



# MidCity Background & Committee

October 2017

## A RECENT HISTORY OF MIDCITY

In the late 1990s, as a new wave of retail and restaurants grew on U Street NW and along 14th Street NW, a group of small business owners and artists formed the U Street Business and Arts Coalition (UBAC). The goal was to bring historic and newer businesses together to the area's attractions and to advocate for better city services. The coalition played a key role in shaping the programs of the 14th and U Main Street organization.

When the 14th and U Main Street folded in 2006, UBAC leaders sought to ensure their community building and marketing efforts continued. In particular, they wanted to continue building more connections. The group recognized the need for a name that differentiated them from the Main Street effort and that continued building strong connections along the 14th and U Street corridors. The resulting "MidCity" designation identified the entire district, not just an intersection.

With that in mind, this group of stakeholders founded the MidCity Business Association in 2006 to continue to build on the progress. "One of the main goals of the MidCity Business Association was to bring historic businesses together with the newer entrepreneurs to collectively market the area's many assets and unique history," said Kamal Ali, owner of Ben's Chili Bowl, which was founded by his father Ben Ali in 1958.

Collaborative branding efforts and neighborhood-wide events such as the Dog Days Sidewalk Sale were early efforts to cement the MidCity name to DC residents and businesses. Business association stakeholders recognized that consistent brand and marketing efforts were necessary, and the MidCity BID Exploratory Committee was formed in 2013 to consider forming a business improvement district (BID) to beautify and promote the neighborhood with greater collaboration and funding. The committee was comprised of commercial property owners and long-time and new business owners. In 2014, the JBG Companies provided the seed money to drive this effort, which involved intensive business outreach to shape the goals and priorities of a potential BID.



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**Kamal Ali, Ben's Chili Bowl**

“MidCity business owners have always wanted to ensure that this neighborhood is a dynamic, enjoyable place day and night. We have worked through different organizations to market, beautify and advocate for small businesses over the years. After years of working together, several of us made the push to move from a business association to a BID,” said Diane Gross, owner of Cork Wine Bar. “The diverse needs and priorities of our neighborhood need to coalesce around something bigger, so that’s why we looked to the BID model as a way to sustain the kind of programs and services needed to ensure the area continues to thrive.”

## MIDCITY BID EXPLORATORY COMMITTEE

The MidCity BID Exploratory Committee is comprised of business owners and property owners:

- **Tony Lucca**, 1905 Bistro & Bar
- **Jean Homza**, 9:30 Club
- **Kamal Ali**, Ben's Chili Bowl
- **Jake Levine**, City First Foundation
- **Diane Gross**, Cork Wine Bar & Market
- **Nora Dweck-McMullen**, Dweck Properties
- **Craig Ciekot**, JBG Smith
- **Pixie Windsor**, Miss Pixie's furnishings & whatnot...
- **Ted Brownfield**, SJG Properties
- **Bradley Halverson-Oxford**, Bozzuto and TIAA

