



2014 Annual Report

Introduction

In 2013, The BLVD Association (Association) partnered with the City to establish the Downtown Lancaster Property and Business Improvement District (PBID), the first-ever district of its kind in the City of Lancaster. Through this effort, the downtown area's previous business district was transformed from an entity that generated approximately \$25,000 annually into an organization with more than \$260,000 in resources to promote the BLVD and help its member businesses thrive. The PBID was established for a five-year period, from January 1, 2014 through December 31, 2018.

As such, 2014 marked a year of transition for the BLVD Association. A new board was elected, incorporating a number of new property and business owners that had never before been involved with the organization. This board reflects the composition of the downtown district, with a wide variety of business and property owners representing uses from restaurants and retail to professional services and residential:

- **President:** Tim Anders, BeX
- **President-Elect:** Shirley Griffiths, Panache
- **Past President:** S. Jill Cooper, AV Bank
- **Treasurer:** Erica Allbee, All About Fitness
- **Secretary:** Chenin Dow, City of Lancaster
- Adam Chant, Vintage Styles Now
- Steve Eglash, InSite Development
- Sharon Giannini, Giannini's Bistro & Grill
- Justin Lane, Monte Vista Properties
- Myrle McLernon, MDM Architects & Kinetic Brewing Co.
- Valerie Orcutt, Bella West
- Robert Turner, Aven's Fine Home Furnishings
- Shandelyn Williams, Antelope Valley Union High School District

These active and engaged individuals worked throughout 2014 to set priorities for the organization, hire the needed staff, and identify and initiate programs and services to meet the needs of the downtown area.

The PBID's budget and governance is separated into three distinct categories: Clean & Safe, Marketing & Promotions, and Administration & Advocacy. Each of these categories is guided by a committee comprised of board members and other interested members of the Association. Below is a summary of the activities for each in 2014.

Clean & Safe

The Clean & Safe Committee identified two major areas on which to focus in 2014: maintenance and security. The downtown district's needs in these two areas are being addressed via the services of Desert Haven Enterprises and the newly-created "BLVD Patrol."

Desert Haven Enterprises

The Association engaged the services of local nonprofit Desert Haven Enterprises to conduct cleanup and beautification efforts throughout the downtown district. Two Desert Haven crews, dubbed “Clean Teams,” work daily Monday through Friday to ensure the general cleanliness and aesthetic appeal of the BLVD. Services include removing trash and debris, assisting with landscaping, sweeping, cleaning street furniture, and more. Teams work on Lancaster Boulevard as well as all side streets throughout the BLVD district. These services augment the City of Lancaster’s previously existing maintenance services on the BLVD.



Desert Haven Clean Team Hard at Work

The BLVD Patrol

The Association also contracted with member business Security Defenders to launch the BLVD Patrol, a private security and ambassador program for the downtown district. The BLVD Patrol serves to not only augment the security of the BLVD, but also to act as ambassadors who can assist patrons as they frequent downtown destinations. As crime statistics and member feedback alike illustrate that the BLVD is already a very safe area, the BLVD Patrol focuses on minor quality-of-life issues and customer engagement.

Marketing & Promotions

The Association’s substantially increased budget permitted the organization to engage in significantly expanded marketing and promotions efforts in 2014, as summarized below.

Advertising

Advertising for the BLVD encompassed a wide range of media in 2014. The Association contracted with a variety of local agencies to attract patrons to the downtown district, with advertising encompassing newspaper, direct mail, radio, billboards, television, and social media. In addition, the Association worked with AV Web Designs to completely redesign the Association website, www.theblvdlanaster.com.



Direct Mail Piece

Events

The Association continued to participate in the City of Lancaster’s annual “Celebrate Downtown Lancaster” event series and organize its own annual events, as well as launching two brand-new ones and partnering with the City’s Lancaster Museum of Art and History (MOAH) to begin a third.

City Events

The Association continued to support the City’s major downtown special events, including:

- Streets of Lancaster Grand Prix
- Celebrate America on the BLVD
- BooLVD Halloween and Harvest Festival
- A Magical BLVD Christmas
- Weekly Farmers' Markets

Wedding on the BLVD

2014 marked the second year of the "Wedding on the BLVD," an event which aims to highlight the wide variety of special event-oriented businesses located downtown. The promotion kicked off in January, when the Association worked in partnership with the Antelope Valley Fair to invite local engaged couples to enter to win a comprehensive wedding package at the Fair's annual Bridal Show. From a pool of more than two dozen contestants, Oswaldo Gonzalez and Jazmin Petty were selected. Every aspect of their wedding, from the gown and bachelor party to the reception venue and photography, was provided



Wedding on the BLVD Photo by Sutton Photography

by a different BLVD business. Each week, the public had the opportunity to vote on these items – for example, choosing the reception meal and bride's hairstyle. Thus, each sponsor had the opportunity to showcase their merchandise and services to the public. An extensive marketing campaign accompanied this promotion, and more than two dozen businesses participated.

Art Walk

In partnership with the Lancaster Museum of Art and History (MOAH), the Association launched a monthly Art Walk event. Held in conjunction with the Farmers' Market during the warmer months, this event transforms the BLVD into a walking museum/art gallery by showcasing and selling the works of local artists in businesses throughout the downtown district. This event aims to attract new patrons downtown while supporting the local art community.

Small Business Saturday

2014 also marked the first Small Business Saturday event hosted by the BLVD Association. To capitalize on the national campaign organized by American Express, the Association organized a street fair-style event on the BeX Patio. This event featured displays illustrating the goods and services available at businesses throughout the downtown district, a raffle for gift certificates from dozens of different downtown businesses, giveaways to the first 250 shoppers, and special one-day-only lunch menus at downtown restaurants for just \$5.

BLVD Gifts of Health & Beauty

To kick off the holiday season, the Association once again hosted "BLVD Gifts of Health & Beauty." This event features health and beauty-oriented specials, gifts and discounts from a variety of downtown businesses. Nearly 20 businesses participated in this year's event.

Music of the Season Choral Showcase

In December, the Association held its third annual Music of the Season Choral Showcase. Local high school choirs were invited to perform on the Bandstand Stage in front of BeX, with each receiving a \$500 donation for their choral programs in return for their performances. This event achieved two key goals: supporting musical education in the Antelope Valley, and also drawing participants, families, and friends downtown during the height of the holiday shopping season.

Santa's Village

Throughout late November and December, the Association hosted its inaugural Santa's Village. Held at the historic Western Hotel Museum, this new event featured photos with Santa, as well as a different holiday-themed movie each night. Santa's Village operated every Friday and Saturday from Small Business Saturday through Christmas, with movies ranging from classic favorites like *A Christmas Story* and *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation* to newer hits such as *Elf* and *Frozen*. Approximately 200 families had photos taken throughout the six-night event, with still more attending to view the movies. In all, an estimated 1,500 people visited Santa's Village during its inaugural year.



Santa and his Elves

Gift Certificate Program

The Association launched its first-ever comprehensive, downtown-wide gift certificate program just in time for the 2014 holiday season. Valid at more than 30 participating downtown businesses, gift certificates can be purchased in person at Aven's Fine Home Furnishings or online at www.theblvdlanaster.com/gift.

Administration & Advocacy

The third component of the PBID budget and governance is Administration & Advocacy. This category encompasses the administration of Clean & Safe and Marketing & Promotions programs, as well as community involvement and representation.

Staffing

Once established, one of the PBID's first tasks was to hire a full-time Executive Director to manage the day-to-day operations of the Association and work with Board Members to implement the programs and initiatives of the Clean & Safe and Marketing & Promotions Committees. A recruitment was conducted in early 2014, with the selected candidate hired in May.

Advocacy and Community Involvement

The BLVD Association, including its new Executive Director as well as participating Board Members, has joined and/or increased its involvement in local trade organizations such as the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce and the Antelope Valley Board of Trade.

Activities & Budget for Fiscal Year 2015

Proposed Activities for 2015

The BLVD Association will continue to provide services in each budget category as outlined below. No changes are proposed to the existing Management District Plan, adopted by the Lancaster City Council in July 2013.

Clean & Safe

Cleaning and maintenance services will continue to be provided by Desert Haven Enterprises, while the BLVD Patrol will continue to serve as customer ambassadors and security. Additionally, the Clean & Safe Committee plans to engage in efforts to further enhance the aesthetic appeal and utility of the downtown area by procuring and installing bike racks, restoring existing murals, and working to obtain sponsorships and/or grants to install new murals and other public art.

Marketing & Promotions

The Association will continue to engage in a comprehensive advertising campaign utilizing a wide variety of media. The organization also plans to continue to participate in City-sponsored special events and organize its own events to attract patrons downtown, including Small Business Saturday, Santa's Village, and several others.

Administration & Advocacy

The Association will continue to provide an Executive Director to handle the day-to-day operations of the Association and serve as a liaison with its many members. Additionally, the Association will work to strengthen ties with like-minded businesses throughout the community by expanding its participation in local trade organizations, as well as participating in training activities to continue to enhance services to its members.

Finances

Assessment Formula

No changes are proposed to the PBID Assessment Formula, which is as follows:

Parcel Type	Lot Rate (per square foot)	Building Rate (per square foot)
Zone 1 (Frontage on Lancaster Boulevard)		
Commercial	\$0.08	\$0.16
Apartment Complexes	\$0.04	\$0.08
Zone 2 (All other areas within the PBID)		
Commercial	\$0.04	\$0.09
Apartment Complexes	\$0.02	\$0.045

The Association will seek sponsorships and/or grants for specified activities in 2015, such as the installation of new murals and public art. However, the amount of these contributions is not known at this time.

Estimated Cost of Proposed Activities for 2015

Administration & Advocacy	
Staffing	
Office	
Memberships	
Member Communication	
Registrations, Training & Travel	
Other	
Category Total	\$48,100.00
Clean & Safe	
Bike Racks	
Desert Haven	
Mural Restoration & Replacement	
BLVD Patrol	
Implementation & Coordination	
Other	
Category Total	\$80,180.00
Marketing & Promotions	
Advertising	
Events	
Printed Marketing Materials	
Partnerships	
Promotional Giveaways	
Implementation & Coordination	
Category Total	\$133,630.00
Contingency	\$5,345.40
Grand Total	\$267,255.40
Anticipated Revenue	\$267,269.82
Surplus	\$14.42

Surplus/Deficit

Because much of the Association's efforts in 2014 focused on setting up the PBID, hiring the needed staff, and identifying the needs of the downtown area, a surplus of \$95,425.49 will be carried over into 2015. This includes a sum of approximately \$40,000 that the PBID received from the previously existing BID upon its establishment. This cautious approach to spending will allow the Association the opportunity to make needed investments in the downtown area in 2015 while also maintaining a healthy reserve.