

# **Main Street Maryland in the Anacostia Trails Heritage Area**

*Addressing Inequities in the Maryland Main Street Program*

Luca Bloom, Catie Huey, Roland Kahn

School of Public Policy, University of Maryland—College Park

PLCY400

Under the supervision of Professor Martin Meagle Sanders

May 2023



PALS - Partnership for Action Learning in Sustainability

An initiative of the National Center for Smart Growth

Gerrit Knaap, NCSG Executive Director

Kimberly Fisher, PALS Director

## **Abstract**

This report evaluates the Maryland Main Street (MDMS) program for its equity and relevance to communities within the Anacostia Trails Heritage Area (ATHA). Maryland Main Street is a downtown revitalization program that supports designated communities. This report assesses the MDMS application process, specifically considering the program's accessibility and whether it offers adequate opportunities to local businesses and diverse communities that may not fit the traditional definition of a downtown area. The report also investigates the potential of West Hyattsville to become a designated main street area.

The report's research includes quantitative data on the demographics of West Hyattsville, as well as interviews with Maryland government officials involved with the project, such as local leaders from successful Main Street designations in Laurel and Mount Rainier. The study also compares the demographic and census data of these communities with West Hyattsville.

The findings from both qualitative and quantitative data result in three policy recommendations: adjust the Maryland Main Street application process to improve the program's accessibility, equity, and transparency; expand and promote the MDMS affiliate program; and consider West Hyattsville for Main Street designation or affiliation.

## Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Background and Research Methodology	5
Literature Review	5
Findings	10
<i>Quantitative Findings</i>	11
<i>Qualitative Findings</i>	14
Recommendations	17
<i>Improve Application Transparency and Equity</i>	17
<i>Expand and Promote MDMS Affiliate Program</i>	18
<i>Consider West Hyattsville for Main Street Designation</i>	19
References	20

## Introduction

Small and local businesses in the Anacostia Trails Heritage Area (ATHA) face many obstacles regarding their development and growth. These obstacles include ineffective and insufficient government support, limited pedestrian and bicycle accessibility, and increased rent and other costs that favor national businesses over local ones.

To address these issues, this project researches and analyzes literature and incorporates interviews with relevant stakeholders. Based on the research, the policy recommendations are designed to increase the growth potential of small businesses while fostering sustainable holistic development (public works, amenities, infrastructure, safety, etc.).

These changes can be achieved through Maryland Main Street (MDMS), a program that aids main streets and downtown areas of municipalities that meet program requirements. The Maryland Main Street program seeks to “improve the economy, appearance and image of their traditional downtown business districts” using funds from the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (Seitz, 2018).

This report evaluates the program and West Hyattsville, a community within the ATHA, guided by a two-part research question. First, how can MDMS increase equity for areas in the Anacostia Trails Heritage Area that may not be as financially advantaged or not fit the “traditional” definition of a Main Street community? Second, is West Hyattsville positioned to become a designated Main Street or Main Street affiliate?

The MDMS program can assist communities in the ATHA and eventually the whole of Prince George’s County through systematic redevelopment, but it currently operates with limited scope and includes only a few communities. With input from the Anacostia Trails Heritage program, this report recommends policy changes that enable MDMS to support more Prince George’s County communities with the program. West Hyattsville will demonstrate that communities within the ATHA have the economic vitality to create thriving Main Streets.

## **Background and Research Methodology**

This report's research focuses on the following issues with the current MDMS program: inadequate state support, an inaccessible application process with overly stringent requirements, and increasing expenses and costs for small businesses owners.

Demographic research was sourced from U.S. Census data on West Hyattsville and similar communities that are designated or affiliated Main Streets. Interviews with stakeholders included ATHA, government leaders from Laurel and Mount Rainier as well as internal stakeholders such as MDMS and the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) employees.

A site visit to the potential designated area was also conducted.

## **Literature Review**

### *Inadequate State Support for the MDMS Program*

Maryland communities that meet the MDMS program criteria are recognized by the State as designated Main Street areas, making them eligible for services and assistance, including architectural design aid, federal grants and loans, and regular site visits during development to ensure long-term efficacy. The current program is generally unfavorable toward lower income communities, and as a result, adversely affects smaller and local businesses. This isn't due to explicit discrimination, but to the rather precise and specific eligibility criteria for the program.

For example, requirements include a minimum population of 1,000, employment of a program manager to organize and maintain a volunteer board of directors or advisory committee and other committees (made up of public and private sector representatives), commitment to providing a sustainable program budget, being a State-approved "Sustainable Community," and a defined, walkable central business district with a significant number of historic commercial buildings (Seitz, 2018).

This is an extensive list, and one that eliminates several communities in Prince George's County that lack financial resources, the population density, or the required historic "provenance." This is a somewhat arbitrary qualification for Main Street designation; there are numerous communities and locations in Hyattsville and in Prince George's County area with

historically significant land or businesses, but they're not commercial buildings, thus depriving the area in need from Main Street certification.

MDMS implements strict eligibility requirements to increase the chances of a successful Main Street development, but also requires communities to have significant existing capital and some degree of investment in an area. Even if unintentional, these requirements have the effect of serving wealthier communities. The issue of support and redevelopment projects favoring higher income communities is not unique to Prince George's County. The experiences of neighboring areas and other redeveloped communities is critical to assessing the effects of redevelopment on West Hyattsville.

### *Main Street Maryland Program Application and Process*

As stated by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, the Main Street Maryland Program is a main street revitalization program that aims to improve the appearance, accessibility, desirability, and economic standing of certain communities within the state, specifically traditional downtown areas and business districts. To qualify for designation, a community's population must be at least 1,000 people, be an area with a defined and walkable central business district that includes a substantial amount of "historic commercial buildings" (Seitz, 2018), and be identified as a "sustainable community" by the State. Cities must commit to employing a program manager, a volunteer board, and committees of both private and public sector representatives.

While West Hyattsville and other Prince George's County communities have the economic potential to benefit from MDMS, the program's application requirements inherently favor communities with already established main streets, making most communities within the Anacostia Trails Heritage Area (including West Hyattsville) ineligible. Examining the program reveals issues of inequitable funding in Prince George's County, and further identifies what needs to be done for communities in West Hyattsville to qualify for the program.

### *Existing Areas in the Maryland Main Street Program*

Examining areas in Maryland that have qualified for the program provides insight into how jurisdictions qualified, and the resulting program benefits. In 2016, New Market, Maryland received Main Street designation. New Market qualified for the program partially based on the

sustainability certification earned by adding new sidewalks, street lighting, and paving of the proposed main street (Etzler, 2016). As a designated Main Street, New Market became eligible for benefits such as grants to revitalize small businesses, which led to economic vitality and increased tourism (Etzler, 2016).

New Market's designation gives insight into how ATHA can qualify for the program. In New Market, a relatively wealthy community, also had an existing street to identify as a "main street" and had only to renovate sidewalks, street lighting, and paving to be considered sustainable. In contrast, West Hyattsville doesn't have the existing resources to meet the program's requirements. A potential solution might be to enroll Hyattsville communities in the Maryland Main Street Affiliate program, which would require further research.

### *Local Business Costs Case Study*

One example of a local business that has suffered from rising costs and inadequate state aid is the Banana Blossom Bistro. The Riverdale Park restaurant is within the ATHA in a popular main street area with a variety of small and corporate/chain businesses. Once a thriving and popular eatery, Banana Blossom suffered a significant loss in revenue during the COVID pandemic when it was already facing rising rent and operations costs.

To cover costs and keep the business running, Prince George's County Councilwoman Danielle Glaros helped organize a GoFundMe page for four local businesses, including Banana Blossom, raising over \$15,000. While a heartwarming act, it should not be the financial responsibility of government officials to privately fundraise and supplement government financial aid; this indicates a critical lack of support. Owner Phil Esguerra received no support from the County's Small Business Administration and "has had to rely on carry-out services and GoFundMe pages organized by residents in the community to stay afloat" (Tercasio, 1).

These issues can't just be blamed on the pandemic, as costs of rent, expenses, and essential goods continue to rise. Examining the financial successes and challenges of local businesses in main street areas provides valuable insight into the real-world challenges faced by businesses, especially those without the financial resources for redevelopment or as a support in a crisis.

### *MDMS Four Point Plan*

To understand how West Hyattsville fits into the current MDMS program, this report analyzes the program's four point plan and evaluates the program's sustainability. The four points are organization, design, promotion, and economic restructuring.

Organization, or how the community will run the program includes “fundraising, committee structure, membership recruitment, and consensus building and cooperation amongst the many businesses, individuals, institutions, and government offices with a stake downtown” (Robertson, 56). The design aspect includes the renovation and improvement of a community's physical qualities (Robertson, 57). Promotion includes marketing the newly redeveloped main street along with encouraging community engagement through events and activities (Robertson, 57). Finally, economic restructuring aims at “strengthening and diversifying” the community's economy (Robertson, 57), including hiring financial planners and advisors, and furthering the development of public works.

A closer look at the four point plan demonstrates how the Main Street program will enhance the viability of small businesses in West Hyattsville and includes the specifics of what West Hyattsville should expect if accepted into this program.

### *Sustainability in the Main Street Maryland Program*

Author Emily Talen provides more insight in determining what elements of the “Main Street Maryland Program” will make the program the most sustainable and viable for communities. Talen argues that geographical factors should be taken into consideration when redeveloping communities, rather than attempting to fill as much retail space as possible (Talen, 2022). This approach can help determine which areas along the Anacostia Heritage Trail Area are the best fit for the program, and how to make the most of the program once accepted. Along with this approach, the Anacostia Trails Heritage program's mapping technology can identify areas in ATHA that will be the best fit for a main street program.

### *Promotion of Cultural Tourism*

One of the main benefits of a main street development is an opportunity to promote cultural tourism. In the process of revitalization, it's important to consider an area's preexisting cultural context, and how different cultures may support the success of a main street program.



The history, cuisine, and artistic traditions of different groups is an opportunity to build a memorable community that can attract tourists (Loukaitou-Sideris, A., & Soureli, K, 51). The strategy of revitalization with cultural influences can create a main street that is unique in comparison to nearby areas and could substantially increase money cycling within minority communities.

### *Providing Recreational and Social Areas*

Main Street development can also provide a recreational and social hub for residents. Through initial research, residents of West Hyattsville and Mount Rainier support more developed Main Streets, walkability, more extensive public transit, and fewer chain stores (Hill). These factors contribute to the community's well-being; as mobility becomes easier, people are able to shop at local businesses and pursue recreation. Local businesses cater to the community more effectively than chain stores and are more visible, accessible, and personalized (Mehta, 2009). With the help of the MDMS, local businesses can exist in ATHA main street communities, providing valuable economic and social benefits. However, there are certain disadvantages to development that must be considered, including gentrification.

### *Community Displacement and Gentrification*

While redevelopment funding would boost the economy of West Hyattsville and of Prince George's County, one can argue that it might also encourage community displacement, specifically by gentrification.

The National Low Income Housing Coalition describes gentrification as a "profit-driven, race and class change of a historically disinvested neighborhood" in which "land is cheap and the chance to make a profit is high due to the influx of wealthier wage earners willing to pay higher rents" (National Low Income Housing Organization, 2019). Essentially, gentrification occurs when citizens and small businesses are displaced due to rising costs catalyzed by redevelopment of an area. This is seen especially in housing and retail rent costs and has been seen in cities and neighborhoods across the country, where residents have and continue to be forced to move due to the increased costs of housing, food, and taxes.

Gentrification is an issue in Prince George's County; with the Purple Line Corridor rail system in the County, the Maryland Department of Transportation argues that the new rail

system will “improve accessibility to jobs, attract development to older inner suburbs, and reduce car use by concentrating that development around stations and providing a more efficient alternative to driving” (Duckworth, 2019). While this sounds beneficial, it could also cause surrounding neighborhoods to face higher living costs and ultimately displace existing citizens of Prince George’s County. The Purple Line Corridor’s implications indicate the potential gentrification of the County. Redevelopment in West Hyattsville may increase housing and other costs and would likely result in some degree of gentrification.

### *Overpopulation as a Result of Gentrification*

Along with gentrification is the issue of overpopulation, which is also a possibility in the redevelopment of West Hyattsville and Prince George’s County. The increased demand to live and work in the area causes an influx of new citizens. Overpopulation of West Hyattsville and Prince George’s County could cause gentrification and impact existing citizens’ quality of life. Increased road and sidewalk traffic could result in longer commute times and will affect the housing market in West Hyattsville. As housing costs rise it will be increasingly difficult to find housing in the face of increased demand generated by redevelopment.

The process of developing a Main Street in West Hyattsville will require comprehensive research, analysis, and solutions that help to navigate receiving adequate and sustainable government funding and resources, while retaining the area’s cultural integrity and minimizing gentrification. Beyond a review of relevant literature, further research is needed to identify a location in the Anacostia Heritage Trail Area that can become a traditional main street area. Analysis with ATHA, local business data, and Census data should include finding the proper ratio of small businesses to corporate businesses and assist in forming policy recommendations.

## **Findings**

To understand the MDMS program, we gathered quantitative data on Hyattsville’s population and businesses from the Maryland census and interviewed local government officials and stakeholders to narrow the research scope and assist in forming policy recommendations. We

also conducted a site visit of West Hyattsville, identifying local businesses and recreational spaces that would be compatible with MDMS.

## **Quantitative Findings**

### *Prince George's County Population Statistics and Business Climate*

Prince George's County is a diverse business and residential environment. The population is over 64 percent African American and includes a large Spanish-speaking population with over 27 percent of residents speaking a language besides English at home. There are 970,000 residents in Prince George's County and the County's median household income is \$83,000.

Approximately 522,000 people make up the County's workforce, and 90 percent of companies are small businesses with 75 percent of businesses minority owned. Of the population over 16 years old, 70.4 percent is in the civilian labor force.

The County has 500 square miles of commercially zoned land; a huge potential for commercial and community development. Three major highways are easily accessible: I-95, 495, and 295, which serve a high volume of travelers and commuters.

### *Ratio of Small Businesses to Corporate Owned Businesses in Hyattsville*

As reported by the Hyattsville Community Development Corporation, there are 767 businesses in Hyattsville as of April 2023. Of those, 105 of are corporate owned, a 767:105 ratio of small businesses to corporate owned businesses.

### *Statistics on the Hyattsville Population*

<b>Hyattsville Prince George's County, Maryland 2021 Data</b>	
Population (#)	20,873
Population (%) of Hispanic/Latinx Residents	35.6%
Population (%) of White Residents	31.0%

Population (%) of Black Residents	28.0%
Population (%) of Asian Residents	5.2%
Population (%) Foreign Born	32.9%
Median Household Income	\$84,763
Civilian Labor Force Participation	78.8%
Food and Accommodation Sales (per \$1000)	\$20,851

Hyattsville's population is diverse, with well over half made up of minorities. Hyattsville has seen considerable population growth over the past 10 years; its 2010 Census population data showed about 17,000 residents. Hyattsville's work force is also active, with 78.8 percent of the population participating in the civilian labor force, above the 63.1 percent national average. In 2017, Hyattsville had total retail sales per capita of \$20,851, indicating some revenue potential for new businesses.

The high percentage of foreign-born individuals in Hyattsville (32.9 percent) exceeds the national average of 13.6 percent, which may indicate a higher percentage of potential immigrant or minority-owned businesses. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021). It's important to note that West Hyattsville is not a U.S. Census-designated area, however, these Hyattsville figures reflect a similar population and economy in West Hyattsville.

#### *Statistics on the Laurel Population*

<b>Laurel</b> <b>Prince George's County, Maryland</b> 2021 Data	
Population (#)	29,490
Population (%) of Black Residents	51.0%
Population (%) of White Residents	21.6%

Population (%) of Hispanic/Latinx Residents	18.3%
Population (%) of Asian Residents	9.4%
Population (%) Foreign Born	28.7%
Median Household Income	\$85,615
Civilian Labor Force Participation	75.8%
Food and Accommodation Sales (per \$1000)	\$134,666

In July 2021, the U.S. Census estimated that Laurel's population was 29,490. Of that total, 51 percent are Black/African American, 21.6 percent are White, 18.3 percent are Hispanic/Latino, and 9.4 percent are Asian. The population is 28.7 percent foreign born.

Laurel's median household income is \$85,615 and 75.8 percent of the population over the age of 16 is in the civilian labor force (71.9 percent of females over 16 are in the workforce). Laurel had \$134,66 revenue in accommodation and food sales (\$1,000).

As the only designated Main Street in Prince George's County, Laurel is a well-established area. It's worth noting that its demographic data is very similar to Hyattsville's.

#### *Statistics on the Mt. Rainier Population*

<b>Mt. Rainier</b> <b>Prince George's County, Maryland</b> 2021 Data	
Population (#)	8,212
Population (%) of Black Residents	47.5%
Population (%) of Hispanic/Latinx Residents	30.9%
Population (%) of White Residents	22.3%
Population (%) of Asian Residents	1.2%

Population (%) Foreign Born	34%
Median Household Income	\$59,268
Civilian Labor Force Participation	77.5%
Food and Accommodation Sales (per \$1000)	N/A

In July 2021, the U.S. Census estimated that Mt. Rainier’s population was 8,212. Of that, 47.5 percent are Black/African American, 22 percent are White, and 30.9 percent are Hispanic or Latino. The population is 34 percent foreign born.

Mt. Rainer’s median household income is \$59,260, is significantly lower than both Laurel and Hyattsville.

With a smaller population, Mt. Rainier’s one-time status as a Maryland Main Street Affiliate community aligns with the program’s mission.

## Qualitative Findings

*Interview—MD Main Street Coordinators Amy Seitz and Christine McPherson*

Amy Seitz and Christine McPherson manage grants, projects, and services related to MDMS and provide technical expertise to serviced communities. Seitz and McPherson are knowledgeable about the MDMS’s budgetary processes, the consideration of equity in applications, the programs successes and challenges, and how the program could be more compatible with Prince George’s County towns in the future. Additionally, they discussed how MDMS factors in rising rental costs.

Seitz said the affiliation program established a few years ago, has different requirements that the Main Street designation process. “Affiliation caters to communities that don’t have the resources/capacity to become a fully-fledged designated area by offering guiding principles, an annual work plan, strategy, and structure.” Affiliation gives access to resources with fewer application requirements and no long-term obligation to commit to the program. Additionally, she noted that a designated expert educates municipalities and nonprofits, which increases the program’s success.

McPherson added that MDMS has an open application program; any municipality can seek to partner with the program, indicating an issue with outreach rather than the application itself. She also recommended the affiliate program, which in small municipalities such as Snow Hill, are places that benefit from affiliation without meeting the requirements for designation.

When asked on how she would improve the program, Seitz said that MDMS could direct new businesses to vacant and available properties. This would ease the financial burden for small businesses by helping them find affordable leases and reducing renovation costs. Identifying vacant and available properties could reduce the effect of rising rental costs, freeing the program from supplying business subsidies. McPherson noted that MDMS's primary challenge is financial constrictions, especially given the program's large scope. The program is funded by the Maryland General Assembly, and it makes decisions about the MDMS budget. A larger budget will allow MDMS to hire more staff who could personalize help in communities.

*Interview—Mt. Rainier Mayor, Celina Benitez and Economic Coordinator, Ronald Hopkins*

Mt. Rainier left the MDMS program in the middle of the approval process, but Mt. Rainier is currently a Main Street affiliate. Benitez and Hopkins were asked about the application process, accessibility to appropriate resources, current programs to support local business, and the Rhode Island Avenue revitalization project, which the city undertook after receiving affiliation.

Mount Rainier stopped the application process because of a change in city staff. However, Hopkins indicated that the decision was not deliberate. The city is a Main Street affiliate, which enabled it to receive two grants: a DHCD grant and a technical assistance grant. The grants funded the Rhode Island Avenue revitalization project, which included renovated storefronts and a new mixed-use development. Mt. Rainier did not charge the renovated businesses for participating.

Regarding equity in the application process, neither Benitez and Hopkins applied to the program but noted that parts of the application would be difficult for smaller municipalities, such as collecting data on pedestrians and businesses. They also noted that MDMS is a relatively unknown program among smaller municipalities, and that more work should be done on outreach.

*Interview—Laurel Director of Community and Economic Development, Robert Love*

This agency assists new businesses in finding suitable rental space and assists in planning and zoning new development. Laurel is the only community with a planning and zoning function in the County. It is the only Prince George's County community to have successfully implemented a MDMS program, and its experience in the applications process and the program's impacts could be useful to West Hyattsville.

According to Love, it took nearly a year to collect all the required material for the application. Once designated, Laurel received DHCD funds, which Love said was made easier by having Main Street designation. Laurel also created a Main Street committee to oversee decisions about dispersing these funds. In Love's estimation, Laurel has successfully implemented the program due to their diligence in applying for grants and carrying out revitalization projects.

*Interview and Site Visit—Hyattsville Department of Community and Economic Development, Dorothy Estrada and Krissi Hubbard*

The Hyattsville Community and Economic Development Department is responsible for assisting residential and commercial revitalization in West Hyattsville. We hoped to better understand their access to different programs (including MDMS and other Affiliate programs), as well as goals for the future of the proposed Queen's Chapel Road Main Street.

The businesses along Queen's Chapel Road, also known as MD500, are within walking distance of the West Hyattsville Metro Station, restaurants and stores, with homes and parks farther down the road. There are a variety of businesses, both locally owned and corporate chains, with several vacant properties due to business closure during Covid-19. While corporate businesses had the advantage of greater access to capital, redevelopment efforts are already underway to better accommodate small businesses.

For example, a KFC drive-through at a busy Queen's Chapel Road intersection closed during the pandemic and is now being replaced by a local, family-owned, sit-down restaurant. This new business will support local customers and increases the intersection's pedestrian accessibility and walkability. Similar redevelopment that accommodates a range of customers and new types of businesses can be seen throughout the area.



Estrada verified some of our research findings as well as provided insight on the area's economic development. West Hyattsville is unique in its diverse populations, with a roughly equal three-way distribution of black, Hispanic, and white citizens. There is a strong immigrant population and high demand for work. The community experiences high traffic volumes, which is good for local businesses but is detrimental to pedestrian and cycling accessibility.

Hubbard described the main street businesses and attractions and areas that need further development. Local art is becoming more widespread and is a tourism draw for the area. There are three murals/installations on public buildings, funded by local government. The local arts scene is further bolstered by the annual Downtown Hyattsville Arts Festival. It is the County's largest arts festival, and West Hyattsville participates in it. The local government is committed to holistic redevelopment and improving the area's public perception.

Estrada and Hubbard also discussed the potential for new business development. Though there are popular supermarkets and restaurants in the area, there are also several unused lots in between the West Hyattsville Metro station area and Queen's Chapel Road. These lots are in high-traffic areas, but if undeveloped they have the potential for urban blight and loitering. Further economic redevelopment under MDMS or its affiliate program would help fill vacant lots with profitable, longstanding, and ideally, locally-owned businesses that better serve the community.

## **Recommendations**

### *Improve Application Transparency and Equity*

The current MDMS application process is extensive. Several requirements—community size, full-time staff, and historic buildings—limit access to the program's resources. The affiliate program is aimed toward smaller communities working to revitalize, but there isn't enough clarity and information on its benefits.

Along with the complex application, some program requirements deter many communities. In-depth information, such as counting pedestrian activity and small business analyses, aren't feasible for communities without staff to handle such projects.

MDMS should reevaluate the criteria for program approval and revamp the affiliate application. The interviews unearthed the need for better communication about the application

process, as well as the benefits it provides. The MDMS website is out of date and has no information for communities interested in applying to the Designated or Affiliate program. Although more specific information about application requirements is provided by the Maryland DHCD, the MDMS website should also provide that information.

The Maryland Main Street program should place more emphasis on small communities that have the potential to evolve and thrive with their partnership. Many communities are unaware of the affiliate program or have a difficult time understanding the program's requirements. MDMS should adjust its outreach about the services provided through both designation and affiliation. MDMS should consider assigning staff to recruit and guide potential program users through the application process. In her interview, Mayor Benitez of Mt. Rainier, pointed out their staff simply wasn't sufficiently informed about the application requirements to maintain affiliate status. With the MDMS's active involvement to guide communities through the process, more diverse and developing communities that will be able to benefit.

#### *Expand and Promote the MDMS Affiliate Program*

MDMS should consider expanding the affiliate program to assist more towns in Main Street development. Currently, there is a one Main Street affiliate program in Prince George's County, Mt. Rainier. Expanding affiliation offers flexibility to communities with less onerous requirements than Main Street designation; it is a good option for communities with no prior experience with MDMS.

Based on interviews, currently municipalities are recommended to apply as affiliates and transition to designation if the program works for them. If MDMS developed the affiliate program, Prince George's County communities could choose whether to benefit from Main Street affiliation for a period, or transition to full-time designation.

Interviews also indicated that affiliate programs with a paid Main Street coordinator are more successful at accomplishing their goals. Currently, there is no requirement for affiliated municipalities to employ a Main Street coordinator, and most affiliates don't. Affiliates without a Main Street coordinator, or other economic development staff, can either hire the staff or collaborate with a nonprofit to add resources.

Expanding the affiliate program will require promotion to make municipalities. According to the interviews, the MDMS program is unknown to smaller communities. Outreach

efforts should give local governments a full understanding of the affiliate program and how to apply. This could be done at seminars such as the Prince George's County Municipal League (PCGML), attended by elected officials and economic development coordinators. Both MDMS staff and representatives from partner towns should explain the program's benefits and share success stories, which may attract more applications from Prince George's County.

### *Consider West Hyattsville for Main Street Designation*

West Hyattsville, specifically the area surrounding Queen's Chapel Road, is this report's focus as a new main street. This area is a prime example of a popular downtown that meets most MDMS requirements but falls short of a few, specifically historical provenance (much of Hyattsville was developed in the 1950s). Also, West Hyattsville doesn't have a program manager or a volunteer board of directors (another MDMS requirement), which may not be feasible for this focus area.

However, the site has undeniable benefits and main street attributes that make it worthy of designation or at for consideration as an affiliate. The area has a diverse population with a high rate of employment, a variety of local businesses, and growing property values and population. The area appeals to new residents, due to the various attractions in the proposed main street area, including a thriving local arts scene, affordable real estate, and proximity to Metro.

But, there are areas for improvement that the MDMS program could address, including restructuring intersections along Queen's Chapel Road to make them more pedestrian accessible (which would also improve the area's "defined walkable central business district") and development of empty lots where several businesses were displaced by Covid, to combat urban blight.

Overall, the MDMS program would significantly benefit the area, and though West Hyattsville may lack the funding or resources to apply for the full program, the local government should pursue the MDMS affiliate program with the eventual goal of becoming a fully designated Maryland main street.

## References

- Bierbaum, A., Thomas, L., & Wolcott, P. (2020, March 27). *Small-Scale, Local Production in Prince George's County, MD*. Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. Retrieved February 21, 2023, from <https://www.mncppc.org/DocumentCenter/View/14836/Small-Scale-Production>
- Hyattsville Businesses. (n.d.). Airtable. <https://airtable.com/shrMYO4OOiU7ID1yq/tblTKDeioOjsVOy5v?backgroundColor=cyan&viewControls=on>
- Etzler, A. (2016, December 26). New market named Main Street Maryland affiliate. The Frederick News-Post. [https://www.fredericknewspost.com/news/politics\\_and\\_government/new-market-namedmain-street-maryland-affiliate/article\\_eff4dae4-f8fd-5498-b3d8-766c42174d61.html](https://www.fredericknewspost.com/news/politics_and_government/new-market-namedmain-street-maryland-affiliate/article_eff4dae4-f8fd-5498-b3d8-766c42174d61.html)
- Gentrification and Neighborhood Revitalization: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE? (2019, April 5). National Low Income Housing Coalition. Retrieved February 21, 2023, from <https://nlihc.org/resource/gentrification-and-neighborhood-revitalization-whats-difference>
- Hill, M. (2005). Increasing Walkability in West Hyattsville: A Case of Cross-Cultural Participation in Community Design and Planning. *Pacific Rim Community Design Network*, 289-295.
- Liu, C., Knapp, E., & Knaap, G. (2013). *Reclassification of Sustainable Neighborhoods: An Opportunity Indicator Analysis in Baltimore Metropolitan Area*. <https://drum.lib.umd.edu/handle/1903/21510>
- Lung-Amam, W. S. (2019, January 7). Surviving suburban redevelopment: Resisting the displacement of immigrant-owned small businesses in Wheaton, Maryland. *Journal of*

*Urban Affairs*, 43(3), 449-466. Taylor & Francis Online.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/07352166.2018.1555439>

MacFarlane, S. (2020, November 10). Concerns Over Whether Prince George's Was Shortchanged on COVID-19 Small Business Aid. *NBC4 Washington*. Retrieved February 21, 2023, from <https://www.nbcwashington.com/investigations/concerns-over-whether-prince-georges-was-shortchanged-on-covid-19-small-business-aid/2469006/>

Mehta, V., & Bosson, J. K. (2009). Third Places and the Social Life of Streets. *Environment and Behavior*, 42(6), 779-805. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013916509344677>

Oldham, S. G., & Vaughan, J. (2004). Context-Sensitive Design Around the Country: Some Examples. *Transportation Research E-Circular*, 15-19.

Roberts, J. D., Tehrani, S. O., Isom, Jr, R., Stone, E. A., Brachman, M. L., & Garcia, V. N. (2020, October 12). Case-comparison study protocol for gauging effects of neighbourhood trends and sickness: examining the perceptions of transit-Induced gentrification in Prince George's County. *BMJ Open*, 10. . <https://doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2020-039733>

Robertson, K. A. (2004). THE MAIN STREET APPROACH TO DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT: AN EXAMINATION OF THE FOUR-POINT PROGRAM. *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*, 21(1), 55–73. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43031059>

Seitz, A. (2018). Maryland Department of Housing And Community Development. Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. Retrieved February 23, 2023, from <https://dhcd.maryland.gov/communities/pages/programs/mainstreet.aspx>

Talen, E. (2022, Spring). The Future of Main Street: Retail Shrinkage. *Built Environment*, 48(1), 30-47. <https://doi.org/10.2148/benv.48.1.30>

*U.S. Census Bureau: Hyattsville, Maryland.* (n.d.). Retrieved April 16, 2023, from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045221>

*U.S. Census Bureau: Laurel, Maryland.* (n.d.). Retrieved April 16, 2023, from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/laurelcitymaryland/PST045221#PST045221>

*U.S. Census Bureau: Mt. Rainier, Maryland.* (n.d.). Retrieved April 16, 2023, from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/mountrainiercitymaryland>

Yang, Q. (1970, January 1). Suburban refill and regeneration, mixed use and higher density development in the Prince George Plaza Metro Station Area. Digital Repository at the University of Maryland. Retrieved February 23, 2023, from <https://drum.lib.umd.edu/handle/1903/17405>