



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Tuesday, May 24, 2016

**CONTACT**

[Mekdy Alemayehu](mailto:Mekdy.Alemayehu@dslbd.org) (DSLBD) 202-741-0813

**SHAW MAIN STREETS WINS NATIONAL AWARD**

*DSLBD sponsored program honored with the most prestigious award in downtown commercial revitalization.*

**(Washington, D.C.)** – The National Main Street Center, Inc. announced last night that Washington, D.C.’s Shaw neighborhood has been chosen as a 2016 Great American Main Street Award® (GAMSA) winner. Shaw Main Streets received the award at the 2016 National Main Streets Conference held in Milwaukee.

By actively involving its multicultural community, cultivating tech businesses, and supporting the arts, Shaw Main Streets has reduced the retail vacancy rate from 20 percent to 1 percent, helped over 200 new businesses open, and attracted approximately \$3 billion in private and public investment. Under Shaw Main Streets’ leadership, Shaw has earned nationwide attention as a fast-rising arts, cultural and dining destination while maintaining affordability and ties to its proud past as an African-American entertainment district.

"I'm proud that the District of the Columbia is the first urban Main Street program to include three Great American Main Street Award winners," said Muriel E. Bowser, Mayor of the District of Columbia. "As a fifth generation Washingtonian, I have witnessed the Shaw neighborhood's growth and progress – of which Shaw Main Streets has played an important role. Shaw is one of our treasured communities, with a rich cultural history that reflects the diversity and vibrancy of Washington, DC. I congratulate Shaw Main Streets' Board of Directors, including Chair Gretchen Wharton, Executive Director Alexander Padro, and hundreds of local volunteers for a job well done."

"Shaw Main Streets has consistently developed innovative approaches and programs that have proven to be impactful in attracting and retaining small businesses in the neighborhood," said DSLBD Director, Ana Harvey. "We are thrilled that the organization is being recognized nationally for its efforts."

Highlights of Shaw Main Street’s 13-year tenure include the rehabilitation of the Howard Theatre, once the largest venue in Washington’s segregation-era “Black Broadway,” the creation of flexible work space for 400 start-up tech businesses in a former Wonder Bread factory, no net loss of affordable housing, and a popular overnight arts festival that draws visitors from all over the metro region every year.

DSLBD supports 10 Main Street programs throughout the District. For more information on the DC Main Streets Program, go to [dslbd.dc.gov/service/DCMS](http://dslbd.dc.gov/service/DCMS). To find out more about Shaw Main Streets, please visit [shawmainstreets.org/](http://shawmainstreets.org/).

**About the District of Columbia Department of Small and Local Business Development**

The District of Columbia Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD) fosters the economic growth, development, and retention of District of Columbia based businesses, and promotes economic development throughout the District’s commercial corridors. For more information, go to [dslbd.dc.gov](http://dslbd.dc.gov) or contact us at [dslbd@dc.gov](mailto:dslbd@dc.gov). Follow DSLBD on Twitter at [@SmallBizDC](https://twitter.com/SmallBizDC), or Instagram at [@smallbizdc](https://www.instagram.com/smallbizdc).

###