Study Participants

**Chevy Chase Main Street**

District Bridges’ Chevy Chase Main Street program (CCMS) serves the businesses, organizations, and individuals who live, work and play along the Connecticut Avenue NW commercial corridor, from Livingston Street NW to Western Avenue NW.

**Jon Stover & Associates**

Jon Stover & Associates (JS&A) specializes in economic analysis, retail revitalization, and helping public, private, and nonprofit organizations collaborate to meet economic development objectives. JS&A has helped a wide range of clients implement plans and programs that have successfully enhanced urban neighborhoods and commercial corridors.

**Dept. of Small and Local Business Development**

The DC Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD) supports the development, economic growth, and retention of District-based businesses, and promotes economic development throughout the District’s commercial corridors. DSLBD manages the DC Main Street program and provides resources to local programs.

Defining Retail

For the purposes of this study, retail is defined in three categories that are common in the retail landscape and used by DC’s Office of Planning.

**Neighborhood Goods & Services**

*Establishments serving residents and workers such as dry cleaners, fresh produce stands, pharmacies, florists, nail salons, barber shops, convenience stores, and more.*

**Food & Beverage**

*Restaurants, cafes, bars, nightclubs, fast-casual dining, take-out establishments, coffee shops, and more.*

**Merchandise**

*Businesses selling general merchandise, accessories, furniture, apparel, electronics, and more.*

_This analysis relies on data provided by CCMS, ESRI Community Analyst CoStar, Mastercard Retail Location Insights, local planning and visioning documents, local real estate blogs such as CurbedDC and UrbanTurf, and surveys of local business owners. Retail metrics and evaluation criteria correspond with the DC Office of Planning Vibrant Retail Streets Tool Kit. All findings presented in this report reflect the conditions in June 2021._
Chevy Chase Main Street’s program boundary runs along Connecticut Avenue NW from Livingston Street NW to Western Avenue NW, bordering Montgomery County, MD.

About This Analysis

Chevy Chase Main Street (CCMS) was formed in 2020 and is in the process of establishing awareness, understanding its constituency, developing organizational objectives and programs, and building lasting relationships with a variety of stakeholders.

This report summarizes retail market analysis findings for the Chevy Chase Main Street program boundary. The purpose of this study is to help CCMS understand its neighborhood retail environment within a city-wide context; identify collective preliminary needs, constraints, and concerns of the business constituency; and identify opportunities for the Main Street to capitalize on retail conditions, trends, and projections to play a leading role in helping to serve local businesses.
# Chevy Chase Demographics

## Surrounding Residential Population
- 2,415 residents live within a ¼-mile radius.
- 7,640 residents live within a ½-mile radius.
- 27,884 residents live within a 1-mile radius.

## Median Household Income
- Median Household Income: $180,794
  
  Household incomes within a half-mile around Chevy Chase are 111% higher than the city-wide median of $85,663.

## Median Age
- Median Age: 47
  
  Chevy Chase has a significantly older population than the rest of DC, with a median age 11 years older than the city-wide median of 36.

## Daytime Population
- (Workers + Residents)
- 2,846 within a ¼-mile radius.
- 7,538 within a ½-mile radius.
- 35,781 within a 1-mile radius.

A lack of nearby office space or major commercial uses limits the surrounding daytime population in the Chevy Chase area.

## Household Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1-Person Households</th>
<th>2+ Person Households</th>
<th>Households with Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>37%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The half-mile radius around Chevy Chase has a relatively high percentage of families with children (25%) compared to the city-wide rate of 21%.

## Population Growth Rate
- (Half-Mile Radius)
- (Since 2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chevy Chase</th>
<th>DC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17%</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With very minimal new development within a half-mile, Chevy Chase’s population has seen limited growth over the last ten years.

Note: Data reflects demographics of a ½ mile radius from the center point of Chevy Chase Main Street.
Data Sources: ESRI, business surveys
Chevy Chase Main Street serves an older, more affluent surrounding population, relative to the rest of DC. While nearby residents have more disposable income than most areas of the city, a lack of nearby residential development has limited the size and overall spending capacity of the local population.

The Chevy Chase neighborhood, like most neighborhoods in Upper Northwest DC, is relatively low-density and primarily comprised of detached, single-family homes. Mid-rise apartment buildings along Connecticut Avenue and larger apartment buildings in nearby Friendship Heights, located a half-mile to the west, provide Chevy Chase with a larger base of nearby customers that are within short walking or driving distance. Businesses also benefit from heavy vehicular traffic along Connecticut Avenue NW, which sees an average of nearly 30,000 vehicles per day.

On Average 29,500 Vehicles Travel This Segment of Connecticut Avenue NW Daily

This portion of Connecticut Avenue NW serves a major commuting thoroughfare for drivers traveling between Upper Northwest DC, Bethesda, Chevy Chase, MD, and other areas of southern Montgomery County. This high level of daily vehicular traffic provides businesses along the corridor with enhanced storefront visibility and the opportunity to capture spending from commuters and other drivers.

Data Sources: DDOT (2019)
Where Are Chevy Chase Customers Coming From?

Chevy Chase retail businesses primarily draw customers who live in the surrounding neighborhoods. Few customers travel from the east of Rock Creek Park.

**Primary Market Area** (20015 Zip Code, southern Chevy Chase, MD) Residents who live in the surrounding neighborhoods within the 20015-zip code (Chevy Chase, eastern Friendship Heights, and Barnaby Woods) and the southern edge of Chevy Chase, MD, account for approximately 55% of Chevy Chase Main Street’s customer base.

**Secondary Market Area** (Upper Northwest DC, Bethesda, and Chevy Chase, MD) CCMS’s secondary market area covers most Upper Northwest DC neighborhoods, west of Rock Creek Park, as well as Bethesda and Chevy Chase, Maryland. This area is comprised of commuters passing through Chevy Chase to and from work, as well as destination visitors, traveling to Chevy Chase to visit to a particular businesses. This area accounts for an additional 20% of customer traffic in the study area.

**Tertiary Market Area** (DC and Montgomery County) Approximately 20% of retail customers originate from areas of Montgomery County and DC outside the study area’s primary or secondary market areas.

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**Most Common Customer Zip Codes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zip Code</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20015</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>Chevy Chase; Friendship Heights; Chevy Chase, MD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20008</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>Van Ness; Forest Hills; Cleveland Park; Woodley Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20016</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Tenleytown; Palisades, Spring Valley; Cathedral Heights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20815</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Chevy Chase, MD; Friendship Village, Martin’s Additions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20814</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>Bethesda, MD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Most common zip codes
Source: CARTO
Customer Base

Chevy Chase Main Street businesses primarily serve their nearby neighborhood residents.

Chevy Chase retail business’s customer base closely mirrors the demographics of neighborhoods adjacent to the study area, given the local-serving orientation of most businesses. Customers within the primary and secondary market areas of Chevy Chase are typically from households with high levels of disposable income and educational attainment.

55%
Primary Market Area
Chevy Chase; Upper Chevy Chase; Friendship Heights; Barnaby Woods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residential Population</th>
<th>Daytime Population</th>
<th>Median Household Income</th>
<th>% w/ Bachelor’s Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16,787</td>
<td>19,506</td>
<td>$192,063</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

25%
Secondary Market Area
Upper Northwest DC; Bethesda; Chevy Chase, MD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residential Population</th>
<th>Daytime Population</th>
<th>Median Household Income</th>
<th>% w/ Bachelor’s Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>160,562</td>
<td>198,806</td>
<td>$147,990</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20%
Tertiary Market Area
Elsewhere in DC and Montgomery County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residential Population</th>
<th>Daytime Population</th>
<th>Median Household Income</th>
<th>% w/ Bachelor’s Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,742,892</td>
<td>1,978,312</td>
<td>$101,041</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Customer base estimates based on CARTO data. These figures are approximate and should be used to understand the overall composition of customers frequenting the establishments within the Main Street.

Source: CARTO, Esri

Retail Customer Profile

Demographics of all retail customers within the Main Street program area

Customer Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 25 years old</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34 years old</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44 years old</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54 years old</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64 years old</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 64 years old</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The customer base of Chevy Chase has a notably high share of older customers, over 64 years old.

Household Income of Customers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Range</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than $20,000</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,000 - $75,000</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$75,000 - $150,000</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater than $150,000</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chevy Chase serves a highly affluent customer base with over 40% of customers living in households with an annual income greater than $140,000.
Retail Real Estate Conditions

Chevy Chase is a healthy and stable retail submarket and is seen as a family-friendly oasis that provides a wide range of local-serving retail amenities.

Chevy Chase’s quiet and safe atmosphere, paired with a continuous stretch of traditional ground-floor storefronts and established base of long-time businesses, has helped maintain relatively strong demand for retail spaces. However, rents have seen a slight decline since 2018, coupled with a slight uptick in vacancy. These trends likely reflect growing competition from emerging neighborhoods, particularly neighborhoods east of Rock Creek Park that have added large supplies of new retail space in recent years. A lack of growth of the nearby population, which is the primary customer base of most Chevy Chase businesses, is another contributing factor to this recent uptick in vacancies and decline in rents.

Current Storefront Occupancy Rate

36 out of 44 retail spaces in Chevy Chase are currently occupied by businesses. 4 of the 8 available spaces are in the Chevy Chase Arcade.

Average Rent (NNN)

Chevy Chase’s average triple-net market-rate rent for retail spaces is 21% higher than the District average ($42).

Average Market Rents per SF (NNN)

Market-rate rents in Chevy Chase, while still higher than the District average, have slightly declined over the past three years. This decline is likely due to increased competition from emerging neighborhoods in the District, as well as the suppression of demand created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Historical Vacancy Rate

Despite having 8 unoccupied spaces, Chevy Chase has a history of low turnover and low vacancy rates, typically between 1 and 4%-- significantly below the DC average. The current uptick in vacancy in 2020 and 2021 is likely attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic and the retirements of several long-time business owners.

Note: Average Market-Rate Rent reflects rate a property would be expected to command on the open market, as of Q2 2020. Source: Costar
Chevy Chase’s retail activity is a mix of day-to-day goods and services with an ample supply of locally-owned food and beverage establishments.

The neighborhood features several long-running establishments, including the Avalon Theater, Chevy Chase Wine and Spirits, and local supermarket Magruder’s, each of which have been operating for over 50 years. Recent business openings have been largely comprised of sit-down restaurants and small branch locations of major national banks – reflecting a national trend of banks seeking to strengthen brand strength and branch accessibility in affluent market areas. Like most local-serving retail clusters in the District, Chevy Chase has a very limited supply of traditional merchandise retailers. Two clothing and gift stores in the neighborhood have closed over the past year, reflecting the growing challenge of competing with online marketplaces in a relatively low-density neighborhood with minimal weekday foot traffic. Notably, the neighborhood still currently supports two clothing stores and a shoe store.

A Complete Range of Amenities

Few retail nodes in the District as small as Chevy Chase provide such a complete range of neighborhood-serving amenities. In addition to its retail establishments, Chevy Chase is anchored by a post office, library, grocery store, theater, and community center.
Chevy Chase Retail in the Greater DC Context

Chevy Chase’s retail conditions largely mirror nearby commercial clusters along Connecticut Avenue in Upper Northwest DC and provide a contrast to the large-floorplate merchandise retail located nearby at Friendship Heights.

Retail rental rates in Chevy Chase are consistent with the other commercial clusters along Connecticut Avenue NW. Rents are moderately higher than Friendship Heights and slightly lower than Van Ness and Cleveland Park. Mount Pleasant provides an interesting comparison point in that it has less vehicular access but more residential density and nearby daytime population.

Chevy Chase is moderately priced compared to nearby retail clusters in Upper Northwest DC. Notably, Friendship Heights’ lower rental rates likely reflect its supply of larger retail floorplates.

While some Chevy Chase properties have struggled to secure occupants in recent years, the neighborhood’s overall vacancy rate is still low relative to nearby retail clusters.

High levels of vehicular traffic along Connecticut Avenue NW extend to Chevy Chase, providing businesses strong visibility. Notably, traffic through Chevy Chase is 26% higher than nearby Friendship Heights.

With a minimal supply of nearby apartment buildings or office space, Chevy Chase’s daytime population is notably lower than more densely populated commercial areas, such as Mount Pleasant or Friendship Heights.
Chevy Chase has a moderately smaller surrounding residential population than many nearby commercial areas – increasing business’s reliance on capturing a high share of local spending or attracting destination visitors.

Population Within a 1/2-Mile Radius
In Comparison Neighborhoods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighborhood</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chevy Chase</td>
<td>7,640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendship Heights</td>
<td>10,527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Van Ness</td>
<td>9,707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland Park</td>
<td>8,769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt. Pleasant</td>
<td>34,899</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Business Mix Comparison
By Number of Establishments

Chevy Chase’s retail orientation towards day-to-day goods and services reflect the local-serving orientation of the area. Cleveland Park and Mt. Pleasant feature similar mixes although those corridors feature higher proportions of dining establishments.
Retail Viability of Chevy Chase

Neighborhood Goods & Services Viability

Chevy Chase serves nearby residents with a wide range of goods and service merchandisers and retailers. The surrounding neighborhood has a high spending capacity with the median household earning more than double the District’s median. The pedestrian and vehicular orientation of the neighborhood support these retail uses.

Food & Beverage Viability

Chevy Chase’s mix of well-performing restaurants and dining options are an important part of the corridor’s character. The ability to support additional restaurants is dependent on the neighborhood’s ability to attract a larger customer base from beyond its immediate surrounding neighborhoods (primary market area).
Chevy Chase has the conditions needed to support a wide range of retail business types. The customer base is limited by a lack of population growth. The most direct strategy to support additional business growth is to bring more customers from beyond the primary and secondary market areas.

The affluent community surrounding the Chevy Chase retail corridor is highly supportive of the retail corridor. Small floorplate retailers targeting the surrounding residential customer base are likely to remain viable in Chevy Chase. Limited daytime populations and pedestrian traffic will continue to impact the operations of future retailers.

**Measuring the Viability of Retail**

The DC Office of Planning developed a process to evaluate retail conditions in the District called the DC Vibrant Retail Streets Toolkit. This analysis borrows from the Toolkit to evaluate the conditions retailers look for before moving to a location, such as retail viability, and assess how the area satisfies the criteria. The data points on the right follow the conditions that are typically necessary to support three types of retailers: neighborhood goods and services, food and beverage establishments, and general merchandise, apparel, furnishings, and more.

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**Chevy Chase supports specialty merchandise retailers.**

- **Regional Draw**
  - for shoppers to come to this area
- **Retail Competition**
  - Limited existing concentration
- **Daytime Population**
  - 7,538 People Within ½ mi.
- **Limited Retail Ready Spaces Available**
- **Pedestrian Traffic**
  - Moderate Amount of Pedestrian Traffic
- **Median HH Income**
  - $151,858 / HH within 1 mi.
- **Education Attainment**
  - 89% have Bachelor’s Degree+ within 1 mi.
- **Vehicular Traffic**
  - 29,500 Average Daily Traffic on Connecticut Ave
- **Population**
  - 27,884 People Within 1 mi.

*Note: Data reflects demographics of a radius from the center point of the Chevy Chase Main Street corridor. Data Source: ESRI Community Analyst (2021); DC DDOT Street Spatial Database (2019)*
The Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic

Retail sales in Chevy Chase remain below pre-COVID levels but are trending upwards in 2021 as cases decline and customers increasingly return to normal “pre-pandemic” lifestyles.

Clothing apparel stores experienced the largest drop in sales from 2019 to 2020 (-72%), while restaurants also saw a significant year-to-year decline (-25%). Grocery stores and liquor stores experienced sizable bumps in total sales, reflecting the nationwide changes in spending habits created by the pandemic.

Change in Retail Sales

During the worst periods of the COVID-19 pandemic, Chevy Chase avoided the steep declines in sales experienced by many other DC retail clusters and the city overall. The neighborhood’s resiliency is in part due to the area’s small share of merchandise retailers, which were hit particularly hard by the pandemic. Nearby Friendship Heights has yet to recover from the pandemic, given its heavy orientation around merchandise retail.

6%

Drop in Expected Retail Sales since February 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic created a 6% decline in total retail sales in Chevy Chase. This drop in sales is equivalent to approximately $2 million in total lost revenue from February 2020 through May 2021.

Note: Rate of decline reflects decrease from expected sales from February 2020 to May 2021. Expected sales figures based on 2019 monthly sales.

Note: Chart above reflects Mastercard Retail Location Insights’ Spend Score, an index that reflects change in overall retail spending within a geographic area, benchmarked to 2018 averages.

Source: CARTO
Chevy Chase customers spent more money in these industries in 2020 compared to 2019.

Chevy Chase saw a sizable increase in spending from nearby residents during the pandemic, reflecting the corridor’s orientation around the day-to-day needs of its surrounding community. This helped the area avoid the large revenue declines that occurred in retail clusters more reliant upon destination visitors, such as Georgetown and Friendship Heights.

Change in Sales by Business Type from 2019 to 2020

These industries in Chevy Chase experienced fewer sales in 2020 compared to 2019.

Year-to-Year Change in Total Transactions by Chevy Chase Customers

Chevy Chase saw a sizable increase in spending from nearby residents during the pandemic, reflecting the corridor’s orientation around the day-to-day needs of its surrounding community. This helped the area avoid the large revenue declines that occurred in retail clusters more reliant upon destination visitors, such as Georgetown and Friendship Heights.
**Blending the Past, Present, and Future of Chevy Chase**

Opportunities exist to leverage several unique, historic assets in the commercial district of Chevy Chase. Designated historic places such as the Chevy Chase Arcade and Avalon Theater, along with anecdotal community landmarks like the American City Diner, root the commercial district in its historic charm. With limited planned development, the physical conditions of Chevy Chase are not expected to significantly change in the near-future. However, nearby redevelopment efforts in Friendship Heights can bring new residents to local Chevy Chase businesses to supplement the existing customer base that is expected to remain for the coming years.

**Chevy Chase Arcade**

Designed in 1925, the historic Chevy Chase Arcade symbolizes Chevy Chase’s development as a premier “streetcar suburb” commercial district in the early 1900s. DC Architect Louis L. Moss designed the shopping arcade, built in the Classical Revival style, to include ten commercial storefronts lining the interior hall. Over the years, a variety of local business have operated within these spaces, though four ground-floor spaces are unoccupied as of June 2021.

*5520 Connecticut Avenue NW*
*Built: 1922*
*Designated as a Historic Place (DC Registry): 1988*
*Designated as a Historic Place (National Registry): 2003*

**Avalon Theatre**

The Avalon Theatre, historically known as the Chevy Chase Theater, is the oldest continuously operating neighborhood theater in the District. Designated on the National Register for Historic Places, the Avalon Theater was built in 1922 by Upman and Adams, distinguished local architects. Built in the Classical Revival style, the building’s marquee remains a key piece of the Chevy Chase commercial streetscape.

*5612 Connecticut Avenue NW*
*Built: 1922*
*Designated as a Historic Place (DC and National Registry): 1996*
Future Development:

Nearby in Friendship Heights, the Mazza Gallerie Mall is positioned for redevelopment as mixed-use residential and retail development.

5500 and 5520 Wisconsin Avenue
- Up to 380 Rental Residential Units
- Up to 15,000 SF of Retail Space

Tishman Speyer plans to redevelop the former Mazza Gallerie Mall located on Wisconsin Avenue at the DC-Maryland border. The development plans intend to reduce the amount of on-site retail space from 44,700 SF to 15,000 SF and bring new residents to the retail and commercial neighborhood.

With the new development a 15-minute walk from the center of Chevy Chase’s commercial corridor, the approximate 500 new residents will add to Chevy Chase’s customer base.

Status: Proposed Development

Nowadays:

Main Street Investment Along Connecticut Ave

In recent years, the commercial districts of Connecticut Avenue NW have leveraged the Main Street model to support local businesses and promote the neighborhoods to residents across the city and region. Chevy Chase Main Street joins three existing Main Streets along Connecticut Avenue NW including Woodley Park Main Street, Cleveland Park Main Street, and Van Ness Main Street. Although each Main Street is distinct in its customer base and brand, all four Main Streets share goals of attracting more shoppers and diners to local businesses, preserving historic assets, and strategically planning for an economically resilient future along Connecticut Avenue NW.
Strong Retail Performance
Chevy Chase has maintained a healthy blend of business continuity and change. The corridor has consistently maintained a below-average vacancy rate over the past decade, with relatively minimal business turnover and quick lease-up paces for street-facing storefronts.

Traditional Main Street Atmosphere
Chevy Chase offers visitors a traditional, pedestrian-friendly atmosphere, with continuous ground-floor storefronts on the west side of Connecticut Avenue, benches and greenery, and an abundance of outdoor seating.

High Spending Capacity of Nearby Residents
Chevy Chase businesses are supported by the high levels of disposable income of nearby residents. The median household income within a half-mile radius of the study area is over $180,000 – making the neighborhood one of the most affluent in DC.

Available Off-Street Parking
Chevy Chase has a two public parking lots located behind storefronts on the west side of Connecticut Avenue NW – making the neighborhood more accessible to customers from other neighborhoods.

Strong Storefront Visibility
Connecticut Avenue is a major commuting corridor, with an average of over 29,000 daily vehicles passing through each day, boosting the visibility of Chevy Chase businesses and their ability to attract spending from commuters and other customers traveling along the corridor.

Historic and Unique Commercial Assets Serve as Anchors
Chevy Chase is home to two historic structures that help distinguish the corridor from other similar commercial clusters: The Avalon Theatre, the District’s oldest neighborhood theater, and the Chevy Chase Arcade, the only early 20th-century indoor shopping arcade of its kind in DC. The library, community center, and Safeway bring additional visitors to the corridor.
Implications for Main Street Programming and Operations

Chevy Chase Main Street has an opportunity to take advantage of its compact program area and build upon the established brand of its neighborhood by supporting the corridor’s unique assets, helping attract new visitors to the neighborhood, and further understand the specific needs of local businesses.

Preserve and Enhance Chevy Chase’s Identity and Physical Characteristics

The Main Street should prioritize technical assistance and programming that maintains and builds upon Chevy Chase’s well-established brand as a clean, safe, and pleasant place to visit. The Main Street should take advantage of its compact program area by organizing community events that draw visitors from outside the neighborhood and help further connect nearby residents to local businesses. Opportunities to enhance pedestrian accessibility around Chevy Chase Circle should also be explored, in order to draw more visitors from across the Maryland border.

Prioritize Support for Historic Community Assets Facing the Greatest Need, Particularly the Avalon Theatre and the Chevy Chase Arcade

The Main Street should work closely with owners and stakeholders associated with the Avalon Theatre and Chevy Chase Arcade to develop a strategy to help preserve and enhance the vitality of each of these landmarks. Each should be incorporated into neighborhood branding and marketing collateral. The Main Street should help promote available retail spaces within the Chevy Chase Arcade and consider organizing events or temporary placemaking initiatives that take advantage of the unique interior of the arcade.

Address Retail Vacancy and Prioritize Expanding the Current Customer Base

Develop a vacant space activation strategy that involves some combination of (a) increasing the customer base, (b) targeting and attracting businesses that satisfy existing demand, and/or (c) finding non-retail uses or temporary popup uses to occupy available spaces. The Main Street should strongly consider undertaking measures to market to and attract more customers from outside of the primary market area.

Further understand needs of business and property owners

As a newly established program with a relatively compact boundary, the Main Street should continue proactively developing relationships with business owners and property owners to further understand needs and interest in technical assistance. The Main Street should continue to play a leading role in providing PPP and other pandemic recovery information and services, as well as explore opportunities for transition planning assistance for older business owners.