

# MAIN STREET INITIATIVE

## OneMainStreet.org

Presented to the KCA Board of Trustees

April 26, 2017

Submitted by: The Kentlands Community Foundation Board of Directors

### SUMMARY

While Kentlands has been heralded as a model New Urbanist community, the focal point of the neighborhood, Main Street, has aged and deteriorated. It is experiencing many of the challenges typical to traditional Main Streets such as lack of community cohesiveness due to individually owned properties, high business turnover and general apathy, all leading to an undesirable business mix. The Foundation Board of Directors has taken an active role in assisting our Main Street. Work completed to date under our Retail Initiative and updates include:

- Kentlands Main Street Survey results are attached which confirm the issues facing Main Street.
- Consultation with a Retail Consultant confirmed that Main Street concerns are real and need to be actively addressed to avoid further deterioration; i.e. action must be taken by the community.
- Panelists from Adams Morgan, Rockville, and Frederick among others were interviewed in advance in order to determine the relevance of their Main Street challenges and thus, selected. They have provided valuable tools and information for our efforts. Therefore we encourage you to attend or watch their presentations.
- Conversations regarding solutions, including funding, have taken place with the City and County along with experts in the field and are ongoing.
- Kentlands Downtown Partnership has ceased operations, leaving a void and a lot to learn from.
- Development plans by Kimco and BF Saul will not solve the problems for us.

### MISSION OR VISION STATEMENT

**Vision:** To enable Main Street to be the social and cultural hub of our community, leading to enhanced quality of life for our residents and healthy property values; to become a timeless model of New Urbanism.

**Mission:** 1) To shine a spotlight on the challenges and opportunities of our Main Street; 2) To provide long term sustainable solutions, and; 3) To engage our Business community in the social, cultural and civic realm.

### THE PLAN:

Phase 1 Goal: To bring a sense of community to Main Street, become a valued and trusted resource to the owners and tenants, and begin to gradually address business mix and second floor vacancies.

- KCF office on Main Street for 12 months: Drop-in community center, source of information, visitor guides, maps, menus, brochures, coffee and “chat”, business owner events, brown bag educational events. Basically replaces KDP as an interim merchants’ association.
- Outreach to all owners/tenants to develop a resource list of available space, open conversations with owners as to new uses for their vacant space.
- Development of a new design model for incubator or “pop-up” second floor spaces; Concepts that uniquely fit our live/work unit sizes such as:
  - Co-working space for local home based businesses which would provide shared office equipment, work space and conference rooms.

- Artists' studios
- Small non-industrial manufacturing such as: 3D Printing
- Become a resource for funding opportunities for our entrepreneurs by promoting the City of Gaithersburg ToolBox program, Montgomery County or private grants and micro loan funds.
- Establish a KCF grant fund to provide seed money for entrepreneurs, specifically for artists and restaurants, who fall short of funding from other sources.
- Establish a marketing fund to be used for:
  - Website, [onemainstreet.org](http://onemainstreet.org) (own domain), to include pages for local businesses with menus, sales, etc.
  - Social media and print media
  - Brochures, visitor maps
  - Marketing efforts targeted at education on Business Investment Districts for phase 2.
  - Stepping into the void left by the KDP by planning and promoting new events of benefit both to Main Street and to the local community such as Arts Festivals or International Festivals.

Phase 2 Goal: To facilitate the steps needed to make OneMainStreet a financially self-sustaining operation with the ongoing management and marketing resources needed to continue improvement of business mix and vitality.

- Finish the promotional campaign begun under Phase 1 of the benefits and resources available to the owners and tenants of a cohesive approach to business on Main.
- Move through the process and vote for a BID
- Market Feasibility Study
- Establish a board for OneMainStreet to include property owners and business owners.
- Turn over the full management to OneMainStreet, a fully owned subsidiary of KCF.

**CAPITALIZATION:**

**Phase 1/Year 1:**

Main Street KCF Office & Gathering Place: \$25,000 for one year

Business Opportunity Grant Fund: \$50,000

Marketing Fund: \$20,000

Part time staff: \$30,000

Events: \$10,000

**Total: \$135,000**

**Phase 2/Year 2:**

If the vote for a BID or similar funding mechanism is approved, these funds will cover operating expenses on a go forward basis. If the BID or alternative funding source is not approved, the owners & tenants on Main Street would be on their own, but hopefully with new business and new energy established through our efforts.


**We propose an allocation of \$135,000 from the TIC fund for this project.**

**We request authorization to proceed with development of a full Phase 1 proposal under the outline as presented**

**Attached is the Survey Summary**

# Kentlands Main Street Survey Results

March 2017

Powered by  SurveyMonkey

30 Respondents of 70 Units (16 Lakelands /54 Kentlands)

15 of the 30 were both Building/Business Owners

42.8% Provided Feedback

## Optic Survey

### Second Level

Consistently Vacant

### Third Level

Most Residential with the exception of 3 to 4 units

### Maintenance

Big Issue both Outside and Inside of Buildings

### Questionable Businesses

Staff cannot communicate nor can provide proof of certification

### Way-finding

Business owners believe to be only accessible by customers who know they are there or have called/researched in advance.

- 85.2 % of respondents are Kentlands Citizens.
- 70% have been in Business for 5 years or more; 30% has been for more than 10 years.
- Parking and **Business Mix** are most Significant Challenges
- 1/5 is KDP members.
- KDP, KCA, LCA and the City are of minimal or no influence to the businesses
- Why? – no interaction
- 93% Supported various degrees of needed improvements for Main St
- Nearly half would consider participating in a group that manages the downtown appearance.
- 88% of Buildings are individually managed.

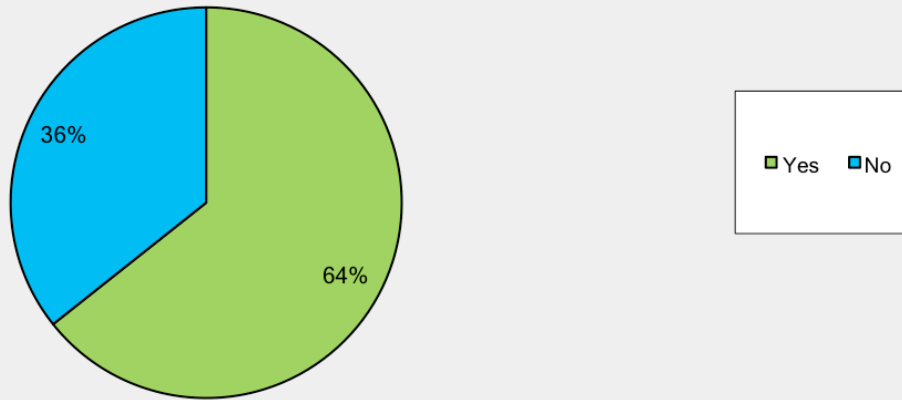
### Retail Consultant Analysis

- Main Street behaves as any Main Street America without the town to hold it together or give it sense of belonging.
- Merchants do not share cultural or social common ground.
- Management and as a result, Business mix is the biggest challenge under the current configuration.

### Retail Consultant Recommendations

- Comprehensive Management Strategy to Enable the Business Mix Desired and to Generate a Common Voice
- Strategic Approaches: Live/works HOA, Parking Tax or BID (most feasible)
- Marketing Initiative for Momentum
- An independent source of Funding is to initiate this process.
- Market Feasibility Study

Would you participate in a unified comprehensive marketing plan for Kentlands Downtown that would increase the breadth of potential tenants and improve the overall mix of businesses in the area?



How would you feel about taking community business mix preferences into account when considering what type of tenant to put in your unit(s)?

