thriving business climate and strong community.

From there, the consultant team worked with BID staff to build a planning framework around these strategic areas including a summary of the issue, visions and goals, high level initiatives, and recommended success measures.

## FOCUS AREA 1:

### PRODUCE COMPELLING MESSAGING FOR THE DUPONT CIRCLE AREA

#### Summary

Dupont Circle has a rich history and is home to architectural assets, lively nightlife and popular restaurants. Due to its location and connectivity, it's easy to get to and from via metro, walking, biking or driving. Dupont Circle is widely recognized as one of DC's most unique cultural neighborhoods. The BID's goal is to re-establish Dupont Circle as a desirable DC destination

A concerted focus on the elements that make Dupont Circle special: the mix of international organizations and local businesses (The Dupont Circle Hotel by The Doyle Collection, Pizzeria Paradiso, Comfort One Shoes, Firehook Bakery, etc.), the elements of sustainability (environmental and low-impact organizations, the Optical Society of America and American Geophysical Union, designing for sustainability in the streetscape project), the draw of the creative economy (The Phillips Collection, IA&A at Hillyer, Dupont Underground, etc.) drawing a diverse range of visitors, investors, residents and businesses).

#### Goals

1. Attract more residents and visitors to experience Dupont's many amenities.
2. Foster a sense of excitement about the area that encourages both frequent and infrequent visitors to spend more time in the neighborhood.

#### Strategic Initiatives to Produce Compelling Messaging for the Dupont Circle Area

- 1.1. Update the brand messaging of the neighborhood to better position the Dupont Circle area's more cutting-edge qualities.
- 1.2. Expand marketing capacity to communicate brand messaging and promote the special qualities to attract more visitors and residents to Dupont businesses and attractions
- 1.3. Develop a series of events and activations in The Circle and throughout the Dupont Circle BID boundary explicitly tied to fresh and dynamic brand messaging.
- 1.4. Conduct qualitative and quantitative research to gain a better understanding of current Dupont Circle area shoppers and a general perception of the area.

#### Recommended Success Measures

- Improved perception of brand messaging
- Increased awareness of the Dupont Circle BID
- Increased foot traffic
- Increase in local media coverage
- Increase in social media engagement

# FOCUS AREA 1 STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

■ LIGHT BLUE SHADING INDICATES A PROJECT IS COMPLETED AND/OR ONGOING

## PRODUCE COMPELLING MESSAGING FOR THE DUPONT CIRCLE AREA

FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	1.1 Update the brand messaging of the neighborhood to better position the Dupont Circle area's more cutting edge qualities.	Key Personnel
●	●	●		Work with the Dupont Circle BID marketing committee on crafting the organization's marketing message, to ensure that stakeholders have a clear impression of the Dupont Circle BID's vision for the area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director</li> <li>Marketing Associate</li> <li>Marketing Committee</li> <li>Clean Team Manager</li> </ul>
●	●	●	●	Develop opportunities and/or methods to increase awareness of the Dupont Circle BID brand and its respective boundary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director</li> <li>Marketing Associate</li> <li>Marketing Committee</li> </ul>
●	●	●	●	Develop new written materials to guide design, events, and overall marketing and communication strategy, including and integrating public health messaging and design.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director</li> <li>Marketing Associate</li> <li>Graphic Designer</li> </ul>
FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	1.2 Expand marketing capacity to communicate brand messaging and promote the special qualities to attract more visitors and residents to Dupont businesses and attractions	Key Personnel
●	●	●		Convene the Dupont Circle BID Marketing Committee to support expanded marketing capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marketing Associate</li> <li>Marketing Committee</li> </ul>
●	●			Develop new materials and marketing initiatives that build on refreshed brand positioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marketing Associate</li> </ul>
●	●	●	●	Develop materials and messaging campaigns to promote a renewed story across multiple platforms and drive more users to experience Dupont's retail, hospitality and cultural offerings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marketing Associate</li> <li>Marketing Committee</li> </ul>
●	●	●	●	Continue to build followers on social media and e-newsletter lists to expand reach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marketing Associate</li> </ul>
FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	1.3 Develop a series of events and activations in The Circle and throughout the Dupont Circle BID boundary explicitly tied to fresh and dynamic brand messaging.	Key Personnel
●	●	●	●	Building on refreshed brand identity and develop virtual, and eventually in-person events and programming that fosters awareness of the renewed BID story and attracts more users to the BID.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director</li> <li>Marketing Associate</li> <li>Event Planning Consultant</li> </ul>
		●	●	Expand events management capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marketing Associate</li> <li>Event Planning Consultant</li> </ul>
●	●	●	●	Identify and leverage opportunities to establish new partnerships that align with overall marketing strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director</li> <li>Marketing Associate</li> <li>Marketing Committee</li> </ul>
FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	1.4 Conduct qualitative and quantitative research to gain a better understanding of current Dupont Circle area shoppers and a general perception of the area.	Key Personnel
	●	●	●	Better understand the spending habits of Dupont Circle area visitors and shoppers in order to accurately identify why visitors currently come to the Dupont Circle Area to spend money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director</li> <li>Marketing Associate</li> <li>Marketing Committee</li> </ul>
●	●	●	●	Conduct an annual Perception Survey in order to gain a better understanding of the overall Perception of the Dupont Circle area and The Circle (Dupont Circle Park)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director</li> <li>Marketing Associate</li> <li>Marketing Committee</li> </ul>

## **FOCUS AREA 2: REVIVE THE CIRCLE**

### **Summary**

Dupont Circle (or The Circle as it will be referenced for the purpose of this report), with its ornamental fountain, green space and seating areas, is an iconic DC gathering place. This National Park is immediately recognizable to scores of people and has been the venue for memorable events both planned and spontaneous. The Circle has an opportunity to play a much stronger role as a community anchor. Through a combination of activations, improved maintenance, and a continued partnership with the National Park Service, the Dupont Circle BID can catalyze the action needed to ensure The Circle can live up to its potential as a major neighborhood amenity.

Working with the National Park Service on COVID-related restrictions and openings, which may fluctuate will be important.

### **Goals**

1. Partner with the National Park Service to transform Dupont Circle into a beautifully maintained and frequently activated park.

### **Strategic Initiatives to Revive The Circle**

- 2.1. Work with the National Park Service to improve the oversight of landscaping, maintenance and rodent control services in The Circle and significantly upgrade services and maintenance in the park.
- 2.2. Collaborate with the National Park Service as they rehabilitate The Circle's fountain, street furniture, and hardscapes.
- 2.3. Develop an activation strategy that consistently draws visitors, residents, and local employees to The Circle for informal gathering. (i.e., move away from medium scale events, and focus on more low key, yet consistent activations with local partners in order to focus on compelling Dupont Circle area messaging.

### **Recommended Success Measures**

- Improved perception of The Circle
- Increased foot traffic
- Increase number of activations and events

## FOCUS AREA 2 STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

■ LIGHT BLUE SHADING INDICATES A PROJECT IS COMPLETED AND/OR ONGOING

### REVIVE THE CIRCLE

				<b>2.1 Work with the National Park Service to improve the oversight of landscaping, maintenance and rodent control services in The Circle and significantly upgrade services and maintenance in the park.</b>	<b>Key Personnel</b>
<b>FY20</b>	<b>FY21</b>	<b>FY22</b>	<b>FY23</b>		
●	●	●	●	Continue to monitor work performed by existing contractor and identify gaps in service and plans to address them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director</li> <li>Clean Team Manager</li> </ul>
●	●	●	●	Work with clean team contract to identify service gaps that could be addressed with existing resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director</li> <li>Clean Team Manager</li> </ul>
				<b>2.2 Collaborate with the National Park Service as they rehabilitate The Circle's fountain, street furniture, and hardscapes.</b>	<b>Key Personnel</b>
<b>FY20</b>	<b>FY21</b>	<b>FY22</b>	<b>FY23</b>		
●	●			Conduct a comprehensive capital needs survey of all Dupont Circle's key assets with NPS to address key needs and potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director</li> <li>Public Space Committee</li> </ul>
	●	●	●	Monitor and help shepherd fountain renovation and longevity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director</li> <li>Public Space Committee</li> </ul>
				<b>2.3 Develop an activation strategy that consistently draws visitors, residents, and local employees to The Circle for informal gathering.</b>	<b>Key Personnel</b>
<b>FY20</b>	<b>FY21</b>	<b>FY22</b>	<b>FY23</b>		
●	●	●	●	Coordinate on safety issues and connect people experiencing homelessness with services and supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director</li> <li>Public Safety Committee</li> </ul>
	●	●	●	Develop an event program that is consistent, aligned with resources and reinforces the BID's updated brand story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director</li> <li>Marketing Manager</li> <li>Event Planning Consultant</li> </ul>
●	●	●	●	Obtain NPS permits for seasonal event series. Work with NPS on a blanket permit initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director</li> <li>Marketing Associate</li> </ul>
●	●	●	●	Develop and monitor event tie-ins with local partners to ensure that events drive visitors to neighborhood businesses and cultural assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marketing Associate</li> <li>Event Planning Consultant</li> </ul>

## **FOCUS AREA 3:**

### **REVITALIZE DUPONT CIRCLE AREA, STREETSCAPES AND PUBLIC REALM**

#### **Summary**

The BID has partnered with Historic Dupont Circle Main Streets (HDCMS) to enhance and expand a successful Welcome Team. The Welcome Team focuses on cleanliness, safety, and being a friendly and helpful presence in the Dupont Circle BID and HDCMS boundary. The partnership between the BID and HDCMS has enabled the Clean Team to maintain and enhance Dupont Circle's public spaces seven days a week, while also providing a friendly presence on the street for visitors and tourists more efficiently.

The Dupont Circle neighborhood will undergo a significant and much anticipated overhaul with the new Dupont Plaza and Connecticut Ave Streetscape Project upgrades. The Dupont Circle BID will propose various efforts in the short and long term to revitalize the public space.

Safety throughout the public space, both physical and health must be carefully considered and addressed.

#### **Goals**

1. Ensure success of the Dupont Plaza and Connecticut Ave Streetscape Project, including developing a long-term management and funding plan.
2. Improve and enliven the pedestrian experience through design interventions and continued beautification and public safety initiatives.
3. Work with key government stakeholders and the public space committee to develop design guidelines that ensure a cohesive approach to landscaping, street furniture, and other elements.

#### **Strategic Initiatives to Revitalize Dupont Circle Area Streetscapes and Public Realm**

- 3.1. Upgrade the street cleaning along the Dupont Circle BID's key commercial corridors.
- 3.2. Create and implement a landscape and seasonal planting program.
- 3.3. Shepherd the Dupont Plaza and Connecticut Ave Streetscape Project through all phases of development.
- 3.4. Coordinate with community stakeholders to foster a safe and welcoming environment.
- 3.5. Develop neighborhood gateways that help the public identify the area when entering and exiting.

#### **Recommended Success Measures**

- Improved resident, business, and visitor experience (as measured by perception surveys)
- Increased media coverage
- Increased retail and hospitality sales
- Increased retail and office occupancy



## FOCUS AREA 3 STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

■ LIGHT BLUE SHADING INDICATES A PROJECT IS COMPLETED AND/OR ONGOING

### REVITALIZE DUPONT CIRCLE AREA STREETSAPES AND PUBLIC REALM

FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	3.1 Upgrade the street cleaning services along the Dupont Circle BID's key commercial corridors.	Key Personnel
●	●	●	●	Improve oversight of cleaning services and upgrade level of service and improve standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director</li> <li>Marketing Associate</li> <li>Marketing Committee</li> <li>Clean Team Manager</li> </ul>
●	●	●		Increase sanitization services in response to COVID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director</li> <li>Marketing Associate</li> <li>Marketing Committee</li> </ul>
FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	3.2 Create and implement a landscape and seasonal planting program.	Key Personnel
	●			Develop planting guidelines for tree boxes and other public space areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marketing Associate</li> <li>Marketing Committee</li> </ul>
●	●	●	●	Conduct a survey of treeboxes, green spaces, street poles and other assets that could be activated through design, lighting and public art activations and identify priority areas and potential partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marketing Associate</li> </ul>
●	●	●		Implement other design interventions (public art, lighting, holiday decorations) that align with design guidelines and reflect renewed brand story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marketing Associate</li> <li>Marketing Committee</li> </ul>
FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	3.3 Shepherd the Dupont Plaza and Connecticut Ave Streetscape Project through all phases of development.	Key Personnel
●	●	●	●	Build strong collaboration with Public Space Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director</li> <li>Marketing Associate</li> <li>Event Planning Consultant</li> </ul>
●	●	●		Develop plan for business assistance and communications during construction phase of Dupont Plaza and Connecticut Ave Streetscape Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marketing Associate</li> <li>Event Planning Consultant</li> </ul>
	●	●		Develop plan for ongoing Dupont Plaza maintenance, programming, and operations, as well as crafting an MOU with DDOT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director</li> <li>Marketing Associate</li> <li>Marketing Committee</li> </ul>
FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	3.4 Coordinate with community stakeholders to foster a safe and welcoming environment.	Key Personnel
●	●	●	●	Work with Clean Team, community groups, businesses, MPD and other stakeholders to monitor and address safety issues, both physical and health related.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director</li> <li>Marketing Associate</li> <li>Marketing Committee</li> </ul>
●	●	●	●	Expand partnerships with behavioral health service providers and MPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director</li> <li>Marketing Associate</li> <li>Marketing Committee</li> </ul>
●	●	●	●	Build and use social media platforms to keep businesses, residents and visitors informed at all times, including during emergencies both long-term (e.g public health) and short-term (e.g. road closures due to construction)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marketing Associate</li> <li>Public Safety Committee</li> </ul>
FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	3.5 Develop neighborhood gateways that help the public identify the area when entering and exiting.	Key Personnel
●				Work with public space and marketing committees to define themes and priorities for gateway identifiers at key nodes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director</li> <li>Marketing Associate</li> <li>Public Space Committee</li> </ul>
	●	●	●	Oversee design and installation of gateway identifiers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director</li> <li>Marketing Associate</li> <li>Public Space Committee</li> </ul>

## FOCUS AREA 4:

### REINVIGORATE THE ECONOMY OF THE DUPONT CIRCLE AREA

#### Summary

The economy in the Dupont Circle area is fueled by its mix of residents, shoppers, and workers. The area is replete with assets: it's well-known to DC residents, is within close proximity to cultural, artistic, and historical experiences, and it's accessible to a wide range of diverse transportation options. Sustainability is authentic to the Dupont Circle neighborhood through its year-long farmers market and its recent inclusion of ecologically-sound properties, as well as wellness focused businesses. However, the research conducted during the Strategic Plan process, revealed that many stakeholders feel the area's overall economy is not living up to its full potential. In addition to this baseline data, the presence of COVID and the restrictions around conducting business to protect public health have had a substantial negative impact on most, if not all businesses. The phased reopening until a vaccine is approved must be considered.

The Dupont Circle BID can play a robust role in efforts to strengthen the economy by working with stakeholders, acting as a clearinghouse for information, analysis, and promotional materials. The Dupont Circle BID can also work to strengthen the economy by supporting business retention and promoting the area as a premier destination for workers, visitors, and residents.

#### Goals

1. Retain and attract a varied mix of new and innovative businesses to fill vacancies and add to Dupont Circle's dynamism as a place to shop, dine and explore.
2. Reestablish the Dupont Circle Area as a dining, cultural, entertainment, and shopping hub.
3. Retain and attract a healthy mix of office tenants.

#### Strategic Initiatives to Reinvigorate the Economy of the Dupont Circle Service Area

- 4.1 Gather Economic Intelligence about Dupont Circle's service area to better understand current office, retail and hospitality market conditions and potential opportunities to support recovery and shape a vision for economic vibrancy
- 4.2. Develop marketing materials, reports, and informational sheets to support robust business retention and attraction efforts
- 4.3. Work with partner organizations to align marketing, business assistance, and event strategies around a compelling brand message

#### Recommended Success Measures

- Improved perception of area among businesses
- Increased media coverage
- Increased retail and restaurant sales
- Increased hotel occupancy and rev/par
- Increased office and retail occupancy rates

## FOCUS AREA 4 STRATEGIC INITIATIVES: REINVIGORATE THE ECONOMY OF THE DUPONT CIRCLE AREA

■ LIGHT BLUE SHADING INDICATES A PROJECT IS COMPLETED AND/OR ONGOING

				<b>4.1 Gather Economic Intelligence about Dupont Circle's service area to better understand current office, retail and hospitality market conditions and potential opportunities to support recovery and shape a vision for economic vibrancy</b>	<b>Key Personnel</b>
<b>FY20</b>	<b>FY21</b>	<b>FY22</b>	<b>FY23</b>		
●	●	●	●	Develop robust business engagement (e.g. Annual Meeting, Roundtables, Committee Meetings etc.) to determine Covid impacts and related needs throughout the recovery process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive Director</li> <li>• Marketing Associate</li> </ul>
●	●	●	●	Undertake market studies focused on the Dupont Circle service area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive Director</li> <li>• Marketing Associate</li> </ul>
●	●	●		Ensure robust participation in the District Government led Covid recovery process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive Director</li> <li>• Marketing Associate</li> </ul>
				<b>4.2 Develop marketing materials, reports and info sheets to assist with business retention and attraction efforts</b>	<b>Key Personnel</b>
<b>FY20</b>	<b>FY21</b>	<b>FY22</b>	<b>FY23</b>		
●	●	●	●	Using research from market studies to develop materials and/or an online portal to assist brokers and property owners with retention and attraction efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing Associate</li> <li>• Marketing Committee</li> </ul>
●	●	●	●	Provide information on available office, restaurant, retail space for lease or for sale.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing Associate</li> </ul>
●	●	●	●	Organize business to business activities and events to highlight area assets to potential residents, business tenants and investors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing Associate</li> <li>• Marketing Committee</li> </ul>
				<b>4.3 Work with partner organizations to clarify roles and responsibilities and to better align marketing, business assistance and event strategies around renewed brand vision</b>	<b>Key Personnel</b>
<b>FY20</b>	<b>FY21</b>	<b>FY22</b>	<b>FY23</b>		
●	●	●	●	Organize consistent meetings with community and business partners around Dupont Circle initiatives. (e.g. ANC, Dupont Circle Main Streets, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive Director</li> <li>• Marketing Associate</li> </ul>



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