



July 6th, 2022

Dear ANC 3/4G Commissioners,

Below you will find a comprehensive report on the purpose, activities, challenges and plans of District Bridges' Chevy Chase Main Street Program. I hope that this report addresses some of the ongoing concerns that the Commission has raised and highlights ways that we can work together collaboratively to serve the Chevy Chase community.

I would first like to explain more about District Bridges, how our Main Street model operates, and the core tenants of Main Street programs more broadly.

District Bridges is a community development nonprofit organization with a mission to enrich neighborhood vitality by bridging community engagement and economic development opportunities so residents, businesses, and organizations can thrive together.

We were the first organization in the nation to develop a multi-Main Street model. In contrast to the traditional Main Street model where each Main Street is a separate independent nonprofit organization, our Main Streets are program of District Bridges. The traditional Main Street model has one executive director responsible for all aspects of the management of the Main Street as well as the nonprofit organization. Our model separates the management of the nonprofit entity from the management of our Main Streets. Each of our Main Streets has a full time program manager who is responsible for serving small businesses, creating events, and promoting the corridor while our administrative staff maintains all the back office functions necessary to run a successful nonprofit. Because of our structure we are able to streamline the operational setup of new programs, create economies of scale and increase staff capacity to create greater impact.

The traditional model relies on finding a passionate person who is a "Jack/Jill of All Trades" to be able to manage all the various aspects of the job. However, when that executive director leaves there is often little to no backup support to keep the program running while the search for a new executive is conducted. Not only that but because these programs lack systems to ensure the retention of institutional knowledge, the programs often have to start back at square one once a new executive is found.

District Bridges model incorporates systems, like Salesforce and Asana, to ensure even when there is staff turnover the institutional knowledge is not lost and the work can continue while the search for a new program manager is conducted. The Main Street job is a demanding one and the national average tenure of program directors is under 18 months. In the current employment climate it is even more crucial that organizations have support systems in place to be able to carry on the important work at hand even when there is employee turnover.

Here in DC, the coordinated Main Streets program is funded by the DC Department of Small and Local Business Development, which operates under the guidelines of the National Main

Street Center to manage the locally designated non-profit organizations who are awarded Main Street grants.

Currently, there are 28 active Main Street programs that comprise the DC Main Streets authorized local programs and grant recipients. District Bridges manages 6 of the 28 programs. The DC Main Streets program use the National Main Street Center commercial district revitalization model called The Main Street Four Point Approach ®.

The Main Street Four Point Approach is a proven model for community based economic development. The Four Points include:



While all Main Street programs adhere to the Four Point Approach, how the approach is articulated in each community can look very different. That's because communities face different challenges, have different strengths, and varying priorities. However, the success of these programs is built off the establishment of trusted relationships with businesses and community partners. Building trust takes time but it also requires connections. In the District Bridges model, each of our Main Street programs has a non-fiduciary advisory board that we call the Neighborhood Strategy Council (NSC). Each NSC is composed of community stakeholders representing the interests of businesses, residents, and community organizations to support a holistic community-based approach to economic development in each of the neighborhoods we serve.

The NSC also serves as a feedback loop which helps each Main Street stay grounded and in tune with the needs and priorities of the community. District Bridges believes in continuous

improvement and program iteration, so we leverage the knowledge and experience of our NSCs to help our Main Street programs continue to increase their influence and impact.

I would like to address two specific questions the ANC has asked. The first is about the structure and function of the NSC and the second is how CCMS can and will engage with issues like the Small Area Plan and protected bike lanes.

The Chevy Chase Main Street NSC includes business owners, residents, and representatives from local organizations and stakeholder groups. The current membership includes Robert Gordon, Ruth Robbins, Steve Altman, Sarah Pokempner, Meghan Evans, Alana Choquette, Kathleen Keifang, Devera Redmond, Tim Walsh, and Donna Evers. This information can be found on our website [here](#) at the bottom of the About page. We are also in the process of recruiting three new members. The NSC does not have officer positions; instead, the program manager serves as the “Chair” of the NSC as a whole. However, each Main Street establishes committees which are chaired by a member of the NSC. While the committees must be chaired by an NSC member, individuals who are not NSC members can participate in committees. This enables committees to engage community members who may have interest in a specific area where they would like to serve but are not able to commit to the NSC as a member. The Chevy Chase Main Street is working to establish three committees currently - the Business Engagement, Events & Promotions, and Beautification committees. A tangible way that the ANC could support CCMS is in helping to recruit members for the committees by promoting the opportunity to your constituents to help us gain greater engagement from the community and moving projects along faster. If this is something the commission would be willing to do, I’m happy to share more information about how people can get involved.

In regards to how CCMS can engage in city planning efforts such as the SAP, our Main Streets try to always remain neutral when it comes to city planning issues like the above mentioned. The reason being that consensus from the entire business community is rarely if ever possible and our responsibility is to serve all the businesses in our corridors. If the Main Street takes a hard stance on a subject like bike lanes, it can put us in a position where we alienate some of the businesses we are trying to serve. So instead of taking stances on planning issues like these, our Main Streets serve as information sharing vehicles. While we cannot compel businesses to participate in the planning process or give feedback, we can provide them the information they need to have their voices heard if they choose to engage. This is yet another area where the Main Street and the ANC can work more collaboratively together. As a commission when information that could impact the businesses comes along the Main Street can use our newsletter, direct outreach, and online presence to inform businesses of how they can engage.

Finally, I am sharing below the monthly program for the Chevy Chase Main Street that provides more details about the activities that have been going on with the Main Street. As you know, we have been actively recruiting for our new Main Street Manager for Chevy Chase; however, as businesses and organizations across the country are experiencing, recruitment right now is extremely difficult. I will give some more detail about our recruitment efforts in the program

report to follow but if the Commission is able to support in promoting the position or recommending potential candidates that would be incredibly helpful. While we have been able to maintain the core functions of the Chevy Chase Main Street and continue to move projects forward, without a full time program manager the program is stimaied.

Please let me know if you have any questions about any of the materials I've presented here. I welcome the opportunity to speak with all of you very soon. Thank you for your commitment to making the Chevy Chase Main Street program a successful one that is serving and meeting the needs of the community.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Brianne E. Dornbush". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Brianne" being more prominent than the last name "Dornbush".

Brianne E. Dornbush
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Chevy Chase Main Street Program Report June, 2022

District Bridges Mission

To enrich neighborhood vitality by bridging community engagement and economic development opportunities so residents, businesses and organizations can thrive together.

Our Values

Relationships | Action-Oriented | Diversity | Collaboration | Fun | Innovation | Story | Inclusion

About Chevy Chase Main Street

The District Bridges' Chevy Chase Main Street program serves the businesses, organizations, and individuals who live, work and play in this unique community. Our Main Street programs provide direct technical assistance to local businesses to help them thrive. We also plan local events and promotions that draw people to the neighborhoods, create volunteer opportunities, and connect stakeholders.

Financial Update

FY22 Budget: \$150,080.00

FY22 Budget Spend Down: \$117,496

Fundraising Goal: \$40,000

Funds raised to date: \$8,834

Notable Financial Details:

- \$5,838.24 from Individuals and Businesses
- \$3,000 from map sponsorship
- Launched Chevy Chase Main Street Membership; 8 Founding members

FY22 Strategic Goals

Stabilization - Financial

- Raise \$40,000 to maintain/achieve DSLBD mature funding tier

Stabilization - Programming

- Volunteer recruitment and engagement
- Progress towards 100 CCMS Memberships

Stabilization - Policy

- Advocacy for cost of living increase for Main Streets
- Advocacy for grant structure change - removal of reimbursement requirement

Stabilization - NSC

- Recruiting new members
- Host quarterly membership/engagement events

Recruitment Update:

We have interview three candidates for the CCMS Manager role. One of those is moving to the team interview which will be conducted next week. We have two more interviews set up for next week as well. Recruitment has still been slow, while we have seen an uptick in applications many of the applicants have not been qualified. We have extended our paid promotion on LinkedIn and Idealist and have been pushing the position out to the national Main Street network and my personal network.

One of the challenges we are facing is that we are having a lot of inexperienced applicants applying - many of whom are applying straight out of school and have little if any background or connection to Chevy Chase. Our ideal candidate would be someone with ties to the community and some relatable professional experience.

Program Updates:

Technical Assistance

The goal of each of our Main Street programs is to complete on average 100 hours of direct technical assistance per quarter. This is not a requirement of the DSLBD grant but a standard that District Bridges strives for in each of our programs. Despite not having a full-time Main Street Manager since mid-March, CCMS has delivered over 280 hours of direct technical assistance to its small businesses. Below is a snapshot of the technical assistance types that have been provided to date. Please note that the numbers below do not account for in-person and virtual outreach to the small businesses on the corridor or the time spent on the business newsletters, both of which occur weekly.

CCMS Team Technical Assistance Report

As of 2022-07-07 13:43:53 Eastern Standard Time/EST • Generated by Brianne Dornbush

Filtered By

Date Field: Opened Date equals Custom (10/1/2021 to 9/30/2022)

Show: User owned technical assistance

Units: Hours

Mainstreet Program equals CC

Technical Assistance Record Type ↓	Mainstreet Program ↑	Sum of Labor Hours Contributed	Record Count
Training and Information	CC	30	20
Other	CC	49.8	54
One-on-One Consultation	CC	20	12
Grant Support	CC	91	25
Event Support	CC	56.75	19
Business Plan Development	CC	5	1
Business Health Check	CC	28	14
Total		280.55	131

To ensure that CCMS is still able to effectively serve the businesses on the corridor while the search for a new Main Street Manager is being conducted, Dr. Gladys Kamau was hired to conduct weekly outreach to our businesses, providing direct technical assistance, and

conducting business health checks. To date she has completed 14 business health checks with CCMS businesses. The health checks provide a baseline evaluation of how businesses along the corridor are doing. Using the information from these health checks we work with the businesses to create a Business Development Plan to help them progressively address and tackle the next steps to helping them improve and grow their business. Additionally, the business health checks provide us aggregate data that shows trends and common issue areas to help us in continuously adapting our technical assistance offerings to meet the changing needs of businesses.

Over the last months as Dr. Kamau has been conducting outreach to businesses two issues have surfaced as key areas of concern. The first is ongoing staffing shortages and the second is landlord/tenant issues. To address the staffing concerns we are exploring the possibility of doing some job fairs where local businesses would have the opportunity to connect with potential job seekers and creating a “jobs board” on our website where businesses could post their openings and we would promote those opportunities through our social media channels and weekly newsletters.

To address the landlord/tenant concerns, this has been something that District Bridges has been working to address more broadly with all of our corridors since the pandemic. We have just launched our Landlord/Tenant Mediation Pilot Program in partnership with DC Bar Pro Bono and DC Community Mediation. The goal of this program is to create a pathway for landlords and tenants to address ongoing concerns like back rent, maintenance and repair issues, lease renegotiations, terminations, or amendments without legal intervention.

Neighborhood Branding & Design

Neighborhood Map

The draft corridor map that was originally submitted required significant redesign. Our marketing team has promised that it will be ready for printing by the end of next week. As soon as the proof is approved they will be printed and distributed. Distribution will start in July.

Streetlamp Flags

We have gotten a quote for streetlamp flags to be installed along Connecticut Avenue between Legation Street up to the Chevy Chase Circle. DSLBD has approved the expense for this year. We can expand to the side streets, around the Circle and further down Connecticut in FY23. Installation is slated for the end of August - however supply chain delays could result in a delay to September. Our hope is that they will be up before Chevy Chase DC Day.

Tree Box Maintenance & Updating

Kathleen and Brianne have captured images of all the tree boxes along the commercial corridor and are cataloguing them. Currently there is no consistency between the boxes - some are maintained and some of not. Brianne has been in contact with Clean Decisions the organization responsible for the Connecticut Avenue Clean Team. They are responsible for weeding and mulching the boxes twice a year. They are able to help us with updating the boxes to have a consistent look along the entire corridor. Brianne is waiting on pricing for that project and a

timeline for when it could be completed. Additionally, we are hoping to get the businesses involved in maintaining the boxes outside of their businesses and possibly helping to fund part of the work. Once we have pricing for the work we will put together a campaign to engage the businesses directly on the project.

Historic Call Box Project

In partnership with CCCA, Ch/Art, and HCCDC, CCMS is helping with the restoration of 3 historic call boxes on the commercial corridor. Ch/Art has put together an [RFP for artists](#). CCMS will be collecting all the proposals and working with the partners to review and select the artists. There are 5 total call boxes in the neighborhood but we are prioritizing the first three that are immediately on or near the commercial corridor. The first call box we are hoping to complete will be done in time for Chevy Chase DC Day (9/17/22).

Fundraising/Community Engagement Update

❖ *July Happy Hour*

Brianne is working with Chris from Blue 44 to host a happy hour events to recruit volunteers and give folks an opportunity to learn more about the Main Street program. We are shooting for the end of the month and will circulate the date as soon as it is finalized. We will be looking to host another happy hour in August and welcome suggestions on where folks would like to go. The hope is that NSC member will be able to come and invite attendees to these events. Some percentage of sales or a direct donation will be made to CCMS from the proceeds that night to help us towards our fundraising goal.

❖ *First Fridays*

Starting on Friday, August 5th we will launch a monthly event series. We will utilize the Wells Fargo parking lot where we will have music, games, and opportunities for neighbors to connect. Given the staffing shortages that many businesses are experiencing we are not pushing for businesses to be vendors but instead are using the activity to then promote specials out and about at local businesses. These events will be held through November and we are hoping they build on each other and each can be a little bit different.

❖ *Chevy Chase DC Day*

CCMS is one of the sponsors for the Chevy Chase DC Day. We are hopeful that we will have a program manager in place by September. Brianne will be out on maternity leave starting September 8th so we will be looking for support to be present at the event. District Bridges has another community event that day so while we will be able to have staff present we will need volunteer support.

Volunteer Opportunities

- ❖ First Friday - we will be needing volunteers to support for setup and engagement during the event.

- ❖ Tree Box Project - while the Clean Team is responsible for weeding their schedule and capacity for that is not sufficient to maintain the boxes to the level we'd like. One thing we'd like to do is have community members help by having some weeding days. If this is something