



**Request for Proposal Strategic Planning Services
June 2022**

RESPOND TO: Stephanie Coppula
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Bethesda Urban Partnership, Inc.
7700 Old Georgetown Road
Bethesda, MD 20814
www.Bethesda.org

Proposals must be received no later than Monday, July 18, 2022



Request for Proposal for Facilitator Services

The Bethesda Urban Partnership (“BUP”) is requesting proposals for consultant services as outlined in this Request for Proposal (“RFP”). Proposal documents shall be submitted to BUP in accordance with the instructions and specifications detailed in the RFP.

I. Background

BUP is a not-for-profit downtown management organization that provides Maintenance, Marketing and Mobility services for the 300 acres of downtown Bethesda. Established by Montgomery County Government in 1994, BUP has grown from four to 35 employees since its inception by bringing previously contracted services in-house and by expanding its programs and services. BUP is made up of four major departments including Maintenance, Marketing (including the Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District), Mobility and Administration.

The Maintenance team’s responsibilities include landscaping, trash removal, street sweeping, sidewalk repairs, and the general beautification of downtown Bethesda, as well as some outside contracts that include trash removal in neighboring downtowns and the maintenance of some areas adjacent to the downtown. The Ask Me Team (part of the Maintenance team) provides information to downtown Bethesda visitors and offers other general assistance during nights and weekends, as well as handles some maintenance duties.

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 our restaurants, live music, visual and performing arts programs, family-friendly activities and more, as well as attracts thousands of people to our downtown each year. Additionally, BUP promotes the restaurants, retailers and arts organizations in downtown Bethesda as well as operates downtown Bethesda’s website, www.bethesda.org, and all social media. The efforts of BUP’s Marketing plan target downtown Bethesda’s residents, tourists, visitors and employees. 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. Additionally, we manage art spaces including Gallery B, Studio B and the Triangle Art Studios.

Our Mobility Department, Bethesda Transportation Solutions (BTS), works with businesses and individuals to promote alternative modes of transportation other than single occupancy vehicles for commuting into downtown Bethesda. This is accomplished through Commuter Information Days, and a variety of events as well as digital and social media outreach. BTS also helps Bethesda employers comply with Montgomery County law as it pertains to traffic mitigation and utilization of the County programs that subsidize employers' transportation costs. BUP also manages the Bethesda Circulator which is a free bus service that makes a 3.1 mile loop through downtown Bethesda.

The boundaries of downtown Bethesda and the creation and mission of the Bethesda Urban Partnership have been determined by Montgomery County legislation.

There has been significant development within downtown Bethesda in the last five years including high rise apartment and condominium buildings throughout our downtown. Additionally, Marriott International has just completed its new corporate headquarters. The new complex includes 700,000 sq. ft. of leased office space to house 3,500 employees, in addition to a 200-room, Marriott-branded hotel. Additionally, the new Downtown Bethesda Plan, developed by Montgomery County's Planning Department has been approved for 4,600,000 sq. ft. of new density.

(Please see the attached Annual Report and our last Strategic Plan for a more detailed outline of recent projects and achievements.)

II. Objective

Engage the services of a consultant to facilitate the Focus Groups and Online Survey for BUP's development of its next Five-Year Strategic Plan. The Five-Year Strategic Plan is designed to reflect BUP's Board of Directors vision of the direction and priorities of the Bethesda Urban Partnership for the next five years. A variety of meetings with the Board of Directors, BUP staff, and Focus Groups consisting of constituents served by BUP will provide the basis for developing the Strategic Plan as well as recommended survey/digital outreach to our constituents. The Strategic Plan will be incorporated into a report to be submitted to the Montgomery County Council outlining BUP's accomplishments over the past five years as well as goals and objectives for the next five years as part of BUP's reauthorization process. The consultant will help guide this independent process by facilitating numerous Focus Groups and attending planning meetings as outlined below and summarizing this information and reporting it to the Strategic Plan Steering Committee.

III. Scope of Services

The Respondent shall:

- A. Attend meeting with Strategic Plan Steering Committee to review scope of work and deliverables. This meeting date will be set for July or August 2022.
- B. Lead six separate Focus Groups gathering information from Bethesda constituent groups which include: County Partners, Downtown Residents, Visitors, Local Business Owners, Developers and Employers. Group members are identified and invited by Bethesda Urban

Partnership, Inc.; and Focus Group questions are drafted by the Consultant with input and approval given by BUP. These Focus Groups are to take place in the September and/or October 2022.

- C. Lead three Focus Group/Brainstorming sessions with the three Boards/Advisory Committees that make up the Bethesda Urban Partnership, Inc. The BUP Board session is a half day retreat; the Arts & Entertainment District Board and Bethesda Transportation Solutions Advisory Committee meetings will be 1-2 hour sessions. These sessions are to take place in October 2022.
- D. Lead one Executive Staff brainstorming session (1-2 hours) in September or October 2022.
- E. Create online survey and/or website for more constituent feedback from our community.
- F. Summarize results from all Focus Groups and Online Survey and report results to Strategic Plan Steering Committee. Provide a final written report summarizing all Focus Group feedback to the Strategic Plan Steering committee. This report is due no later than Nov. 30, 2022.
- G. Provide final recommendations for the Plan, and draft these points for the written narrative in a word document.

IV. Submission of Proposals

Contents of proposal should include:

- A. Statement of the Project Scope (3 page maximum)
- B. Overall approach to work
- C. Staff assigned to project and their experience
- D. Previous examples of work
- E. Detailed budget outline
- F. References

Please submit your proposal via e-mail or hard copy by July 18, 2022:

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