FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS
SECTOR PLAN

WHAT IS THE FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS SECTOR PLAN?

The Friendship Heights Sector Plan is Montgomery Planning's comprehensive update to the 1998 Friendship Heights Sector Plan. The plan envisions a vibrant Friendship Heights with improved connectivity, new parks and public spaces, and new development that would strengthen the local economy and bring housing and neighborhood amenities to the area. The Sector Plan will provide a framework for future development projects and infrastructure investment in Friendship Heights. Building on all the feedback received to date, and staff's work, the plan will make recommendations on zoning, land use, housing, transportation, parks and open space, the environment, schools, economic development, and more.

Plan Area

WHERE ARE WE IN THE PLANNING PROCESS?

The plan kicked off in November 2024 with an engagement effort that welcomed the community to share hopes and concerns about the future of Friendship Heights. Following the approval of the **Scope of Work** and Plan boundary in early 2025, the team continued with **engagement**, reaching over 1,000 people through in-person workshops, virtual meetings, online questionnaires, and dozens of meetings with community groups, property owners, business owners, residents, and other stakeholders. The team also completed a technical analysis of the existing conditions of the plan area and retained a consultant to examine the real estate market in Friendship Heights.

In February 2026, informed by the key engagement takeaways and the planning analysis, Montgomery Planning staff presented preliminary recommendations for the Sector Plan to the community and to the Planning Board. Preliminary recommendations are the planning team's high-level initial thoughts about what the plan could ultimately recommend. The team will continue to work on the plan through the spring, including developing site-specific recommendations, incorporating feedback from the community and the Planning Board. Staff anticipates sharing the full draft of the plan, or Working Draft, in the summer followed by a Planning Board Public Hearing.

Plan Timeline

Plan Kick-off + Engagement
Fall 2024

Scope of Work + Plan Boundary Approved
Winter 2025

Existing Conditions Analysis
Spring 2025

Visioning
Spring - Fall 2025

We are here
Preliminary Recommendations
Winter 2026

Working Draft
Summer 2026

Planning Board Public Hearing + Work Sessions
Summer 2026

County Council Public Hearing/ Review + Executive Review
Winter 2027

Plan Approval and Adoption
Spring 2027

WHAT DO THE PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS INCLUDE?

While complete Preliminary Recommendations materials covering all topics can be found on our website, here is a summary of the key ideas:

New development that responds to both market reality and community concerns

- Provide flexibility for redevelopment of key sites in the Plan area and incentivize much-desired neighborhood amenities.
- Focus the tallest building heights closer to the Metro station and along Wisconsin Avenue.
- Set clear standards for compatible transition areas between Wisconsin Avenue and neighboring single-family communities.

More affordable housing

- Incentivize additional affordable housing, including larger family-size units and those with deeper affordability.
- Prioritize a mix of housing types and unit sizes to accommodate families, renters, first-time homeowners, and seniors.

A safer and better-connected downtown Friendship Heights

- Improve pedestrian connections between the surrounding neighborhoods and the downtown.
- Enhance safety measures via lighting, high-visibility crosswalks, and intersection improvements.
- Provide protected bicycle facilities per the 2018 Bicycle Master Plan to provide safe routes to and from the Metro and the surrounding communities.
- Evaluate River Road to determine how best to improve safety for pedestrians, vehicles and cyclists.
- Extend Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) along Wisconsin Avenue from Bethesda to Friendship Heights.

New and improved parks and public spaces

- Provide new parks and public spaces as part of future development on key sites and improve visibility and access to existing parks and public spaces.
- Connect new parks and open spaces with existing community amenities to create a network of open spaces.
- Activate public spaces in Friendship Heights with design, ground-floor uses, and placemaking.

Protection of natural resources and climate change mitigation

- Protect natural resources such as canopy trees, wooded areas, and streams.
- Integrate nature-based design strategies in future development to help mitigate the impacts of climate change and incentivize sustainable, high-performance buildings.

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE? HOW CAN I PROVIDE FEEDBACK?

To learn more about these preliminary recommendations, to provide feedback, and to sign up for the plan e-letter, please visit the Friendship Heights Sector Plan website at: www.montgomeryplanning.org/fhsp

Contact the Planning team:

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Montgomery Planning