



Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Friendship Heights Alliance?

The Friendship Heights Alliance is a place management organization. It is a 501(c)6 nonprofit formed in 2021 to coordinate the place management efforts and programs in the Friendship Heights neighborhood on both sides of Western Avenue.

What do place management organizations do?

Place management organizations typically fund services that are a supplement to those already provided by the government, such as economic development, business support and promotion, public realm cleaning and maintenance, management of capital improvements, placemaking and streetscape enhancements, neighborhood marketing, events and brand management.

Place management organizations have a proven track record around the world of helping urban, mixed-use commercial districts meet these challenges. They are designed to bring private-sector creativity and ground-level expertise to Friendship Heights' evolution in collaboration with District and County partners.

How will the Friendship Heights Alliance be funded?

Since its inception, the Alliance has received grant funding from DSLBD and Montgomery County, as well as proportional private contributions from property owners on both sides of the DC and Maryland border. To create a sustainable and long-term funding stream, the Alliance is beginning a business improvement district formation process on the DC side, and an urban district formation process on the Maryland side.

What is a Business Improvement District (BID) funding model?

A BID is a funding mechanism in which property owners pay an additional assessment to support place management programs and community building within a defined area. BIDs are 501(c)6 nonprofit organizations with a board of directors and an executive director that are funded primarily through the tax but can also draw upon other public and private funding streams.

What is an Urban District Funding model?

Urban Districts are special taxing districts formed in mixed-use commercial areas of Montgomery County to increase the maintenance of the streetscape and its amenities; provide additional public amenities such as plantings, seating, shelters, and works of art; promote the commercial and residential interests of these areas; and program cultural and community activities.

What are the boundaries of the Friendship Heights Alliance?

The coverage area extends along the Wisconsin Avenue commercial corridor from Fessenden Street on the south to Oliver Street on the north – in other words, from Rodman's to Saks Fifth Avenue.

How will the Alliance be governed?

The Friendship Heights Alliance is a 501(c)(6) organization governed by a Board of Directors, elected by members on both sides of the DC and MD border. Property owners from both sides of the DC and MD border will comprise a majority of the board. Remaining members will include a balance of Maryland and DC business, non profit and community stakeholders. The board will shape the organization's programming priorities, provide financial oversight and hire a leaders and staff to carry out a collaboratively defined vision.

What are the benefits of the Alliance for the small business community?

Place management organizations like the Alliance have proven to be remarkably successful in supporting small businesses through collective marketing, networking opportunities, and public space improvements. In addition to supporting small businesses through joint

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marketing campaigns, economic development research, and placemaking services, these organizations have the nimbleness and flexibility to respond quickly to business concerns, to provide information and support as they navigate municipal issues, and to create opportunities for small businesses to make their voices heard around key decisions impacting a place.

What are the benefits of the Alliance for residential property owners?

The Friendship Heights Alliance will take a robust role in cultivating Friendship Heights' many overlapping ecosystems. It will help support a unique and thriving small business community and attract the office and retail tenants that are so necessary for creating daytime and nighttime vibrancy. In addition, the Alliance will focus on creating gathering places, creative cultural events, and community building programs to bring people together.

Is there public-sector oversight of the Alliance's activities?

Yes. In DC, the BID funding mechanism must be renewed every five years by a vote of property owners and review of the mayor. In Montgomery County, the Urban District funding model with the Friendship Heights Alliance will undergo annual appropriations reviews and a five-year renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding.

What types of properties will be included in the Friendship Heights Alliance and thereby subject to a special assessment?

In Maryland: All commercial property in the Urban District boundaries. Exempt properties include: residential rental properties with 4 or fewer dwelling units, all residential condos (no matter how many units), and any properties exempt from property taxes.

In DC: All real property in the Business Improvement District boundaries. Exempt properties include: residential properties with 4 or fewer dwelling units, residential rental properties that existed before July 1985, all residential condos (no matter how many units), and any properties exempt from property taxes.

How many place management organizations are there across the U.S.?

Currently, there are more than 2,500 place management organizations in North America, including more than 70 in New York City, 11 in Washington, D.C., three in Northern Virginia, and several in Baltimore.

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

The Friendship Heights Alliance's events and placemaking activities over the past year have helped create much-needed energy around our properties. For our company, being part of a place management organization makes business sense. It helps ensure the environment around our buildings is top-notch and amplifies our own marketing and tenant attraction efforts. For us, it's a win-win.

— JOHN ZIEGENHEIN, CHEVY CHASE LAND COMPANY

I see joining the Alliance as an investment in the future of Friendship Heights as one of the region's great places. The Alliance creates a framework for collaboration and information-sharing. As Friendship Heights continues to transform, coordination is more important than ever.

— NOLAN RODMAN, RODMAN'S FOOD & DRUG STORE

Decisions about where to shop, live, or lease an office are not just shaped by the quality of individual buildings or even businesses. It's all about the dynamism of the place, the sense of community, and the vibrancy of the public realm. By supporting the Friendship Heights Alliance, my company is investing in the future of the neighborhood.

— JAD DONOHOE, THE DONOHOE COMPANIES

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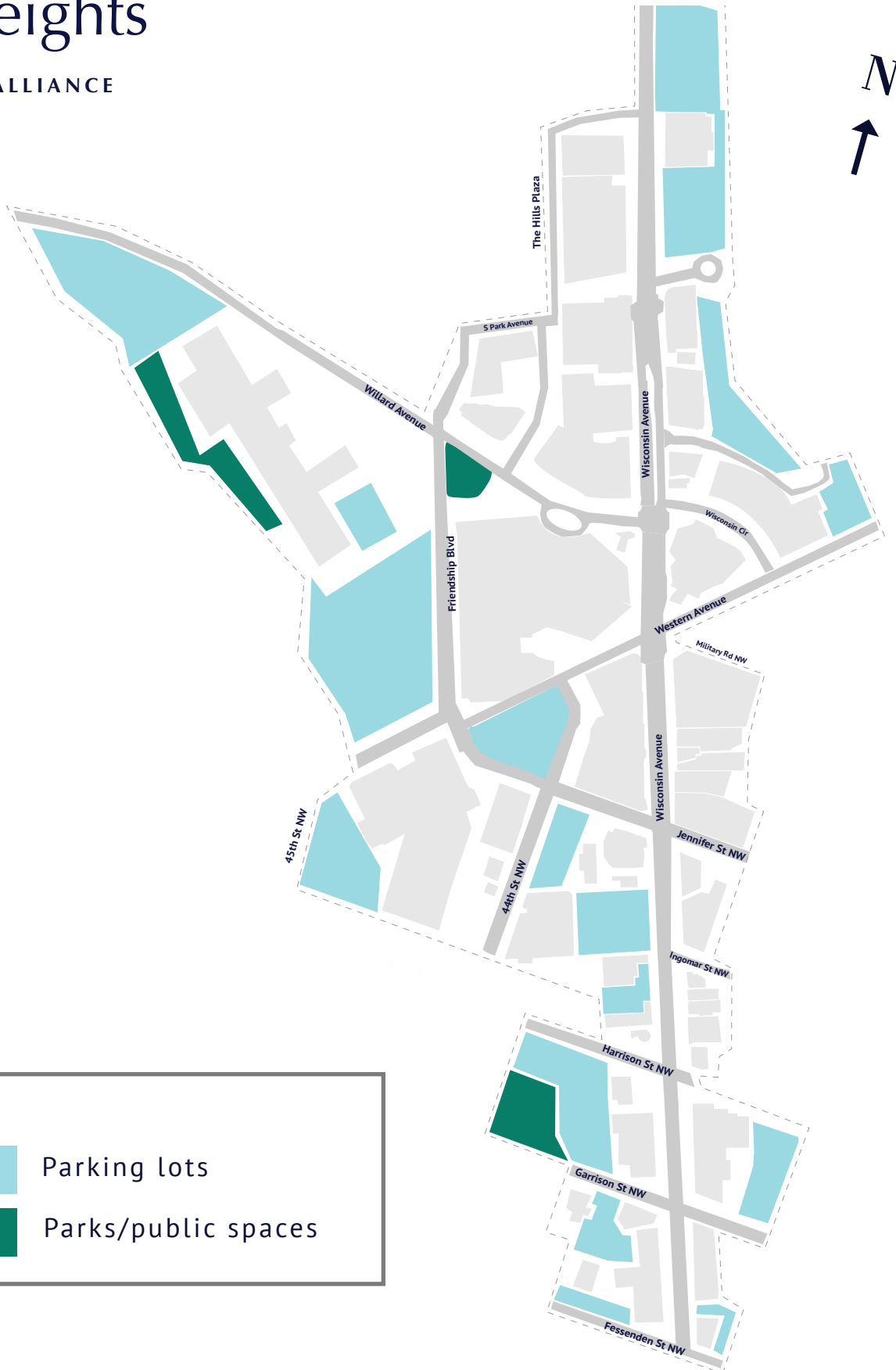
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Boundary Map



Friendship Heights

ALLIANCE



KEY



Parking lots



Parks/public spaces