

# Historic Dupont Circle Main Streets Annual Report 2021



*October 2020-September 2021*



*In memory of Diego D'Ambrosio and Diego's Salon*





## Letter from the Chair and Executive Director

By April 2020, we are in the beginning of the pandemic with no end in sight. Scientists were working diligently to figure out how COVID-19 infected people and what were safe business practices. DC was fully shut down for three months; the public quarantined at home. HDCMS had to pivot to help businesses overcome the negative impact of the virus. The past twelve months were trying times assisting small businesses to stay open, sell online, collect donations for staff, establish pick-up/drop-off zones, and then permit outdoor dining and streateries.

Many businesses evolved from sales to fundraising. And HDCMS was there giving classes, in partnership with ANC2B and SBA to assist with grant writing and loan applications. In time, merchants became comfortable with fundraising – especially after the first grant application was completed. Businesses learned that they could do it, and many were awarded \$40,000 or more from the Paychecks Protection Program and EIDL. When DC grants were rolled out, businesses were encouraged to keep their doors open and their staff employed.

Sadly, we cannot say that all businesses remained open, and Dupont Circle experienced an increase of vacancies from 9% at the start of 2020 to 13% vacancy at the height of the pandemic. Happily, we are pleased to report that more and more vacant spaces are being leased in 2022, and Dupont Circle is reinviting itself as a destination for restaurants and services.

Dupont Circle is a unique neighborhood replete with small storefronts and modest footprints – a great place for entrepreneurs to start a business. With the return of hotel guests, conference attendees filling ballrooms, university students back on campus, and foot traffic coming back, Dupont Circle is well positioned to become vibrant once again.

Sincerely,

Mandy Warfield  
Chair

Bill McLeod  
Executive Director

# Main Street Approach

In 1980, the National Trust for Historic Preservation created the National Main Street Center to disseminate the knowledge developed during the pilot program. Since then, the Main Street Four-Point Approach® has been extended to over 43 states and the District of Columbia. Every community and commercial district is different, with its own distinctive assets and sense of place. The Main Street Approach offers community-based revitalization initiatives with a practical, adaptable framework for downtown transformation that is easily tailored to local conditions. The Main Street Approach helps communities get started with revitalization and grows with them over time.

## Main Street Fundamentals

The Main Street Approach is centered around Transformation Strategies. A Transformation Strategy articulates a focused, deliberate path to revitalizing or strengthening a downtown or commercial district's economy. A program's work on Transformation Strategies should be organized around the Four Points: Economic Vitality, Design, Promotion, and Organization. A revitalization program's work, and its Transformation Strategies, need to be informed by a solid understanding of local and regional market data, and sustained and inclusive community engagement.



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## Transformation Strategies

Transformation Strategies generated through meaningful community engagement and informed by an analysis of the district's market position help to guide a revitalization program's work. An effective Transformation Strategy serves a particular customer segment, responds to an underserved market demand, or creates a differentiated destination. Transformation Strategies are implemented through comprehensive work in four broad areas, known as the Main Street Four Points.

**ECONOMIC VITALITY** focuses on capital, incentives, and other economic and financial tools to assist new and existing businesses, catalyze property development, and create a supportive environment for entrepreneurs and innovators that drive local economies.

**DESIGN** supports a community's transformation by enhancing the physical and visual assets that set the commercial district apart, using historic preservation.

**PROMOTION** positions the downtown or commercial district as the center of the community and hub of economic activity, while creating a positive image that showcases a community's unique characteristics.

**ORGANIZATION** involves creating a strong foundation for a sustainable revitalization effort, including cultivating partnerships, community involvement, and resources for the district.

## Design

The Connecticut Avenue median continues to be a focus for the Design Committee. This year, we planted the median with pink calibrachoa and sweet potato vines, which provided blankets of cascading color throughout the growing season to complement the perennials under the shade of the southern magnolias.

The Design Committee works with the Clean Team, which is funded by a grant from the Department of Small & Local Business Development. We partner with the Dupont Circle Business Improvement District to manage the team of six men and women who sweep the commercial areas seven days a week now: P Street, Massachusetts Avenue, Connecticut Avenue, 18<sup>th</sup> Street, and 17<sup>th</sup> Street, NW. On an average day, the Clean Team picks up 900 pounds of trash from the streets and sidewalk, weeds the 200+ tree boxes, and waters the median. We collaborated with the National Park Service to clean the five parks around Dupont Circle, including Dupont Circle, the two-acre park at the center of the community.



In the winter, it is all hands-on-deck when there is a prediction of snow. The Clean Team is out salting sidewalks and ADA ramps in advance of the storm. And then they shift to shoveling snow to clear the path for pedestrians. This heroic effort is due to the esprit du corps instilled in the Clean Team by Central Union Mission. Without their support, the can-do spirit in freezing weather would not be possible.



We also helped businesses with permitting, including two Pick-up/Drop-off Zones, and 20 outdoor cafes and steateries. DDOT has been instrumental in keeping the restaurants in business by issuing permits at no cost and approving them in five days or less! This public space process used to be slow, but during the pandemic it was streamlined to facilitate commerce. And businesses could not have been more pleased.

We held a holiday window contest again to promote better retail design. Congratulations to our winners in 2020! Pride Smoke Shop won for best retail shop because Sean Kim's decorations embodied the diversity of Dupont Circle while embracing the holiday season. Floriana won best restaurant decorations for its Kamala Harris Tree and steatery decorations, showing that any woman can be Vice President (yes, she made a visit). Deluca Massage won best service with its romantic holiday decorations covering its three-story historic building. The scale and scope of Deluca's decorations outshone all others – requiring a ladder to install.

## Promotion

While in the midst of the pandemic, many Promotion Committee activities stopped because we could not bring people together indoors or have large crowds gather. Eventually, we turned our marketing attention to pop-ups outside on the sidewalk and spread out. In 2020-1, we organized five outside events, drawing thousands of people to Dupont Circle for the day, spread out safely over eight blocks. Each pop-up accommodated some 50 vendors on P Street and Connecticut Avenue. Our old commercial areas don't have wide sidewalks, so we have to squeeze vendors in wherever the sidewalks provide enough space to fit a tree box, cafe, tent, plus six feet of public passage.



Because we could not organize the 17<sup>th</sup> Street Festival, we partnered with ANC2B for the Block Party on 17<sup>th</sup> Street on June 26, 2021. The road was narrowed for the afternoon, tables were set up on the street, people were dancing in the street, families were jumping through sprinklers, and people came out to enjoy activities outside.

In lieu of the High Heel Race, which normally attracts 10,000 people, we organized a Halloween Maskerade Stroll on 17<sup>th</sup> Street where people dressed up for the afternoon and walked 17<sup>th</sup> Street and then dined in the 16 outdoor cafes to show off their costumes. We set up two tables to give out candy, and kids from all ages loved it.



## Economic Vitality

The Economic Enhancement Committee helped small businesses around Dupont Circle survive the pandemic through business retention, expansion, and recruitment. Retaining businesses during the pandemic meant pivoting to online sales and grant writing. Some 27 restaurants received funding through the SBA's Restaurant Revitalization Fund. And we are happy to report that we have helped over 100 merchants in Dupont Circle with grants, loans, and permitting.

Our business consultant Cherie Lester was very active assisting businesses improve their on-line presence, and marketing made a difference. Some businesses needed to get control of their Yelp reviews and make changes. Other businesses needed to start using Instagram to build a following. Others offered online classes to show the public how to give a massage, get a haircut, or do yoga. Creativity went a long way.

After working on expanding the boundaries of the Great Streets Grant, we were pleased to report that in 2021, Connecticut Avenue businesses were eligible to apply for \$50,000 to use on infrastructure. We will continue to work with the City Council to expand the boundaries to all of Dupont Circle.

We worked with ANC2B to offer nine on-line businesses classes about applying for PPP, EIDL, or other grants, some in Spanish and Vietnamese. These classes were very well received, and because they were virtual, we offered them city-wide to include anyone in DC.

1. January 8: PPP in Spanish
2. January 29: PPP in English
3. February 12: PPP in Spanish
4. February 26: Rent Relief: working with landlords
5. March 4: PPP in Spanish
6. March 5: Small Business Resource Center
7. March 10: Working with Landlords in Vietnamese
8. March 15: One on One Legal Clinic
9. April 23: Streateries 101, by DDOT



During very tough times, the relationships between landlords and tenants became key. In most instances, businesses needed to renegotiate their leases. Some businesses received a 50% reduction; others opened their books every month to show their sales and pay a percentage. But the key was creating a frank dialog about what was realistic to keep the doors open. Knowing that a vacant space would remain empty for the next three years, it was a sobering realization that working out a deal was best for everyone.

Art All Night came back in September 2021, and what an event it was! We had 12 locations open, plus activities in Dupont Circle park. While this year's Art All Night was not our biggest event, we were overwhelmed with the turnout: 17,000 people checked out all locations from 7:00-12:00 midnight. We were in shock! This citywide favorite warmed so many hearts, and it showed us that people wanted to get back to normal – even if people wanted to stay outside to watch fire jugglers for an hour or listen to a band in the Dupont Underground.

# Organization

The Organization Committee works on a number of things, including fundraising, membership, governance, and volunteers.

- Newsletter: each quarter we published a print newsletter that was hand delivered to 340 merchants, mailed to 200+ people, and stacks delivered to a number of apartment buildings and condos.
- E-news: this bi-weekly newsletter was emailed to our 1000+ friends.
- Website: we updated our organizational website [www.dupontcirclemainstreets.org](http://www.dupontcirclemainstreets.org) regularly, and maintained six other websites: Taste of Dupont, First Friday, Dupont Circle Pop-up, 17<sup>th</sup> Street Festival, Spring Fling, and Art All Night.



Quietly, we fundraised to keep our programs going through grant writing, sponsorship, ticket sales, vendor fees, consulting, etc. All these ways of taking in money helped us fulfil our mission. We want to thank our members and donors who generously gave to HDCMS: Mr. Michael Kain, Kain & Associates, Mr. Russwin Francisco, Bite the Fruit; Mr. Mark Payne, Hotel Dupont; Mr. Pierre Abushacra, Firehook; Ms. Natalina Koropoulos, La Tomate; Mr. Paul London, Washington Sports Club; Mr. Pender McCarter; Ms. Kathy Luu, SpaLogic; Mr. Alex and Eva Gotzev, Zeleno; Mr. Patrick Kain, Kain & Associates; Mr. Rob Halligan, Halligan Projects; Mr. James Gebara, PNC Bank; Mr. Tim Touchette, Attache Corporate Housing; Mr. Richard Busch; Ms. Mesha Williams; Mr. Robert Meins; Mr. Sean Kim, Pride Smoke Shop; Ms. Evelyn Wofford; Mr. Desmond McKenna, McKenna Group; Mr. Nhut Tran; Mr. James Nussbaumer.

We want to acknowledge our citywide Main Street program: DSLBD. Without the support of Director Whitfield and her dedicated staff, we would not be successful. The Department of Small & Local Business Development is our largest funding source, and through their seed money, we were able to grow our budget each year – thus increasing our services to small businesses. Thank you!



# Board of Directors

**Chair:** Mandy Warfield

**Vice Chair:** Tim Touchette

**Treasurer:** James Gebara

**Secretary:** Sue Taylor

James Gebara, Vice President

*PNC Bank*

Rob Halligan, Principal

*Halligan Projects*

Colleen Hawkinson, Executive Director

*Dupont Circle BID*

Michael Kain, Principal

*Kain & Associates*

Paul London, General Partner

*Washington Sports Club*

Robert Meins, Director

*Dupont Underground, Ex Officio*

Rev. Susan Taylor, National Public Affairs

*Church of Scientology*

Tim Touchette, President

*Attache Corporate Housing*

Mandy Warfield, Vice President

*Dupont Circle Rotary*

Mesha Williams

*Resident*



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Bill McLeod

*Executive Director*

# FY21 Budget

<b>Revenue</b>				
Grants			\$	
	DSLBD Main Street			150,080.00
	DSLBD Clean Team			127,000.00
Special Events				
	Pop ups			15,400.00
	Art All Night			26,000.00
Membership Income				5,000.00
Earned Income				14,000.00
Board Contributions				<u>8,000.00</u>
<b>Total Revenue</b>			\$	<b>345,480.00</b>
<b>Expenses</b>				
Staffing				128,550.00
Clean Team				
	Clean Team			117,000.00
	Uniforms			1,000.00
	Landscaping			2,000.00
Total Clean Team				120,000.00
Organization				
	Annual Report			0.00
	Audit-900			5,000.00
	Newsletter			16,000.00
Total Organization				21,000.00
Total Administration				18,930.00
Marketing				
	Website			500.00
	Holiday Popup			500.00
	17th Street Festival			330.00
	Art All Night			20,000.00
Total Marketing				21,330.00
Business Consulting				
	Social Media Consulting			12,000.00
	Business Consulting			12,000.00
Total Consulting				24,000.00
Design				
	Façade grants			11,000.00
Total Design				<u>11,000.00</u>
<b>Total Expenses</b>			\$	<b>344,810.00</b>
Revenue over/under Expenses				670.00

# FY22 Budget

Approved Budget			FY22
<b>Revenue</b>			
Grants		\$	
	DSLBD Main Street		150,080.00
	DSLBD Clean Team		176,753.61
Special Events			
	Fall Fundraiser		15,000.00
	Holiday pop up		5,000.00
	Spring Fling annual meeting		5,000.00
	Taste of Dupont		5,000.00
	18th Street Festival		5,000.00
	Art All Night		0.00
Membership Income			5,000.00
Earned Income			25,350.00
Board Contributions			<u>6,000.00</u>
<b>Total Revenue</b>		\$	<b>398,183.61</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Staffing			146,240.00
Total Clean Team			160,253.00
Organization			
	Audit-900		5,000.00
	Newsletter		16,000.00
Total Organization			21,000.00
Total Administration			20,830.00
Marketing			
	Website		5,000.00
	Fall Fundraiser		500.00
	Holiday Popup		500.00
	Spring Fling Annual Meeting		500.00
	Taste of Dupont		500.00
	Street Festival		500.00
	Art All Night		0.00
Total Marketing			7,500.00
Business Consulting			
	Social Media Consulting		12,000.00
	Business Consulting		12,000.00
Total Consulting			24,000.00
Design			
	Holiday windows		600.00
	Flower contest		2,000.00
	Façade grants		11,000.00
Total Design			<u>13,600.00</u>
<b>Total Expenses</b>		\$	<b>393,423.00</b>
Revenue over/under Expenses			4,760.61

Historic Dupont Circle Main Streets  
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