



Friendship Heights

ALLIANCE

Frequently Asked Questions

About the Friendship Heights Alliance

The Friendship Heights Alliance (FHA) is a property owner collaborative focused on the transformation of Friendship Heights through placemaking, place branding and place-based economic development.

Why is this organization needed now?

In spring 2021, ULI Washington held a Technical Assistance Panel to strategically address concerns related to the area. The panel members, consisting of a multi-disciplinary team of 12 leading land planning and community development professionals, met for four-and-a-half days to consider a wide range of issues and opportunities, and subsequently offered many insightful observations and recommendations, affirming the growing consensus of a new vision and an emerging cooperative spirit [\[link to full plan\]](#) [\[link to full video of meeting\]](#).

One of the key strategic priorities noted by the ULI panel was to “Establish the Friendship Heights Alliance” as an organization to catalyze the needed initiatives. FHA is modeled on other regional organizations such as the Tysons Partnership. The organization was born out of the once-in-a-generation opportunity to come together around a new vision for the neighborhood, building on its significant strengths to become a dynamic, inclusive, walkable urban place.

What are the Friendship Heights Alliance’s guiding principles?

- Improving the public realm to make Friendship Heights more walkable and inviting
- Connecting the retail and public space experience to existing residents and neighbors
- Supporting more housing, including multifamily opportunities and affordable housing inclusivity
- Building a sense of place and diverse, inclusive connections to both DC and Maryland

What work will be done in the coming months?

Friendship Heights Alliance has embarked on a collaborative strategic planning process to guide the organization's agenda in shepherding the continuing transformation of the Friendship Heights area as a dynamic commercial marketplace and a livable urban place. Major property owners and other stakeholders recognize the need to collaborate around a new vision for the neighborhood and to build on its significant strengths to become a dynamic, inclusive, walkable urban place. The Alliance team is:

- Engaging a broad range of stakeholders through interviews, focus groups and surveys
- Conducting market research and economic data analysis
- Developing an interim brand/identity for Friendship Heights
- Planning a summer event and activation series
- Preparing for a business improvement district formation process

How is the organization currently governed?

The Friendship Heights Alliance is led by a Board of Directors that includes leaders from the Donohoe Companies, The Chevy Chase Land Company, Boston Properties, Tishman Speyer, Zuckerman Gravelly, Clarion Partners, Grosvenor, Federal Realty Investment Trust, Equity Residential, Carr Companies, Lenkin Co., Barings, and WMATA. As the organization evolves, more stakeholders will be added and an advisory committee will be formed.

How is the organization funded?

Currently, the Friendship Heights Alliance is funded through a grant from the Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD) and voluntary contributions from member property owners. The Alliance is in the process of building its funding base to include cross-jurisdictional funding.

Who is staffing the Friendship Heights Alliance?

Richard Bradley is the Executive Director of the Friendship Heights Alliance. Rachel L. Davis and Natalie Avery are leading community engagement, events strategy, branding, marketing, and research efforts. They are working with a range of partners, including the [Georgetown University Regional and Urban Planning program](#) and [The Social Life Project](#) to support and guide the organization's placemaking and strategy.

Are there plans for the Friendship Heights Alliance to become a Business Improvement District?

It is the intent of property owners and public sector partners that the Alliance is the first step towards the creation of a Business Improvement District (BID) to guide and sustain the programs and initiatives necessary to achieve a new vision for Friendship Heights.

What is a Business Improvement District?

A BID is a defined area within which entities volunteer to pay an additional tax in order to fund projects within the district's boundaries. BIDs are 501(c)6 nonprofit organizations with a board of directors and an executive director that are often funded primarily through the tax but can also draw upon other public and private funding streams. BIDs typically fund services that are in addition to those already provided by the government, such as street cleaning, additional security, management of capital improvements, public space activations and events, public realm coordination, placemaking, marketing, brand management, and construction of pedestrian and streetscape enhancements.

How many BIDs are there across the U.S.?

Currently, there are more than 2,500 BIDs or other 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. Montgomery County is in the process of creating its first BID in Silver Spring.

Contact Us:

For more information or to get involved, contact info@friendshipheightsalliance.org.