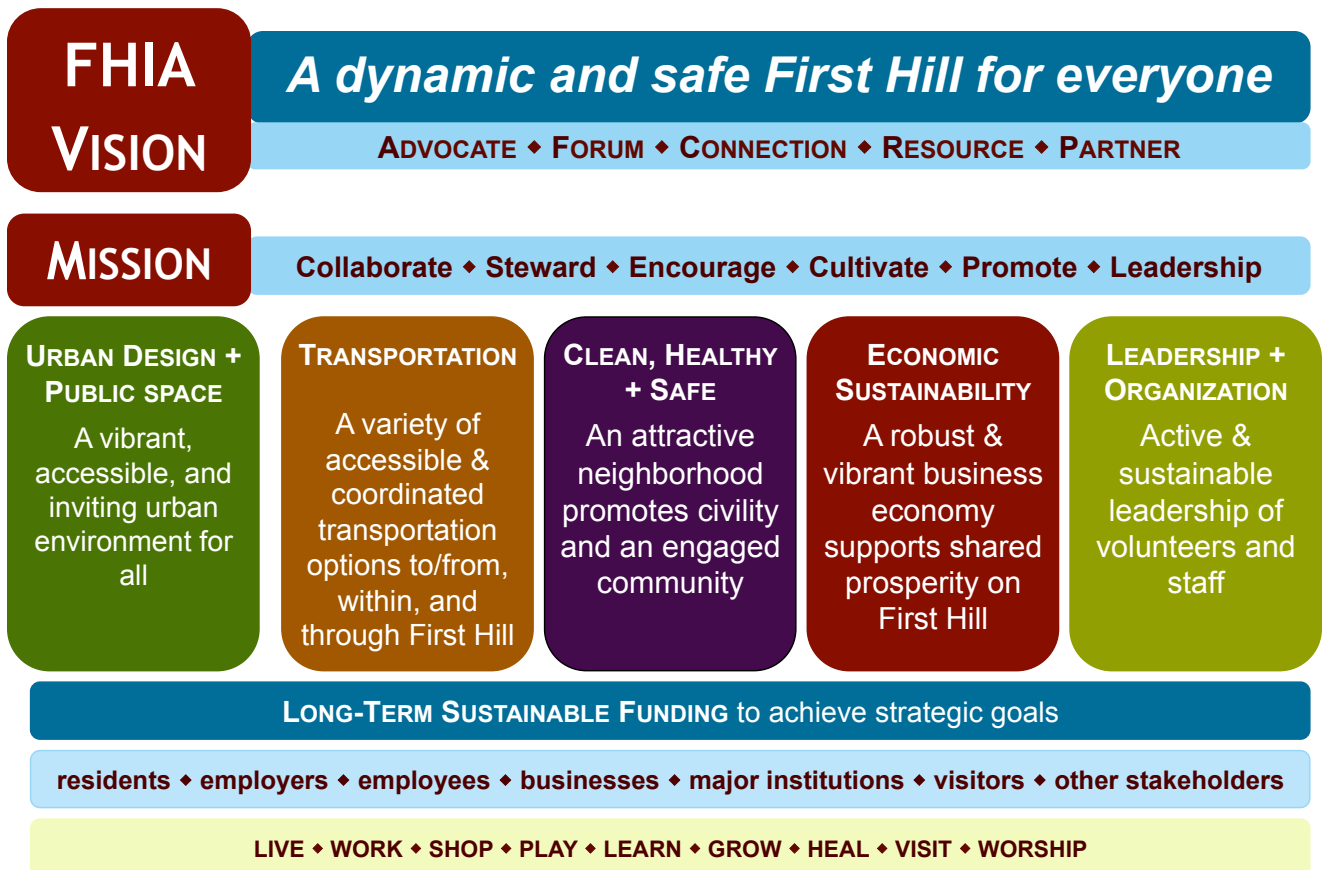


Strategic Plan for First Hill Improvement Association

Approved in Principle by the FHIA Board of Trustees: 9/17/14

Plan-at-a-Glance



Background & Purpose

The First Hill Improvement Association (FHIA) is a nonprofit organization that has been serving Seattle's First Hill neighborhood since 1958 as an advocate, forum for debate, and point of contact about community issues.

First Hill's future is lively and complex. Burgeoning development, public safety, traffic, transportation and parking issues, declining retail services, and inadequate parks and open space impact all residents, businesses, and organizations. First Hill needs a strong united voice to express concerns and support responsible growth without sacrificing quality of life.

Organizational Assessment

In early 2014, FHIA completed an organizational assessment (funded by a Small and Simple Grant awarded by the City of Seattle's Department of Neighborhoods), that included a survey and large-scale community meeting at Town Hall, engaging more than 600 residents, employers, employees, and other interested stakeholders of First Hill. The process culminated with a FHIA Board of Directors retreat to identify action priorities and develop a vision to better serve the neighborhood and strengthen its voice in community affairs.

Strategic Planning

Following the Organizational Assessment, FHIA used a grant from Only In Seattle Grant Initiative of the City of Seattle's Office of Economic Development to complete this strategic plan. This process involved Board working groups on open space, land use and development, healthy neighborhood, transportation, and fundraising. The top community issues were identified for each focus area, along with key programs that could be implemented based on various levels of resources and staffing. The FHIA board of directors synthesized this three-year strategic plan (2015-18) at a retreat in the fall of 2014, which will inform FHIA's annual work planning and budgeting for the next three years.

Vision

FHIA envisions **a dynamic and safe First Hill for everyone.**

FHIA endeavors to be a **well-organized and sustainably funded nonprofit organization** that delivers **defined programs** to and with the First Hill community, **and advocates** for all residents and businesses, all income levels, and all needs, to make it possible **for a diverse, vital, and inclusive community to live in, work in, and visit First Hill.**

FHIA will:

- Harness the energy, interests, and passions of First Hill residents, employers, businesses, major institutions, and other stakeholders to **come together to consider and address** common issues.
- Speak with a strong voice for First Hill and be a visible and leading **advocate** for pedestrian and public safety enhancement, business retention and economic development, urban design and public space, and effective transportation in First Hill.

Mission

FHIA's Mission is to **collaborate** with many stakeholders to:

- **Steward** an urban environment that is vibrant, accessible, and inviting to all;
- **Encourage** a variety of accessible and coordinated transportation options to/from, within and through First Hill;
- **Cultivate** an attractive neighborhood that promotes civility and an engaged community;
- **Promote** a robust business community that supports a vibrant economy and shared prosperity on First Hill; and
- Provide active and sustainable **leadership** (community leaders and staff) to achieve program goals with sustainable funding.

Strategic Initiatives

FHIA will work to achieve its Mission by focusing on **five strategic initiatives**:

- Urban Design + Public Space;
- Transportation;
- Clean, Healthy + Safe;
- Economic Sustainability; and
- Leadership + Organization.

The strategic initiatives are described on the following pages. Each description includes an overall approach, guiding principles, and goals and strategies through which the strategic initiative will be addressed by FHIA.

Strategic Initiative 1:
Urban Design + Public Space

Approach

Steward an urban environment that is vibrant, accessible, and inviting to all.

Guiding Principles

- Successful neighborhoods have a clear vision for development, based on collaborative planning;
- Development that serves a diversity of residents, businesses, and jobs builds a robust neighborhood; and
- Collaboration among all stakeholders in the community leads to an environmentally and economically sustainable neighborhood.

Goals & Strategies

1. Build informed relationships with government agencies responsible for land use, development, and parks and open spaces on First Hill:

Strategy 1A: Continue to be involved in **urban design and public space projects** that will impact the future infrastructure, development, and character of First Hill (e.g. Public Realm Action Plan, Yesler Terrace, Bus Rapid Transportation gains in open space).

Strategy 1B: Promote the development of an updated **neighborhood plan**.

Strategy 1C: Promote the establishment of **design review guidelines** for First Hill.

2. Advocate for land uses on First Hill that benefit and enrich the community:

Strategy 2A: Learn about **land use codes**, especially around heights and public benefits offered for height increases on high-rise zones.

Strategy 2B: Influence/seek **revisions to code** regarding public benefits for developers and other aspects (e.g. height restrictions).

3. Build informed relationships with property owners and developers and their impacted neighbors on First Hill:

Strategy 3A: Get involved early on with **property development projects** to monitor and inform plans and progress

Strategy 3B: Advocate for **civic, retail, and open space amenities** that would benefit everyone in First Hill (e.g. Presbyterian, Alecta, Yesler Terrace).

Strategic Initiative 2: Transportation

Approach

Encourage a variety of accessible and coordinated transportation options to/from, within, and through First Hill.

Guiding Principles

- Supporting a transportation system that offers a variety of efficient choices and modes is essential to a healthy urban neighborhood;
- Transportation systems serving First Hill should acknowledge the neighborhood's unique topography and demographics, and emphasize accessibility, affordability, and safety for all; and
- First Hill's role as the medical center of the region, and its residential density requires reliable, affordable 24-hour public transportation for residents, employees, patients, and visitors.

Goals & Strategies

1. Build informed relationships to promote a coordinated public transportation system that serves the needs of First Hill residents, employers, employees, and visitors:

Strategy 1A: Participate actively in **government-led processes** that will impact public transportation for First Hill (e.g. Madison BRT, Metro service cuts, streetcar planning, pedestrian improvements).

Strategy 1B: Request that Seattle Department of Transportation integrate studies by major institutions and others to create a comprehensive analysis of **traffic and pedestrian patterns** on First Hill.

2. Work to assure a variety of safe, efficient, and accessible transportation modes are available:

Strategy 2A: Monitor any coming changes to **transportation services and infrastructure**, and alert and respond as necessary.

Strategy 2B: Provide active leadership to educate **community** about coming changes, and **champion** avenues for participation and input.

3. Encourage adequate parking for vehicles and bicycles at reasonable rates on First Hill:

Strategy 3A: Request **parking study** from Seattle Department of Transportation that includes current capacity, rates and hours, and public parking options for vehicles and bicycles.

**Strategic Initiative 3:
Clean, Healthy, + Safe**

Approach

Cultivate an attractive neighborhood that promotes civility, and an engaged community.

Guiding Principles

- Safe, clean, healthful, and welcoming neighborhoods are best created in collaboration with the community; and
- Safe, clean, and healthy public spaces are critical to a vibrant and dynamic neighborhood.

Goals & Strategies

1. Build informed relationships with social service and public safety providers on First Hill:

Strategy 1A: **Invite representatives** to appropriate FHIA meetings and activities.

Strategy 1B: Attend **activities and/or meetings** offered by police and social service providers and collaborate when feasible.

Strategy 1C: **Recruit representatives** of these agencies to serve on FHIA committees and/or as Board members.

2. Provide and support programs to promote cleanliness, safety and health:

Strategy 2A: Sponsor or collaborate with others on **activities** promoting a more attractive neighborhood, including clean-up, beautification, and art projects.

Strategy 2B: Work with social service, public health, and public safety providers to **learn** how to positively FHIA might support their programs.

Strategy 2C: Consider a community-wide First Hill event—possibly focused on health and health care issues.

3. Provide and support social and educational events to build community:

Strategy 3A: Continue to offer **monthly public meetings** on topics of concern to the neighborhood.

Strategy 3B: **Support** the social and educational programs of government agencies, non-profits, arts organizations, and others in the neighborhood.

Strategy 3C: Create and support enlivening **activities** that draw people together in the public realm.

Strategic Initiative 4: Economic Sustainability

Approach

Promote a robust retail presence and a business community that will support a vibrant economy and shared prosperity on First Hill.

Guiding Principles:

- First Hill needs more retail businesses that serve the needs of the neighborhood, particularly in light of anticipated growth; and
- Businesses of all types prosper by belonging to an organization that can represent their interests in the neighborhood and beyond.

Goals & Strategies

1. Build informed relationships with existing retailers and the broader business community:

Strategy 1A: Procure a **business and retail assessment** to identify existing business assets on First Hill.

Strategy 1B: **Contact business owners** to offer support and recruit them as FHIA members, Board members, and/or onto committees.

Strategy 1C: Participate in the City of Seattle Office of Economic Development's **business retention and engagement** program.

2. Engage the neighborhood in assessing new desired businesses:

Strategy 2A: Survey those who live, work, and visit in First Hill regarding the **businesses** they desire and would support.

Strategy 2B: Engage property owners in identifying **potential business tenants and sites**.

3. Actively market business assets on First Hill:

Strategy 3A: Promote and **market businesses** on First Hill through multiple means and media.

Strategy 3B: Retain a business recruiter to identify and **recruit new businesses** to First Hill.

Strategic Initiative 5: Leadership + Organization

Approach

Develop an organization of community leaders, engage staff, and develop sustainable funding to achieve program goals.

Guiding Principles

- A diverse and skilled Board of Trustees is essential to a successful non-profit corporation;
- A talented and well compensated staff and committed volunteers are needed to achieve challenging organizational goals; and
- Long-term financial planning and sustainable funding provide the bedrock for a visionary and reliable organization.

Goals & Strategies

1. Establish a Governance Committee to oversee Board governance and Trustee recruitment, education, and evaluation:

Strategy 1A: Adopt a **trustee job description and recruitment** process.

Strategy 1B: Implement an **education** program for trustees.

Strategy 1C: Develop an annual **Board retreat and evaluation** process.

Strategy 1D: Enact a **Conflict of Interest** policy.

2. Engage and fairly compensate a competent and dedicated staff and recruit volunteers to achieve organizational goals:

Strategy 2A: Identify **needed staff skills** and negotiate **fair employment or contract terms** with qualified personnel.

Strategy 2B: Provide needed **training and enrichment** for staff.

Strategy 2C: Explore use of **volunteers and interns** to support staff work.

Strategy 2D: Acquire donated **office space and equipment** for staff use.

3. Increase Board fund raising and organizational financial strength:

Strategy 3A: Recruit, engage, and train Board and Committee members with **relevant skills**.

Strategy 3B: Establish and articulate short and long-term **financial plans**.

Strategy 3C: Establish a **federal tax status** for FHIA to support fund raising.

Strategy 3D: Explore **Business Improvement Area and other funding sources** as potential means to support long-term goals.