BACKGROUND

The Ballston BID Service District was approved by the Arlington County Board in December 2010 and the Ballston BID was approved in August 2011 to operate under a service agreement with Arlington County from July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2016. The Ballston BID provides a range of services, events and activities that are supplemental to those already provided by Arlington County, for the benefit of commercial property owners within the District.

The Ballston Business Improvement Corporation, Inc. is a 501(c)(6) organization. The BID is governed by a Board of Directors who are elected or appointed to represent commercial property owners; tenants; cultural and recreational interests; educational, science, and/or technology interests. The Board of Directors has also established several standing and other committees to accomplish the goals of the organization and deliver the BID services described in this plan. These committees include: Finance; Governance; Strategic Planning; Marketing and Branding; Mobility/Urban design; and a Property Managers Group.

PROGRAM FOCUS SUMMARY by FISCAL YEAR

FY12- CEO search/hire; Strategic Plan; Brand Research and Development; Placemaking Plan Development; Operations Set-up.

FY13- Brand Launch, LaunchPad Program & Challenge with Ted Leonsis, Website Design and Launch, Began implementation of Placemaking Plan- median landscape for Fairfax Drive, public Wi-Fi, and art (planning); digital statues and holiday lights on Wilson (implemented). Created 1st Thursday Mega Market with music, themed vendors and beer/wine garden to augment the Farmers’ market. Also, elevated status of Taste of Arlington to become a family-friendly food festival.

FY14- LaunchPad Program & Challenge Finale, Ballston Restaurant Challenge with Mike Isabella, Placemaking beautification and enhancements to our neighborhood-including parking & gateway signage and wayfinding (planning stages), public art series, metro canopy art project, mobile application design & launch, virtual ambassador program launch, public Wi-Fi hotspots and median beautification projects (implemented).

FY15- Review and revisions to Strategic Plan; Continued implementation of marketing and placemaking projects. Additional features and functionality for website, mobile application, submit proposals to County for banner and gateway signage programs, begin planning stage for wayfinding program, public art series (implemented), metro canopy art project (underway for March 2015), launch series of programs focused on tenant retention (January 2015).
BUDGET

Arlington County approved a rate for CYs 2011-15 of $0.045 per $100 of assessment value for each non-residential, commercial property located within the District. The BID may accept voluntary contributions from tax-exempt properties to show support of the Ballston BID activities and programs. For the FYs ending June 30, the funding received from commercial property tax assessments within the District:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FY</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Tax Rate*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>$1,241,759</td>
<td>.045</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013A</td>
<td>1,482,632</td>
<td>.045</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014B</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
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<td>2016</td>
<td>1,563,000</td>
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* Tax rate is per $100 of assessed value
A- Represents a 19.4% increase in assessed property values per Arlington County Department of Management and Finance.
B- 2.84% increase over FY13.
C- 2.64% increase over FY14.
D- estimating a 1.5% increase over FY15

In addition to the tax assessed funding, BID staff raises funds to supplement the budget through cash and in-kind sponsorships and tickets sales for our programs and events which primarily include Taste of Arlington but also include our Farmers Market, Property Managers Group, and other special programs such as the LaunchPad and Restaurant Challenges. These funds totaled an additional $442,000 and $240,000 for the FYs 14 & 13, respectively.
VISION

Our vision for Ballston is to create a leading business district that attracts, supports and connects the most creative, compelling and ambitious minds in the region.

MISSION

The Ballston BID will imagine and implement innovative programs, partnerships and collaborations that bring people together, create a sense of community and strengthen the economic vitality of our businesses and commercial partners.

STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVES

- Increase focus on collecting, managing and sharing data about what makes Ballston unique and how the BID is driving results.

- Place greater emphasis on the various touch-points for each of our customer categories- commercial tenants, retailers, employees, brokers, visitors, and residents.

- Develop programming geared toward tenant retention and targeting Ballston employees to help them learn, connect and grow.

- Revise the operational structure of the BID to maximize staff’s talent, time and attention on the right, high impact, strategic projects.

Please see the FY15-18 Strategic Plan for a detailed outline of our objectives and action steps we are taking to meet the strategic plan objectives.
FY16 PROGRAMS AND OPERATIONS
The Ballston BID has 3 program budget areas that have assigned action steps to ensure each organizational goal will be achieved: Branding and Marketing; Physical Enhancements (Placemaking); and Management, Finance and Administration. For each area, we have outlined the accomplishments made to date and discuss the steps we will take in FY16.

BRANDING & MARKETING

Notable Metrics from June 30, 2013 to Oct 31, 2014:

- Taste of Arlington event occurs each May. From 2012 – 14 we had dramatic increases in attendance from 12,000 to 20,000 to this year over 35,000 people. Restaurant participation also increased from 32 to nearly 50 restaurants from all over Arlington. We conduct a survey of patrons for Taste – the event overall rated a 5.3 out of a possible 6 points for FY13 and a 5.4 for FY14 - with most people being very satisfied with the program.

- Ballston Farmer’s Market from May to October- FRESHFARM Markets manages the market for us and attracts high quality vendors to participate. We’ve seen increasing number of patrons, week after week. We also established a MEGAMarket for the first Thursday of each month that includes art, music, tastings, and now a Beer/Wine Pavilion. This venue has also been a wonderful way for us to launch our temporary public art projects- with a built in audience at the market and then augmenting features of a regular market, we are able to cross-promote each program using the events.

- Sponsored and/or hosted over 150 programs and events from May 2012 to present. We focused on activities that will further establish Ballston as a center for research, technology, creativity and imagination and/or promote connectivity among those who live, work and play here in Ballston.

- Held or presented at over 300 meetings to introduce the BID, its mission, and provide updates on our progress to members of the Arlington County Board, Arlington County Staff, local and regional press, community groups, property owners, tenants, commercial brokers and Arlington non-profit organizations.

- Represented the BID at over 150 industry events in NoVa, the District of Columbia and Maryland.
  - Over 120 Earned Media stories (TV, Magazine, Newspapers) about Ballston and the BID’s programs, events and activities.
  - Twitter Followers- 795 to 2,324 Followers; nearly a 300% increase and over 29% of our Tweets are Re-tweeted- a much higher than average rate.
  - FaceBook Likes- 300 to 2,588 Likes; a 862% increase and a reach of over 12,000 views per day
  - Enews- Biweekly newsletter is distributed to over 8,000 subscribers
  - Website- averaging 30,000 page views per month
Programs and Activities for FY2015/16 – and through FY18

We will continue outreach to increase awareness of Ballston and the brand, however, our focus will be on making closer connections among the commercial tenants and the employees who work here in Ballston.

- **Ballston Tenant/Employee Events** - This program will aim at creating a successful series of events that targets Ballston employees and help them learn, connect and grow. These events include regular networking events, as well as partnering with and promoting organizations to bring exclusive and compelling programs to Ballston. Over the next 1-3 years, we plan to touch every tenant/employee in every building in some way- whether it be hosting breakfast in the lobby or sending an ice cream cart around to each building just to say “we appreciate you” while passing out treats and information about what’s happening in the community.

- **Customer Focused Programs & Events** – In addition to the above program for Ballston employees, we will design and implement programs tailored for our other customers, including retailers, brokers, visitors, and residents.

- **Success Criteria, Variables and Data Project** - This project will clarify success criteria for the BID and tracking, managing and sharing data around key variables.

- **Organizational Capability & Connections Project** - We will conduct market research in Ballston, including tenant interviews, to gain a deeper understanding of what organizations are actually in the community and what their needs are.

- **Digital Content Strategy** - This project will create a clear strategy and operational guidelines for all digital content (web, mobile, social, etc.). This includes looking at potentially shifting the messaging of digital properties (website) from being “BID” focused to being more “Ballston” focused.
  - **Dark Fiber** – This represent an amazing asset for Arlington/Ballston. We will create a coordinated plan for promoting the dark fiber services available.
  - **User Experience Audit** - Based on our new customer definitions, this project will take a comprehensive look at the user experience for each type of customer in order to develop insights and possible steps to take for improvement and increased engagement.
  - **Social Media** - We will continue to concentrate on expanding our social media reach via Twitter and Facebook with a goal of 3,000 and 4,000 Followers/Likes, respectively and increased engagement around regular promotions, contests, etc.

- **Taste of Arlington** – Our last Taste in May 2014 hosted a record 35,000+ visitors. We partnered with and made a donation of $10,600.00 to the Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC) (May 2013 we donated $7,500.00). We added several new features to this event (Kidzone stage, BarkPark, VIP Pavilion, and expanded footprint) to make it more pleasant for our sponsors and participants and we will further increase the quality of the event to maintain our standing as the Premier Family Food Festival of our region. We will maintain this level of quality for 2015 and enhance each area of the event such as the Kidzone,
Barkpark, Concert stage and Beer/Wine Pavilion, VIP Pavilion, and of course the restaurant tasting experience.

- **Taste of Arlington Transition Project** - Taste of Arlington, while a valuable program for Ballston, takes up a tremendous amount of internal resources. This project will focus on developing a transition plan that could include hiring a staff person to focus solely on all aspects of this event and possibly having Taste of Arlington become a separate 501(c)(3) organization as a related party to the BID. This organization (under the overall management of the BID) could then market the event as a public charity as well as pursue additional funding resources such as grants.

- **PR/Media Relations** - As shown in the metrics above, this program has been highly successful and has brought consistent, positive attention to Ballston and the BID’s programs, activities and amenities including major, special events. We will continue our media relations program to build on the momentum and exposure we’ve gained over the last two years.

**PHYSICAL ENHANCEMENTS**

Notable accomplishments from BID inception to date:

- Created a Mobility/Urban Design Committee of the Board of Directors to oversee all placemaking projects and completed placemaking plan for Ballston.
- Took responsibility for maintenance and beautification of the medians on Fairfax Drive and Wilson Boulevard. Cleaned up medians and installed winter lights along Wilson from Dec 13 to March 14. Implemented new, dramatic landscaping program on Fairfax Drive in summer 2014.
- Completed streetscape furniture and tree pit guide for Ballston. Implemented trash can/recycling bin purchase program for BID members.
- Completed series of 6 temporary and 2 permanent (Ballston Walking Tour and Ballston Music for Landscapes App) Tech-Art projects under our “Public Displays of Innovation” program.
- Wi-Fi Hotspots - Installed 8 Wi-Fi hotspots with more coming. Our goal is to create the most free Wi-Fi coverage possible while in Ballston.
- Mobile application - Phase 1 completed in April 2014 with information about Ballston BID programs, community events, calendar, mapping, business directory, and “Ballston Voices” - the ability to record comments about experiences in Ballston. Phase 2 completed in September 2014 included the technology we created for the digital statue, expanding its use to create our “Virtual Ambassador” program. This program is being deployed throughout the neighborhood via a series of markers that one can scan to discover the history, the programs and events, the public art, etc. in Ballston.
Placemaking Projects for FY16

• **Ballston Metro Canopy Temporary Light-Art Installation** – We’ve been working in collaboration with Arlington Public Art and the Arts Commission, the planning and design stages for this project are nearly complete. This will be an interactive light art installation with LEDs and motion sensors installed in the 133 panels of the canopy. Installation is planned for Spring 2015 with maintenance to be conducted during FY16.

• **Digital Statue** – We launched a mobile version of the digital statue at the 2013 Taste of Arlington; we plan to redeploy the mobile version through a series of events and then continue to research, design and possibly install an “art kiosk” in FY16. This will be a temporary installation in Ballston to highlight Ballston employees, their creativity and accomplishments.

• **Virtual Ambassador Program** – We launched this program in FY15 and will add content and more categories for people to explore, get involved and learn more about Ballston. Each BID member building will have a marker that, via our mobile app, will provide users with information about the building, history, companies and/or employees who work there- this can be in the form of video, audio, web links or simply text. The mobile page will be tailored for each customer. For example, a marker could show an employee who works in the building talking about why they love Ballston and why they love working here.

• **Mobile Application** – We will conduct user surveys and roundtables to continue to add features and functionality to encourage those who work, live and visit Ballston to use the app on a daily basis. For example, daily push notifications about what is happening in Ballston today, restaurant specials, contests, polls etc.

• **Wi-Fi Program** – We will explore opportunities with Arlington County to bring public Wi-Fi to the entire neighborhood, possibly using the ConnectArlington/Dark Fiber resources. While we research that possibility, we will continue to implement hot spots in public places.

• **Banners** – We completed the research, design, and cost analysis for fabricating, installing and maintaining light-box and digital banners for Ballston. We will submit our banner application for approval with the county to install banners under a phased plan throughout Ballston during FY15 and plan to begin installation in FY16.

• **Smart Wayfinding** – We are currently researching possible designs for a smart wayfinding kiosk to supplement the County’s designs for signage under the approved wayfinding plan. For example, we are looking at augmenting the designated kiosk with replacing the static map (a sticker that can be replaced as desired) with an electronic, touchscreen interactive map that is updated constantly as part of a system that will send a completed itinerary for you to your phone or tablet- where your meeting is, where you can have lunch, what time your bus home will leave, etc. We will also make suggestions to updating the wayfinding plan since the plan is several years old.
• **Median Landscaping and Maintenance** – We will continue to maintain the medians and landscaping on Fairfax Drive and Wilson Boulevard as well as provide winter lights on Wilson. We also plan to submit a plan to the County for approval to replace the hardscape (curbs/brick areas) for the medians on Fairfax Drive in order to finalize our dramatic designs for this street.

• **Farmers’ Market** – Will continue to run the market every Thursday, May through November. We will renew our MOU with FRESHFARM Markets to operate our Farmers’ market and maintain the highest quality. We will also continue to expand and upgrade the MEGAMarket on the first Thursday of each month, to expand the market offerings and broaden our reach to workers and residents.

**MANAGEMENT, FINANCE and ADMINISTRATION**

• **Strategic Plan** - During FY14 and 15, we evaluated our progress on our original strategic plan and modified our strategy going forward for FYs 16-18. A copy of the plan is provided as an attachment to the document for you. The programs described in this document were formulated in support of the new plan.

• **Retail Group Project** - Retailers help to create and define a neighborhood. This project will focus on setting up a retail advisory group that will meet on a regular basis to discuss issues and design and implement programs in support of our retailers.

• **Resident Property Integration Outreach Project** - This project will focus on creating a coordinated outreach plan that works towards getting residential partners onboard to financially support the BID’s efforts. This would ideally involve expanding the boundaries of the BID to include apartment properties as BID members. The BID will provide an implementation strategy as well as the schedule of augmented/accelerated and additional programs that would result from their participation. We will work closely with AED and the County Manager’s office to evaluate this possibility as well as to determine what form and rate of implementation might occur should apartments be invited to join to the BID.

• **Internship Program** - This project creates a formalized internship program that will allow the BID to shift some of our limited resources from operational tasks to those focused on new value creation. We are working to establish programs with Marymount University, George Washington University and/or George Mason University.