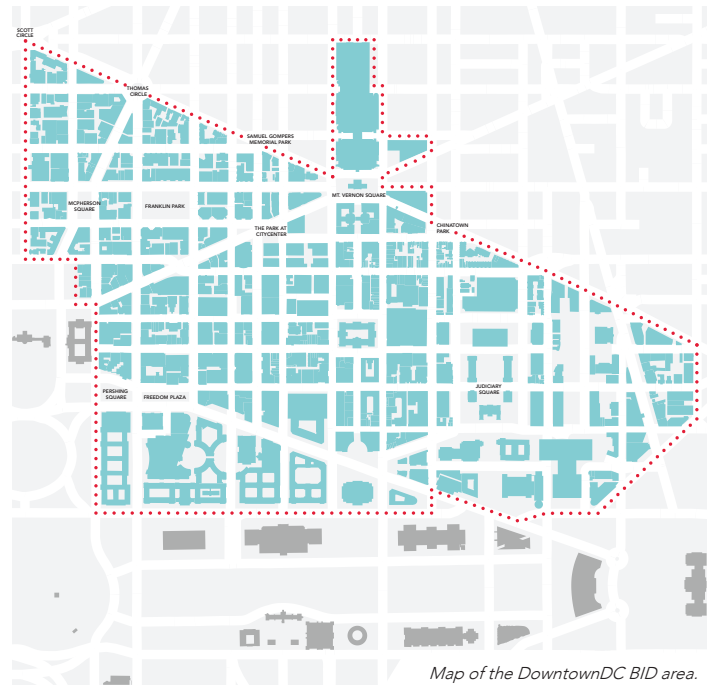


OPPORTUNITY PROFILE

# Director of Planning and Placemaking

DowntownDC Business Improvement District



Map of the DowntownDC BID area.

## Overview

The DowntownDC Business Improvement District (BID) is searching for its next Director of Planning and Placemaking. Reporting to the President/CEO, this position is responsible for improving, activating, and reimagining the public realm throughout the BID’s square mile of downtown D.C., including its 24 acres of parks and plazas, sidewalks, streets, alleys, gateways, and other open spaces.

The Director of Planning and Placemaking plays a vital, highly visible role as the BID’s primary liaison to the executive and legislative branches of the District of Columbia government, the federal government, property owners, businesses, residents, and other stakeholders on all matters related to public space beautification and activation, transportation/mobility, and infrastructure. The Director leads a team of BID staff and consultants to fulfill its goal of making downtown D.C. a vibrant, thriving space by conducting relevant studies, developing and disseminating planning documents, designing and implementing plans to improve public spaces, and regularly engaging the community and BID stakeholders for input.

This important role comes online during a pivotal moment as downtown D.C. and other urban central business districts adapt to a “new normal” due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and develop strategies to thrive. The ideal candidate must be a visionary, future-forward leader who is prepared to offer policy and planning guidance that will shape the public realm and economic viability of downtown D.C. for years to come.

The full job description may be viewed online at [bit.ly/DTDCplanningdirector](https://bit.ly/DTDCplanningdirector).

To succeed in this role, one must have:

- A **passion** for downtowns and urban livability and a desire to see continuous improvement in the public realm.
- A natural **inclination** to see what is possible and to drive/shape/transform underused or inactive spaces to make them more safe, attractive, and vibrant.
- Expert-level **knowledge** of how cities work and a fundamental **understanding** and **appreciation** of how and why people experience and value public spaces.
- A strong **commitment** to meaningful community engagement and racial and ethnic diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- An **ability** to forge strong working relationships and effectively communicate with a wide range of stakeholders.

## About DowntownDC BID

Founded in 1997, the DowntownDC BID is a private nonprofit organization that leverages private- and public-sector resources and leadership to drive initiatives, partner with the District and federal governments, and convene stakeholders to ensure that D.C.’s downtown is clean, safe, economically strong, and welcoming.

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→ *About DowntownDC BID, cont'd*

When the BID was established as the city's first, and largest, place-management organization, downtown D.C.'s built environment, public spaces, and economy lagged in comparison with its suburban counterparts. Facing a fiscal crisis, the District government passed legislation to allow the creation of business improvement districts to complement and enhance government services.

By focusing on the quality of place, improving the public environment, and creating welcoming spaces, the BID helped set the stage for economic growth, attracting new investments, development, and jobs into the downtown area. In 1995, downtown D.C. was littered with 125 vacant lots; today, only seven development sites remain.

During the 25 years that the BID has been in existence, the District's downtown has seen an immense transformation, becoming a fully built-out neighborhood with world-class, welcoming public spaces, office buildings and hotels, Michelin-starred restaurants, improved connectivity, growing residential options, and a thriving cultural and entertainment scene. The DowntownDC BID has been a significant catalyst in this change.

## The DowntownDC BID has been a significant catalyst in the immense transformation of the District's downtown over the past quarter-century.

Through its work serving the downtown D.C. community, the BID has been recognized regionally, nationally, and internationally for its forward-thinking homeless services efforts, park management, Safety/Hospitality and Maintenance (SAMs) ambassador program, and more. As a unique and exemplary BID, it has built community through events and activations, created a care infrastructure through its homeless services and outreach programs, and fostered a space for thought leadership by bringing instrumental partners to the table with a common goal of building a more sustainable, resilient, and connected downtown.

Over the past 25 years, the BID has evolved from its initial focus on the fundamentals of place management to playing an integral role in building a city where people, places, and businesses thrive.



*Black on the Block market event at Franklin Park in DowntownDC.*

## Planning & Placemaking Highlights



The BID's public-space efforts take many forms, and the organization's numerous successes in downtown have occurred at every scale, including, over the past 10 years:

- ★ Leading the decade-long effort to reimagine and revitalize **Franklin Park**, a National Park Service property that, at nearly 5 acres, is the largest, and best-used, DowntownDC green space. Thanks to a first-of-its-kind agreement between the District and the National Park Service, the BID now maintains and manages this beautiful, vital public amenity, which reopened in September 2021.
- ★ Developing a **recommended planting palette** for property owners and managers to utilize, adding vibrancy and color to the neighborhood. Additionally, the BID designed and gained approval for a signature custom planter and seating element to beautify public space, soften the urban environment, and enhance DowntownDC's identity.
- ★ Supporting and activating the District Department of Transportation's **Open Streets** event, which closed 1.5 miles of 7th Street NW and allowed residents and visitors to enjoy the space free of automobiles.

*Continued on page 3* →

→ *Planning & Placemaking Highlights, cont'd*

- ★ Implementing placemaking initiatives in parks and open spaces throughout DowntownDC with the introduction of **movable furniture** (chairs, tables, umbrellas) and new plantings.

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- ★ Working with downtown businesses to obtain permits to facilitate **outdoor dining** and takeout in public space during the pandemic, a lifeline for many businesses.

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- ★ Supporting the redevelopment of Pershing Park into the beautiful **World War I Memorial**.

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- ★ Developed the **"Plants of Indiana"** installation at Indiana Plaza (7th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue NW) in partnership with the National Park Service and the Indiana Society of Washington, D.C. The temporary planters featured flora native to Indiana and featured plaques with botanical information for passersby.



## Opportunities

Among the important DowntownDC projects the Director of Planning and Placemaking will manage or have a significant role in are the following:

- ★ Implementing the recommendations of the BID-led **Gallery Place – Chinatown Corridor Study**, which focuses on the central part of DowntownDC between 6th and 9th Streets and Pennsylvania Avenue and New York Avenue. This soon-to-be-released report seeks to elevate Gallery Place as the cultural and entertainment center for the national capital region.

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- ★ Implementing the BID-developed **Parks Master Plan**, which will be released soon. This document creates a vision for new and enhanced park spaces throughout DowntownDC that meet the needs of the community.



*The 5-acre Franklin Park is maintained and managed by the BID.*



*The BID recently partnered with stakeholders to imagine the next evolution of the Gallery Place – Chinatown Corridor.*

- ★ In partnership with stakeholders, the District government, and others, leading a strategic **Downtown Action Agenda** that will create a bold, new five-year implementation plan for key investments and initiatives in DowntownDC.

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- ★ Working with the District Department of Transportation on the **K Street Transitway** project, an upcoming construction effort that will reconfigure one of the city's major east-west corridors with vast improvements to benefit bus riders, cyclists, pedestrians, and motorists.

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- ★ Working with the National Capital Planning Commission on its **Pennsylvania Avenue Initiative**, which seeks to transform Washington's most famous street into a more pedestrian-friendly and signature outdoor venue that could attract and support major national and international events, contributing to the local economy.

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- ★ Assisting the BID's work with the District government, property owners, and others in **office-to-residential** conversion efforts.



## Challenges

## 138 BLOCK AREA

Every place-management organization faces difficulties — especially now as cities begin to recover from the pandemic. Significant issues within DowntownDC include:

- ★ Current economic activity is half of what it was in late 2019.
- ★ An office vacancy rate of almost 20%, with commercial office space accounting for 76% of the BID's available square footage.
- ★ A weekly office return-to-office rate of around 37%, lower than elsewhere in D.C.
- ★ The demise of retail and dining businesses that depended significantly on office worker foot traffic.
- ★ An increased presence of individuals experiencing homelessness and people sleeping overnight throughout downtown.
- ★ A subway system suffering from underinvestment and a precipitous loss in ridership due to the pandemic.

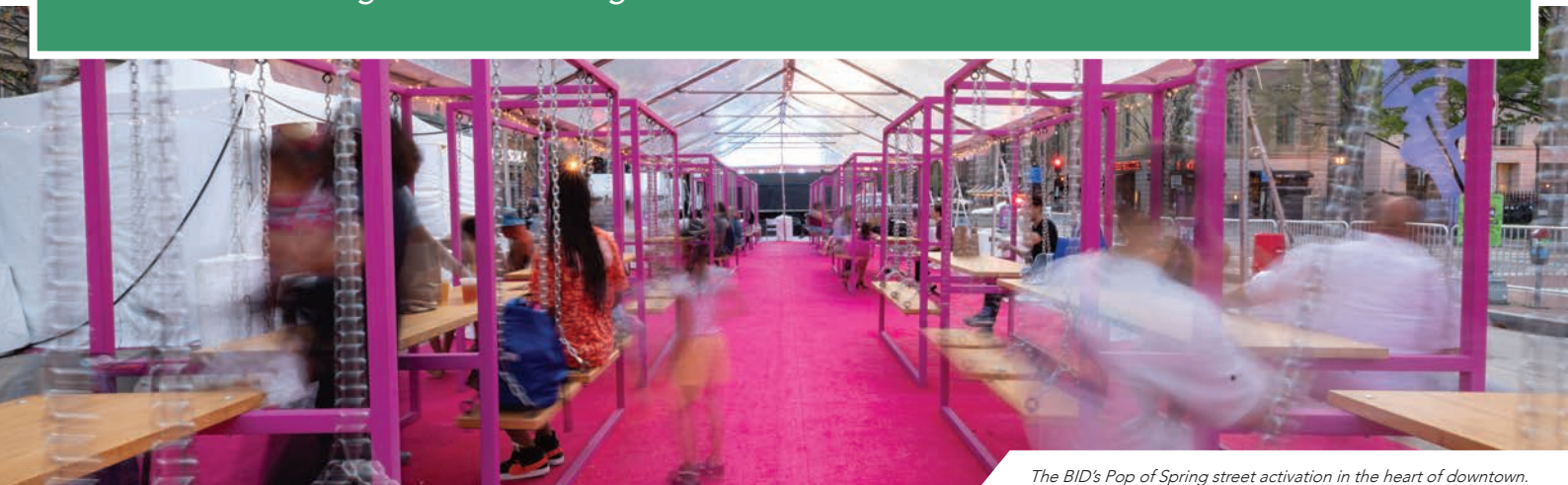


**7** METRO STATIONS SERVING ALL LINES **24** ACRES OF PARKS AND OPEN SPACE



**Applications must be received by September 9, 2022**, to ensure maximum consideration. To apply, please email a copy of your résumé and cover letter detailing your relevant experience to [adminjobs@downtowndc.org](mailto:adminjobs@downtowndc.org).

Please send documents in **PDF format** and email with the subject line *"Director of Planning and Placemaking – Your First Name and Last Name"*; for example: *Director of Planning and Placemaking – John Doe*.



*The BID's Pop of Spring street activation in the heart of downtown.*