

**Friendship Heights
Transportation Management District
Advisory Committee
July 11, 2023**

Voting Members

Bob Banach	Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights
Afua Ofori	Polinger Co./Large Employer
Elizabeth Demetra Harris	Friendship Heights Village

Non-Voting Members

Sandra L. Brecher	MCDOT/Transportation Policy-Commuter Services
Peter Fosselman	B-CC Services Center

TMD Staff

Jim Carlson	MCDOT/Transportation Policy-Commuter Services
Nakengi Byrd	MCDOT/Transportation Policy-Commuter Services

Absent

Chief John Fitzgerald	Chevy Chase Village Police
Ahkecia Payne	GEICO

Guests

Natalie Avery	Friendship Heights Alliance
Jennifer Coursen	Chevy Chase Land Co.
Rachel Davis	Walnut Street Creative
Thomas Dant	Bethesda Urban District
Gary Erenrich	MCDOT
Larissa Klevan	M-NCPPC
Shelley Monique Mann	TMD Outreach
Julian Mansfield	Friendship Heights Village
David Proctor	TMD Outreach
Tom Quinn	ANC-3
Shannon Rovak	Town of Somerset
Jeffrey Slavin	Mayor – Town of Somerset

Item 1 & 2- Introductions/Agenda Review/Minutes: Jim Carlson called the meeting to order, and introductions followed. January and March meeting minutes were submitted for review.

Pete Fosselman explained the Montgomery County & DC partnership structure of the Friendship Alliance, reporting that Montgomery County funds the Alliance of \$300k budgeted in FY24 using an ad valorem tax to pay back funds. Four new Alliance board members were selected yesterday - two from the business community and two residential. **Mr. Fosselman** provides quarterly reports regarding FHA's progress.

Item 3 – Presentation, Friendship Center Redevelopment: Geoff Sharpe from Federal Realty Investment Trust (FRIT) reported on the new project redevelopment of Friendship Center, which contains Maggiano’s and the recently closed DSW, located at 5333 Wisconsin Avenue between Jennifer & Western Avenue. The building is between Chevy Chase Plaza & Chevy Chase Pavilion. He explained why the site is being redeveloped for residential units, due to changes in marketing trends with more neighborhood retail and no ‘big box’ stores or major shopping outlets. Also discussed:

- Mazza Gallery, which is located across the street from the site is also under redevelopment
- Traffic circulation around the site will have no curb cuts but underground parking and access to Metro
- The building will have multi-tiered level with green roofs and bays throughout the 310-unit site
- Multi-level parking garage will allow access for two properties in addition to the residential site, including Mazza Gallery as Nordstrom Rack will be converted into parking, adding 80 spaces to the 180 spaces for the 310 rental units
- The parking spaces are still tight for the market and are classified as technically over-parked as they are above the maximum mandated for the TDM program
- 130,000 square feet will be reduced to 13,000 for ground retail space for a coffee shop & bank
- To support DDOT, the TDM program includes EV charging, TDM marketing, a bike repair station, collapsible shopping carts and a telework business center for traffic mitigation efforts
- The project’s TDM plan will be shared with DDOT

Mr. Sharpe reported that the new residential project will be composed of renters mainly in their late 30s and will have 1- & 2-bedroom rental units. Although they will offer SmarTrip cards to access the redline, some residents will still use a car.

- It will be 18 months before construction begins and another two years to build – 4.5 years until fully occupied, thus the CSS’s e-cargo bike pilot would be concluded before project is completed
- Offering free SmarTrip cards and Capital Bikeshare coupons to incentivize residents to use Metro
- The need to obtain approvals from WMATA for deep underground digging to reinforce structure’s hi-rise
- Discussion regarding the investment challenges in Friendship Heights area and how other development in the area helps make the case for reinvestment
- There is a recent increase of parking that is pushing parking into nearby neighborhoods - Saturday charging in parking garages
- Parking fees support employer outreach, TMD traffic reduction and pedestrian safety efforts

Item 4 – Metro Update: Gary Erenrich announced that he is retiring August 1, 2023. He updated the Committee on Metro operations, explaining that the new fare structure that was implemented eliminates off-peak fare, making it affordable for those inside the beltway but more of a financial burden for those that travel long distances, such as riders coming from Shady Grove station. They will see a 70% increase in fares from \$3.85 to \$6.50.

- Ridership is on the increase with highest in Montgomery County since the pandemic
- Metro has implemented low-income program called Metro Lift for SNAP recipients, reducing fare to 50% for those that qualify - Ride On fare is already reduced to 50%
- Metro has updated its real time technology, and the Ride On mobile app notifies users of bus capacity/crowding
- The new nighttime courtesy bus stop service allows riders to request a stop near the bus stop that is safer and closer to their destination
- A \$104 million low emission grant from the Federal Transit Administration that will be used to electrify a bus depot and some buses to reach the 2035 zero emissions goal to reduce climate change – funds received in June

Mr. Erenrich discussed the pending financial cliff facing Metro now that the Federal funding provided for Covid assistance has been depleted. The budget short fall is \$750 million out of a \$2 billion dollar budget.

All jurisdictions have put in the max subsidies to fund Metro with Maryland only being able to increase its subsidy 3% a year.

- Metro’s only option is to increase fares or reduce service levels to reduce deficit and are dependent on the Federal Government and states for funding
- Cutting bus and rail service will have a detrimental impact on the climate
- Metro is developing an 8000 series rail car, which will also have an impact on its budget
- Metro has a dedicated \$500 million in Capital program funding and has issued bonds to fund part of its \$2 billion dollar budget and using the dedicated funding to provide repairs

Mr. Erenrich explained how Capital funding is used to pay for some operating costs by conducting preventive maintenance that will enable repairs to last longer, providing \$25-\$60 million to operating costs. This has further drained funds and has push back from Board members who want to use the funds for its original purpose – capital funding. He also explained:

- The Council of Governments CAO has been meeting about the issue and the issues it poses to the long-range plans for the system
- Gov. Moore’s I 270/495 project has financial obligations that further affect Maryland’s capacity to fund Metro
- MCDOT is working with Fairfax Va. to provide bus service from Bethesda to Tysons-connector has money to purchase and operate the bus service
- Friendship Heights to Bethesda bus service is lacking and we are working to increase

Item 5 – Employer TDM Annual Reports: Jim Carlson presented four TDM plans to the Committee to recommend to the DOT Director for approval. He commented that many of the

offices have a small staff and the plans are voluntary. There was a suggestion to investigate Medstar since there are many staff on site; however, they may be Contractors. **David Proctor** said his team would visit the offices.

Item 6 – Marketing Outreach Update: Mr. Proctor reported that his team is working closely with Friendship Heights alliance. Also reported:

- The Bike to Work Day event was a success with 200 sign ups
- Working with GEICO in preparing for Car Free Day pledges
- Gearing up for the Walk & Ride challenge in October

Item 7 – TMD/DOT/Other County Updates: Sande Brecher announced:

- Commuter Services won a regional award for sales, increasing participation in transit programs from COG
- Meetings underway with marketing contractors to update collateral materials and the CSS website
- Since the County Executive ban on recording meetings, **Ms. Brecher** asked the Committee to review meeting minutes for errors - **Tom Quinn** announced that the ANC is required to record meeting since they are public
- **Julian Mansfield** reported the 18-story building project at 5500 Wisconsin Avenue is moving forward as final Planning Board approvals have been submitted
- **Bob Banach** raised concern about the increasing scooters in the area blocking the public right of way and that corrals need to be increased - will be a topic of discussion at a future meeting.

Adjourn: Next meeting -September Joint TMD AC Meeting- date TBA