

TESTIMONY OF LEIGH CATHERINE MILES, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
TENLEYTOWN MAIN STREET  
BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS, CONSUMER, AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS  
APRIL 20, 2016

Good morning Chairman Orange and members of the Committee on Business, Consumer, and Regulatory Affairs. My name is Leigh Catherine Miles and I am the Executive Director of Tenleytown Main Street. We are among the most recently designated D.C. Main Streets, and I would like to thank all of you, Mayor Bowser, Councilmember Cheh, and DSLBD Director Ana Harvey for your support of and investment in Tenleytown's business community. I would also like to acknowledge Lauren Adkins and Cristina Amoruso with DSLBD, as well as my fellow Main Street directors, who have lent their time, counsel, and extensive expertise to help ensure our new endeavor is a success.

While we are a new organization, Tenleytown Main Street has made significant strides since launching in January of this year with start-up funding from D.C. Main Streets. We have earned local buy-in, with 250 business and community members participating in Tenleytown Main Street meetings and events – more than 50 of those have committed to serving on our operating committees. Additionally, 341 businesses, workers, and residents took part in our visioning survey, resulting in a new vision for the Tenleytown commercial district that truly represents the interests of our community.

In the 15 weeks we have been operational, Tenleytown Main Street – and your investment in us – has already paid dividends for local businesses. During the January blizzard, we worked with the Wisconsin Avenue Clean Team to remove snow; publicized businesses that remained open during and immediately after the storm; and helped keep Tenleytown open for business during a particularly challenging period.

When local businesses saw sharply declining sales due to protracted utility work on Wisconsin Avenue, we worked with business owners, the Advisory Neighborhood Commission, the mayor's office and Pepco to modify work schedules, improve communication, identify financial assistance programs, and mitigate the impact of the infrastructure project on business owners.

Through community events, like the recent Tenley Tiger Run, we showcased local businesses to residents across the city.

And in just three days, we will hold the first annual Tenleytown Earth Day Clean-Up as part of our commitment to a clean and green business district. A dozen businesses have joined to sponsor the event and offer special promotions, and nearly 50 volunteers will lend a hand to beautify our commercial corridor.

These achievements are but the beginning. In the remainder of fiscal year 2016, Tenleytown Main Street will:

- work to establish a cohesive visual identity for the business district through new signage and storefront improvement projects;
- conduct a market analysis and business census;
- provide technical assistance to small and local businesses; and
- promote Tenleytown through music and art festivals that showcase businesses, attract customers, and highlight the unique attributes of the community.

We will also welcome several new businesses, including Beefsteak, District Taco, Chick-fil-A, City Bikes, and Classic Motors.

Now is an exciting time for Tenleytown. Our business district is poised for a renaissance. And in the next few years we anticipate at least three new development projects, which collectively could bring more than 500 new residents and offer nearly 65,000 square feet of additional retail space.

Continued investments in our business community and our unique Tenleytown brand are critical for our historic neighborhood to capitalize on these opportunities and keep pace with new and burgeoning neighborhoods across the District.

Thanks to the support of this committee, DSLBD, and the \$200,000 Main Street grant we received for FY16, Tenleytown Main Street is building an organization that not only serves our existing businesses, but will be able to attract new ones, bringing additional jobs and tax revenue to the District.

In just four months, we have already demonstrated that the Main Street model is the right one to build grassroots support and galvanize our businesses. A grant of \$150,000 for fiscal year 2017 would help ensure that the seed – as Mayor Bowser often describes Main Streets – planted earlier this year grows and blossoms. With renewed funding, we would expand our storefront improvement grants, increase direct technical assistance to small and local businesses, and strengthen the Tenleytown business brand.

Funding at this level would also allow Tenleytown Main Street to build a sustainable organization with a proven track record that can attract private funding to multiply the investment made by the District of Columbia. With your continued support, we can transition from a new organization, still in its infancy, to a mature Main Street program like those represented by my colleagues here today.

Again, I thank you for your continued investment in Tenleytown. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.