



  
**Bethesda**  
URBAN PARTNERSHIP

2023/24 ANNUAL REVIEW

# Bethesda

A world in one neighborhood.

[BETHESDA.ORG](http://BETHESDA.ORG)





## From the Executive Director



As we compiled this Annual Report and reflected on this past year, from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024, I am filled with gratitude for the dedication and passion displayed by our Bethesda Urban Partnership (BUP) team. Guided by our Board of Directors, we are very fortunate to serve a

community of hard-working retailers, restaurants, arts venues and local businesses that have made our downtown so successful. Our core values of service, stewardship and spark can be seen and experienced in our daily work and efforts to make downtown Bethesda the most vibrant destination in our region.

In December 2023, the Montgomery County Council voted unanimously to reauthorize the Bethesda Urban Partnership for another five years to continue our work in marketing and maintaining downtown Bethesda. This reauthorization was done after a full evaluation by the Montgomery County Office of Legislative Oversight and included our five-year Strategic Plan. The Plan was written with feedback from our constituents including residents, visitors, business owners, developers and our County partners. We wholeheartedly look forward to another five years of serving our constituents, creating placemaking programs and bringing our community together.

We welcomed thousands of visitors to our downtown this past year to enjoy marquis events such as the Taste of Bethesda – returning for the first time since 2019. Play in a Day also returned after a short hiatus,

and celebrated local playwrights, directors and actors. Additionally, we held weekly activations such as our Summer Concerts, free Fitness in the Parks classes, Yappy Hours and large-scale festivals such as the Bethesda Fine Arts Festival. We pride ourselves in creating a downtown that is welcoming to residents and visitors, and hosting special events is a great way to get people to enjoy our downtown, visit local businesses and enjoy our many amenities.

Development continues to progress in downtown Bethesda and several projects were completed including residential buildings Solaire 7607, The Camille, Sophia Bethesda and 4915 Auburn Avenue. Additional projects such as Hampden House, 8015 Old Georgetown Road and 7340 Wisconsin Avenue will be completed within the next year or so.

We continue to promote mobility throughout our downtown by keeping residents, businesses and building owners informed on transportation alternatives, Metro, bike paths, walking options and more.

As we celebrate our achievements over the last year, we are looking forward to an exciting future for downtown Bethesda. Complemented by new and longtime residents, we are continually looking for new ways to bring excitement and livability to our downtown. We will continue to focus on our community of residents, local businesses, developers and artists as we work towards the best Bethesda and fulfilling our motto of “A World in One Neighborhood.”

Sincerely,

**Jeff Burton, Executive Director**  
**Bethesda Urban Partnership, Inc.**





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## From the Board Chair



I am honored to serve as Chair of the Bethesda Urban Partnership Board (BUP) of Directors, an organization I have had the pleasure of being a part of for many years. As I assume the position for the July 2024 - June 2025 term, I would like to thank our community for its continued

support of downtown Bethesda. As a local resident, I look forward to leading an organization that is dedicated to the success of our downtown enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. Our community is fortunate to have successful local businesses like our wonderful restaurants and retailers as well as exciting arts events, cultural programming and more.

In December 2023, the Montgomery County Council unanimously reauthorized the Bethesda Urban Partnership to continue our work of marketing and maintaining downtown Bethesda for another five years. We worked closely with the County's Office of Legislative Oversight which did a thorough review of BUP, our mission and our daily efforts in managing downtown Bethesda. BUP was created in 1994, and since that time, we have been working in maintenance and landscaping, marketing and mobility. You'll see our dedicated team in red shirts working throughout downtown Bethesda, at our special events and more.

BUP has a Board and staff dedicated to not only taking care of our downtown, but also marketing our many amenities to attract new residents, businesses, visitors and artists. Downtown Bethesda is one of the premier neighborhoods in the Greater Washington, D.C. area, and we are thrilled that so many local businesses and residents call Bethesda home.

Special events such as our Summer Concert series, Outdoor Movies, Bike to Work Day, Taste of Bethesda and Bethesda Fine Arts Festival make Bethesda a welcoming and exciting place. Public art programs, local galleries and arts events such as the Bethesda Film Fest make our area culturally rich and provide quality entertainment close to home. Bethesda's artist and cultural community, designated as a Maryland Arts & Entertainment District, is one of the many reasons residents, visitors and developers alike come to downtown Bethesda.

I am grateful to have the privilege of working alongside the BUP team and my Board colleagues as we remain dedicated to maintaining, supporting and promoting all that Bethesda has to offer. As Chair, I look forward to another successful year working with our constituents and fulfilling our best strategic vision for downtown Bethesda's future.

Best regards,

**Katya Marin, Chair**  
**Bethesda Urban Partnership**

# Operations & Funding



The Bethesda Urban Partnership, Inc. (BUP) was established by Montgomery County in 1994 to market and maintain downtown Bethesda. BUP celebrated our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in early 2024, and was reauthorized by the Montgomery County Council in December 2023 to continue our work of managing downtown Bethesda.

Throughout the last 30 years, BUP's dedicated employees who work in marketing, maintenance/field operations, administration and mobility management have continued to promote and support the beautiful and dynamic downtown.

The BUP team maintains the public spaces in downtown Bethesda and creates initiatives and marketing programs to welcome and engage residents, visitors and artists, as well as promote local businesses.

A vibrant neighborhood within the Greater Washington, D.C. area, Bethesda offers a variety of restaurants, retailers, entertainment venues and events. BUP's marketing team manages unique and exciting programming, including community festivals and arts events, and highlights the many destinations throughout the downtown. BUP also manages field operations, Bethesda Transportation Solutions (BTS), the Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District and the Bethesda Circulator.



## Bethesda Urban Partnership Staff

### Jeff Burton

Executive Director

### Stephanie Coppola

Director of Marketing & Communications

### Chiqui Laboy

Office Manager

### Jason Liu

Marketing & Events Manager

### Jeff Oyer

Director of Finance

### Susanna Parker

Marketing & Communications Manager

### Emma Q. Zanello

Marketing & Communications Manager



BUP is operated by an eleven-member Board of Directors comprising residents, businesses and developers appointed by the County Executive. The organization is funded primarily by revenue generated from the Bethesda Parking Lot District fees, in addition to a small percentage of the commercial Urban District property tax and general tax dollars. Private sponsors also partner with BUP on events such as Taste of Bethesda, Summer Concerts and the Bethesda Fine Arts Festival.

### Bethesda Circulator

The Bethesda Circulator is a helpful mode of transportation for those looking for an easy and free way around town. The buses are on route Monday-Friday, 7am -11pm and Saturday, 10am -11pm. The route services north to Battery Lane and south to Bradley Boulevard and includes 20 stops at popular downtown Bethesda destinations including the Metro, public parking garages, restaurants and shops. Bethesda Transportation Solutions offers a Circulator App that tracks the real-time location of the buses along the route.



### Bethesda Urban Partnership Board of Directors July 2023 – June 2024

#### Executive Committee

**Chair:** Katya Marin, *Western Montgomery County Citizens Advisory Board*

**Vice Chair:** Dan Schlaff, *Resident from Close Proximity to Urban District*

**Treasurer:** Christopher Smith, *Stonebridge Associates, Inc., Optional Method Developer*

**Secretary:** Adam Murphy, *Mon Ami Gabi, Small Business*

#### Board Members

Marian Block, *Residential Representative from within the Urban District*

Jane Fairweather, *The Jane Fairweather Team, The Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce*

Apoorva Gandhi, *Marriott International, Optional Method Developer*

Mylene L. Ortiz Luis, *The Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce*

Cherian Thomas, *Resident from Planning Area*

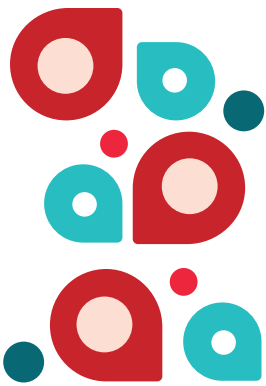
Evan J. Weisman, *The Donohoe Companies, Optional Method Developer*

Peter Fosselman, *Director, Bethesda Chevy Chase Regional Services Center (Ex-Officio)*





# Maintenance



The dedicated BUP Maintenance Team removes trash and recycling, sweeps streets, repairs sidewalks, prunes trees, plants flowers, and more to keep the downtown refreshed and inviting. The beautiful flowers seen along the Wisconsin Avenue median, at downtown Bethesda's gateways, and in the many planters located throughout our downtown are carefully planted and maintained by the BUP team. Their efforts remain vital to maintaining Bethesda's cleanliness and appeal as the downtown area grows.

Additionally, the team is charged with the upkeep and beautification of public gathering spaces in downtown Bethesda including Veterans Park, located at the corner of Norfolk and Woodmont Avenues. Residents and visitors alike enjoy these spaces for lunch, dinner, coffee dates and more.





During FY'24, the maintenance team managed and pruned 1,600 trees, took care of 35,000 flowers and 180,000 sq. ft. of turf, as well as removed trash and litter seven days a week.

The team also assists with on-site needs at BUP events and manages the maintenance tasks at Gallery B, Studio B and Triangle Art Studios. The team is certified in First Aid, CPR and AED.

### Ask Me Team

The Ask Me Team is on duty Wednesday through Sunday and can be found around town ready to help downtown guests. The Ambassadors are available to provide emergency assistance, give directions and assist with the downtown's maintenance needs. The team has been an integral part in the operations of BUP's events both big and small from Yappy Hours to Taste of Bethesda.



### Maintenance and Ask Me Team Members:

- Eli Banks, Field Operations Manager
- José Castro, Maintenance Supervisor
- John Mattingly, Ask Me Team Supervisor
- Tito Castro, Trash Removal Team
- Datrell Childers, Street Sweeper
- Manuel Constanza, Landscaper
- Adan Diaz-Reyes, Urban Beautification Squad
- José Gaitán, Urban Beautification Squad
- Jorge Hernandez, Landscaper
- Darren Lewis, Ask Me Team
- Melvin Muñoz-Macoto, Landscaper
- Celio Peña, Landscaper
- Marlon Reynolds, Ask Me Team
- Pedro Rodrigues, Trash Removal Team
- Jeron Terrel Russell, Ask Me Team
- Martir Salmeron, Landscaper
- Gene Singleton, Ask Me Team
- Jaime Villanueva, Landscaper
- Felix Villatoro, Landscaper



# Marketing



BUP's marketing team is charged with promoting downtown Bethesda as a vibrant destination offering dining, shopping, the arts, and unparalleled amenities for residents and visitor alike. Large-scale festivals, monthly activations and cultural events attract many people to enjoy our community. Our website, [www.bethesda.org](http://www.bethesda.org), e-newsletter, social media posts and free printed guides are all great resources to learn more about the restaurants, retailers, arts venues and events throughout the downtown.

Downtown Bethesda's marquis food festival, the popular **Taste of Bethesda** returned to Woodmont Triangle on October 7, 2023 for the first time since 2019. The festival celebrated its 31st year and featured a look at the rich culinary diversity of the downtown Bethesda restaurant community. More than 25,000 attendees enjoyed the 35 participating restaurants, eight live bands and an activity area for kids. The festival was made possible with the generous support of the 2023 sponsors including: Suburban Hospital, Amazon Fresh, MoCo360, Renewal by Andersen and The St. James.







Our love of restaurants continued in the new year with **"Savor Bethesda" Restaurant Week** which was held from February 16-25, 2024 featuring great dining deals. Over 30 participating downtown Bethesda eateries curated lunch, dinner and dessert menus at \$10, \$20 or \$35 for dine in and take-out customers. BUP promoted the culinary week, encouraging patrons to check out the deals and support their favorite restaurants. BUP partnered with FOX 5 DC to bring some of their reporters to our local restaurants for chef demonstrations and additional promotion of our beloved restaurants.

The free **Friday Summer Concerts** continued into 2024, drawing large crowds who delighted in live music, dining and dancing to kick off the weekend. The summer season started with The 19th Street Band followed by other popular local groups including Soul Crackers and Melissa Quinn Fox.



### 2023 Taste of Bethesda Participating Restaurants

- |                                      |                                   |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Benihana                             | Moby Dick                         |
| Casa Oaxaca                          | Mon Ami Gabi                      |
| Ceremony Coffee Roasters             | Nothing Bundt Cakes               |
| CHIKO                                | The Organic Butcher               |
| Delhi Spice                          | The Original Pancake House        |
| Dog Haus Biergarten                  | Planta                            |
| Just Ice Tea                         | Poke Dojo & Kusshi                |
| Fialova                              | The Red Bandana Bakery            |
| Georgetown Cupcake                   | Rock Bottom Bethesda              |
| Good Ducking Burger                  | Seventh State Restaurant & Lounge |
| Guapo's                              | Silver                            |
| Hawkers Asian Street Food            | Smoke BBQ                         |
| Kadhai Boutique Indian Cuisine       | Smoothie King                     |
| Levain Bakery                        | Spanish Diner                     |
| Maman                                | Tacombi                           |
| Mamma Lucia                          | Tout de Sweet Pastry Shop         |
| Medium Rare                          | World of Beer                     |
| MI Café at Marriott International HQ |                                   |





**Free Outdoor Movies** returned to Woodmont Triangle for three nights in July and August 2023 featuring major motion pictures in various genres including new releases, a classic romantic comedy, and an action fan favorite.

Getting fit for free with **Fitness in the Parks** returned for the summer of 2024 with free fitness events held in Elm Street Park. In June and July, over 250 local residents participated in outdoor classes with Barre3 Bethesda, Corepower Yoga, The St. James Performance Studio, Urban Boxing Bethesda, and Orangetheory Fitness Bethesda. After class, participants could learn more about the studios, get sign-up discounts, and take home some custom swag.



In partnership with Montgomery Parks, BUP hosted **Yappy Hour and Pop-Up Dog Parks** at Elm Street Park in July, September and October of 2023. BUP's maintenance team built play areas for both large and small dogs on each side of the park's plaza. This allowed dogs to freely run and play while their owners could listen to music from local bands and enjoy food from downtown Bethesda restaurants such as Dog Haus Biergarten



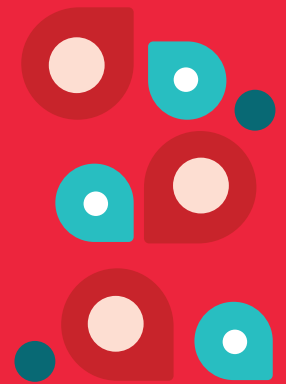
and Smoke BBQ. Local pet retailers Bone Jour, Bond Vet and Atlas Doghouse also joined in the Yappy Hour events with fun activities and giveaways for dogs and dog-owners. A special treat was the artist who drew caricatures of participating dogs!





BUP continued its support of restaurants and retailers with the E-gift card "Bethesda Bucks." The Bethesda Bucks program continued to grow, with over 60 retail and restaurant participating locations and selling \$8,500 worth of gift cards used at local establishments.

**Bethesda's Winter Wonderland** was held on Saturday, December 2, 2023, drawing big crowds of families, local singers and more. The celebration featured festive choral and dance performances from Academy of the Holy Cross, Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School, Bethesda Conservatory of Dance, Chevy Chase Elementary School, Georgetown Prep, Unity Dance & Movement, Young Artists of America and Walter Johnson High School. The event also featured a live ice sculpting presentation, face painting, and a special appearance from Santa Claus. Children were able to participate in free crafting stations from local theatres, Imagination Stage and Round House Theatre, while all attendees enjoyed food and beverages from The Red Bandana Bakery and Good Ducking Burger.



## Essay Winners

Raegan O’Lone, *Bethesda, MD, 1st Place*  
 Kyra Swantkowski, *Fairfax, VA, 2nd Place*  
 Jonathan Kronstadt, *Silver Spring, MD, 3rd Place*  
 Charlotte Clymer, *Washington, D.C., Honorable Mention*  
 Rachel Coonce, *University Park, MD, Honorable Mention*  
 Hope Randall, *Bethesda, MD, Honorable Mention*  
 Dian Seidel, *Chevy Chase, MD, Honorable Mention*

## High School Essay Winners

Hannah Brunick, *Quince Orchard HS, 1st Place*  
 Sofia Guyer, *Bethesda-Chevy Chase HS, 2nd Place*  
 Ariana Miranda, *Wheaton HS, 3rd Place*  
 Joanne Fan, *Thomas S. Wootton HS, Honorable Mention*  
 Winnie Chen, *Thomas S. Wootton HS, Honorable Mention*  
 Chelsea Zhu, *Richard Montgomery HS, Honorable Mention*

## Short Story Winners

Bari Lynn Hein, *Germantown, MD, 1st Place*  
 Naomi Louie, *Bethesda, MD, 2nd Place*  
 J. Milliard Simpson, *Germantown, MD, 3rd Place*  
 Michael Norton, *Silver Spring, MD, Honorable Mention*  
 Karen Yuldeson Sandler, *Washington, D.C., Honorable Mention*  
 Silvia Spring, *Washington, D.C., Honorable Mention*

## High School Short Story Winners

Abigail Ott, *Northwest HS, 1st Place*  
 Sydney Tamashasky, *Poolesville HS, 2nd Place*  
 Noah Grosberg, *Bethesda-Chevy Chase HS, 3rd Place*  
 Naomi Bortnick, *Walt Whitman HS, Honorable Mention*  
 Kalina Peterson, *Thomas S. Wootton HS, Honorable Mention*  
 Juniper Sohn, *Richard Montgomery HS, Honorable Mention*

## Poetry Winners

May-Mei Lee, *Alexandria, VA, 1st Place*  
 Taylor Franson Thiel, *Springfield, VA, 2nd Place*  
 Gary Stein, *Silver Spring, MD, 3rd Place*  
 Emma Berver, *Arlington, VA, Honorable Mention*  
 Susie Chen, *Potomac, MD, Honorable Mention*  
 Kyi Kaung, *Chevy Chase, MD, Honorable Mention*  
 Maggie Rosen, *Silver Spring, MD, Honorable Mention*

## High School Poetry Winners (Youth Poet Award)

Lauren Ajebon, *Winston Churchill HS*  
 Aigerim Bibol, *Sidwell Friends School*  
 Katherine Erceg, *Georgetown Visitation Preparatory School*  
 Raquel Liriano-Dieiguez, *Richard Montgomery HS*  
 Ariana Vazquez-Avalos, *Paint Branch HS*  
 Jennifer Wan, *Richard Montgomery HS*  
 Max Zonov, *Albert Einstein HS*



The 2024 Local Writer’s Showcase celebrated writers from Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia with two readings and award ceremonies. More than 700 entries were submitted for the Bethesda Essay, Short Story and Poetry Contests. Thirty-nine writers were acknowledged, with over \$5,000 in prize money distributed. Additionally, top prize winners received classes and memberships to The Writer’s Center, along with the opportunity to have their work published in *Bethesda Magazine*.

On March 14, 2024, the Poetry Awards and Reading took place in person at The Writer’s Center, featuring readings by this year’s winners and guest poets Courtney LeBlanc and Regie Cabico, the 2024 Poetry Contest Judge. The Showcase continued on March 15<sup>th</sup> at The Hyatt Regency Bethesda with the Essay and Short Story Reading, showcasing this year’s winners.

Produced by the Bethesda Urban Partnership, the Local Writer’s Showcase was sponsored by Moco360 Media and The Writer’s Center, with support also provided by The Trawick Foundation.



## Online and Social Media

Bethesda Urban Partnership's website serves as a valuable resource for information about Bethesda, offering restaurant and retail guides, upcoming event details and more. BUP shares both BUP-specific and downtown Bethesda updates, as well as promotion of local retailers and restaurants on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn. In 2024, a key focus was the use of short videos to spotlight downtown Bethesda's local businesses, restaurants and retailers as well as Bethesda Urban Partnership events and contests. These videos gained significant traction, garnering over 150,000 views and were reshared across thousands of accounts, resulting in a 35% increase in followers. Moreover, the weekly e-newsletter continues to grow its subscriber base, serving as an essential tool for those seeking up-to-date information on what's happening in downtown Bethesda.



facebook.com/BethesdaUp  
@BethesdaUp  
@BethesdaBup





# Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District



Downtown Bethesda was officially designated as an Arts & Entertainment District by the state of Maryland starting July 1, 2002. This designation provides special tax incentives that support artists, arts organizations, and developers within the Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District. In July 2022, downtown Bethesda received its third re-designation to further advance its mission of promoting the arts in the area.

The Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District curates top-tier arts, cultural events and programs that enrich the lives of residents, businesses, and visitors, while fostering community growth and vitality. The A&E events showcase the talents of local artists, writers, filmmakers and performers, offering them platforms to present their work to the community. These initiatives not only spotlight Bethesda’s artistic and cultural assets but also draw nearly 1,000 artists and attract over 30,000 attendees annually.



## Bethesda Arts & Entertainment Board of Directors; July 2024 – June 2025

### Executive Committee

**President:** Jane Fairweather,  
*Jane Fairweather Team/Long & Foster*

**Vice President:** Jad Donohoe,  
*The Donohoe Companies*

**Secretary/Treasurer:** Patrick O’Neil,  
*Lerch, Early & Brewer*

### Board Members

Arlene Begelman, *Local Resident*

Bonnie Fogel, *Imagination Stage*

Richard Greenberg, *Greenhill Companies*

Bob Hebda, *Local Resident*

Amy Kaslow, *Amy Kaslow Gallery*

Zachary Oxman, *Artist and Local Artist*

Robin Sherman, *Local Resident*

Wendy Susswein, *Local Resident*

Peter Fosselman (Non-voting),  
*Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services Center*



Continuing efforts to **"Paint the Town"** with public art and public mural projects, the Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District held a "call for artists" in spring 2024 seeking original designs from local artists to replicate and print onto vinyl wraps that will be adhered to 15 signal boxes in downtown Bethesda. The project is currently underway, and we look forward to unveiling the artists and their colorful designs to additionally beautify our downtown.

BUP manages **Gallery B**, a nonprofit art gallery that features monthly exhibits by regional artists and hosts the exhibitions for the annual Bethesda Painting Awards and The Trawick Prize. The spring 2024 exhibit lineup began with "Threads of Connection," by returning group Art4Us Artists Coop. The lineup also included "Celebrate the Feminine" by Deborah CC LaCroix with drawings, painting and sculptural work, as well as exhibit "Creating in Abstraction" a show curated by Morton Fine Art, highlighting 11 global contemporary artists. In May, artists

Michael West and Kristine DeNinno presented "Flow State" featuring printmaking and sculptural work.

In addition, BUP oversees **Studio B** and **Triangle Art Studios**, providing studio spaces that serve as both workspaces and exhibition venues for local artists. Studio B showcases the works of Linda Bartley Button, Shanthi Chandrasekar, Sara Leibman and Gloria Solomon. At Triangle Art Studios, visitors can explore the works of Maruja Quezada, Barb Siegel and Stephen Estrada. Additionally, Triangle Art Studios includes a gallery space that exhibits artworks by resident artists as well as guest artists.

The **Bethesda Art Walk** returned for four nights spanning the fall of 2023 and the spring of 2024, and saw an outstanding attendance. These popular events guide attendees between Triangle Art Studios, Gallery B, Studio B, Amy Kaslow Gallery, Artworks Fine Arts Studio and the Waverly Street Gallery, and allowed guests to view the work in each space and speak directly to artists.





### 2024 Bethesda Film Fest Films

*1001 Cuts*, film by Sarah Temkin of Colonial Beach, VA

*A Chocolate Lens*, film by Gabriel Veras of Washington, D.C.

*Eat Flowers*, film by River Autumn Finlay of Washington, D.C.

*Filming Under Fire: John Ford's OSS Field Photo Branch*, film by Charles Pinck of Washington, D.C.

*Spanish Joe Remembers*, film by Samuel A. Miranda of Washington, D.C. & Ellie Walton of Mount Rainier, MD

In 2024, Bethesda welcomed back the cherished event, **Play In A Day!** Six esteemed theatre companies from the Washington, D.C. area collaborated to write, direct, rehearse, and perform original plays centered around common themes in just 24 hours. Play In A Day was held on Saturday, March 2, 2024 at Imagination Stage. *Play In A Day* kicked off on Friday evening, March 1<sup>st</sup> when playwrights and directors joined together to receive their assigned themes and props. The event featured local theatre groups Adventure Theatre MTC (Glen Echo, MD); Flying V (Bethesda, MD); Imagination Stage (Bethesda, MD); The Keegan Theatre (Washington, D.C.); Olney Theatre (Olney, MD) and We Happy Few (Washington, D.C.).

The 12<sup>th</sup> annual **Bethesda Film Fest** featured five short documentaries made by local filmmakers. The selected films were screened on April 5 and 6, 2024. This year's venue, the Bethesda Row Landmark Cinema, greatly elevated the festival for the filmmakers and attendees alike with its widescreen, high quality sound and professional cinema experience. Each screening was followed by a Q&A session with the filmmakers, moderated by Robin Hamilton, documentary filmmaker and producer. The Bethesda Film Fest was supported by Bethesda Row, the Honorable Pete Fosselman and the Maryland State Arts Council. Additional supporters include Arlene Begelman, The Donohoe Companies, Jane Fairweather Team, Bonnie Fogel, The Greenhill Companies, Robert Hebda, Amy Kaslow Gallery, Oxman Studios, Robin Sherman, Wendy Susswein, and Lerch, Early and Brewer.







## Bethesda Fine Arts Festival

### Best in Show Winner

Christopher Falck – *Photography*

### Judges' Choice Award Winners

Sandra Sedmak Engel – *Mixed Media*

Joseph Craig English – *Printmaking*

David Levy – *Furniture*

Jennifer McBrien – *Clothing/Fiber*

David Souza – *Wood*

Kyle Wilson – *Photography*



The 19th annual **Bethesda Fine Arts Festival** took place on Saturday, May 11 and Sunday, May 12, 2024, in Bethesda's Woodmont Triangle along Norfolk and Auburn Avenues. As one of downtown Bethesda's premier events, this festival attracts over 20,000 attendees annually who come to explore and purchase original fine art created by over 100 of the nation's most skilled artists. Artists from across the country were selected through a jury process to participate in the festival, showcasing diverse artworks including paintings, photography, jewelry, sculptures, furniture, glass, ceramics, and more. Festival-goers enjoyed live music and had the opportunity to indulge in cuisine from downtown Bethesda restaurants while immersing themselves in a diverse array of original artwork.

**The Trawick Prize: Bethesda Contemporary Art Awards** exhibition was on display at Gallery B from September 7 – October 1, 2023. The eight finalists were selected from nearly 300 applicants by the following artists and art educators: Brandon Morse, Associate Professor and Chair of the Art Department, University of Maryland; Jon-Phillip Sheridan, Chair of the Photography and Film Department, Virginia Commonwealth University and Naoco Wowsugi, Associate Professor of Art, American University.

The 20<sup>th</sup> annual **Bethesda Painting Awards**, also founded by Bethesda resident Carol Trawick, was held at Gallery B from June 6-30, 2024. Eight finalists were selected by the competition's panel made up of Virginia Anderson, Department Head of American Painting & Sculpture and Decorative Arts at the Baltimore Museum of Art; Scott Hutchison, Associate Professor of Practice in painting and drawing at Georgetown University; and Nicole Santiago, Professor of Art at the College of William and Mary, who was also the 2023 Bethesda Painting Awards Best in Show Winner.



### 2023 Trawick Prize: Bethesda Contemporary Art Awards Winners

#### \$10,000 Best in Show

Rex Delafkaran, Washington, D.C.

#### \$2,000 Second Place

Charles Mason III, Baltimore, MD

#### \$1,000 Third Place

Stephanie Garon, Baltimore, MD

#### \$1,000 Young Artist

Megan Koepfel, Hyattsville, MD



### 2023 Bethesda Painting Awards Winners

#### \$10,000 Best in Show

Sanah Brown-Bowers, Baltimore, MD

#### \$2,000 Second Place

J. Jordan Bruns, Silver Spring, MD

#### \$1,000 Third Place

Mary Proenza, Riverdale Park, MD





▶▶▶  
TRANSPORTATION  
SOLUTIONS

# 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 and local residents. BTS promotes multimodal transportation such as rail, bus, carpools and biking with the goal of reducing the number of Bethesda employees and residents who drive alone to work.



## Bike to Work Day Supporters

- BellRinger
- Bethesda Bike and Ski
- Cheltenham Interiors
- Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail
- Griffin Cycle
- Montgomery County Ride On
- Montgomery County Planning Department
- Pedego Electric Bikes Bethesda
- Potomac Pedalers
- Silver
- Terrapin Bicycles
- The Barrett
- The St. James Performance Club
- Washington Area Bicyclist Association

Each year BTS hosts one of the largest **Bike to Work Day** events in the Washington, D.C. region. The 2024 event saw enthusiastic participation from cyclists, local businesses and elected officials. There were over 426 registrants in Bethesda, the largest “Pit Stop” in Montgomery County. Baked goods, beverages and treats were donated by The Red Bandana Bakery, Bethesda Bagels, Silver, Just Ice Tea and DrinkMore Water. Prizes were donated by Barre3 Bethesda, Fully Promoted, Griffin Cycle and Pedego Electric Bikes. BTS gave a bike commuting award to Bethesda employee, Alex Duarte.

The **Walk & Ride Challenge** tasks participants, including teleworkers, to incorporate walking into their day and they were asked to record their steps. The top three teams for 2023 were from the employer American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (two teams) and The Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce. Individual participants also competed in weekly challenges to win prizes, including the “Bethesda Bucks” gift card. On **Car Free Day**, which was held September 22, 2023, there were 5,105 pledges by commuters to consider other transportation modes that day, a 26 percent increase over the previous year.

The **BTS Cool Commute Contest** was created in 2022 to encourage commuters to walk and bicycle to work during winter months. In 2024, due to the success of the Bethesda event, it was expanded to other areas in the County. Bethesda commuters submitted 24 photo entries of their walking and biking commutes to win gift certificates. Additionally, BTS worked with Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) to host a **Bicycle Safety Class** in downtown Bethesda, and partnered with a local bike shop to host a Bethesda **Community E-Bike Ride** in the spring of 2024.

Over the course of these various events, BTS usually assists over 2,000 commuters annually and places more than 25 people into carpools.

The BTS team collaborated with The Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce to partner with employers. The team connected with employers at several local Chamber events and meetings throughout the year to promote BTS services and secure new sponsors for BTS events. Each year, BTS nominates Bethesda employers to the Metropolitan Council of Governments, Commuter Connections Awards Ceremony for recognition of outstanding commuter benefits programs.

As part of the Developer Traffic Mitigation Agreements required by MCDOT, BTS provided transportation and commute information to commercial properties in Bethesda. BTS also assists Bethesda employers in filing their Transportation Demand Management Plans. BTS monitored pedestrian safety concerns associated with construction projects in Bethesda, and communicated the information to the public.

BTS worked with MCDOT and MDOT to promote several initiatives and updates in 2023-2024, including the County Bike Donation program, the County FareShare transit subsidy program, County-wide adult bicycle education classes, Ride On service changes, MDOT Purple Line updates and temporary Metro station closures near Silver Spring. BTS also helped promote Metro, parking and traffic updates.

BTS used direct mailing, emails, social media, an e-newsletter and their website to communicate with employers, commuters and property managers. BTS created an electronic “Bethesda Transportation Options” brochure for residential property managers highlighting downtown Bethesda transportation options.



### Bethesda Transportation Solutions Staff

Kristen Blackmon, Director  
 Marcus Johnson, Marketing & Outreach Manager  
 Allison Kemp, Customer Service

### BTS Advisory Committee

#### Nominated by The Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce:

Michael Catudal, Capital Business Collective  
 Juliana Stein, Barre3  
 Carla Young (Chair), The Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce

#### Nominated by the Western Montgomery County Citizens Advisory Board:

Thomas Clash, Bethesda, MD  
 Kevin Finn, Bethesda, MD  
 Steven Teitelbaum, Bethesda, MD

#### Appointed by BUP - Bethesda Employer with 50 or More Employees:

Sal Attanasio, Buchanan & Mitchell  
 Brian Goldblatt, The Donohoe Companies

#### Appointed by BUP - Bethesda Employer with Fewer than 50 Employees

John Antokas, Metro Transportation Management & Design  
 Claire Harshbarger, First National Bank

#### Non-Voting Members

James Carlson, Montgomery County Department of Transportation  
 Joseph Cox, National Institutes of Health  
 Commander Amy Daum, 2D Commander Montgomery County Police  
 Peter Fosselman, Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services Center  
 Dan Schlaff, Representing Bethesda Urban Partnership  
 Ifitin Thompson, Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission





# Bethesda

URBAN PARTNERSHIP

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