

1. Describe the organization requesting the grant, including the nature of the services it provides to the residents of ANC 3F. Please be specific. Attach additional pages as needed.

Van Ness Group Db a Van Ness Main Street (VNMS) is a nonprofit 501-C3 organization based in Van Ness, DC. Our mission is to make Van Ness a beautiful, sustainable, walkable, and vibrant economic and cultural hub by supporting the growth of existing businesses, attracting new, local enterprises, and activating local cultural institutions. Our work is to create a better place for our residents of all ages. All of our programs are accessible and aim to specifically ensure the health and success of our small businesses while creating inclusion and community across all of our demographics.

VNMS is part of the national Main Street movement and we use the following four transformation strategies as a guiding framework for our work—1) Economic Development - harnessing local economic opportunity and creating a supportive business environment for small business owners and the growing scores of entrepreneurs, innovators, and localists. 2) Design - enhancing the built environment or physical elements of our main street by capitalizing on the unique assets that set us apart from our DC neighborhoods. 3) Promotion – organizing and supporting events to enhance Van Ness as the center of the community and hub of economic activity, while creating a positive image that showcases our community’s unique characteristics. 4) Organization – ensuring our resources (partners, funding, volunteers, etc.) are mobilized to effectively implement our strategic plan.

Over the past several years, VNMS has been critical to the survival of our small businesses in the corridor and we expanded our borders from Van Ness Street to Nebraska Avenue just in time for the pandemic shut-down. Over the past 48 months, VNMS has awarded more than \$150,000 to our small businesses for COVID relief and rebuilding, harnessed the supportive power of our community, and created safe, and socially distanced ways for the community to get out and beautify our corridor. These events are ongoing due to popularity during the pandemic. We also continue to provide a beacon of light and hope with our permanent light installation above Bread Furst. While we have seen eight businesses close these past four years, we have opened 10 and have six in build-out phase slated to open in 2024. This is due to our ongoing technical assistance, promotion of our corridor, and the attractiveness and buying power of the neighborhoods of Van Ness, Forest Hills and Wakefield that we now serve after our expansion.

Van Ness Main Street is governed by a 13-member Board of Directors and employs a full-time professional executive director. Our largest institutional partner, UDC, provides VNMS with free office space at 4340 Connecticut Avenue. The Forest Hills Connection e-magazine and Friends of the Forest Hills Playground are two of our programs.

2. Describe the purpose of the grant and how the grant funds will be used. Please be specific. Attach additional pages as needed.

OVERVIEW

In 2020 as the pandemic took hold, VNMS shifted to full support of the small businesses but also on how to engage our community with safe, rewarding projects. One of these projects that is one of our cornerstone programs today is our Planting and Beautification program led by our Master Gardener and Master Naturalist, Kathy Sykes.

PROJECT SPECIFICS AND BENEFITS

VNMS is requesting \$5000 to continue our Beautification and Planting program on Connecticut Avenue from Van Ness Street to Albemarle and then Fessenden to Nebraska, our two commercial corridors. VNMS’ master gardener and master naturalist, Kathy Sykes will lead this ongoing program. She also graciously manages the volunteers that come from the community and across the city. And most importantly, she and her husband donate on average, \$7000 toward these plantings and also countless of hours carrying out the program.

This project, which began a few years ago, has removed the turf grass that does not support the environment and pollinators, nor does it sequester carbon. By planting native plants, less water is consumed, landscape contractors are not needed to cut grass or apply harmful fertilizers that often contain herbicides damaging the soil, our drinking water and killing beneficial insects. Our program also brings flowering plants to the neighborhood during the Spring, Summer and Fall seasons and supports native bees that need uninterrupted food, (pollen and nectar). And, it promotes beautiful scenery along our sidewalks and streets. We also remove invasive plants—a benefit for Rock Creek Park. We plan to add more evergreen plants and shrubs that provide interest year-round.

More than 70 percent of the plants, shrubs and seeds are native plants to the DC area, which are essential to saving the native pollinators and restoring the environment. This percentage is based on scientific findings to promote the next generation of pollinators.

Another benefit of the community planting is that it promotes connections. Numerous people new to the neighborhood join because they are looking for activities to get to know their community and neighbors.

Timeline:

March through May	Plantings and Maintenance
June through August	Watering, plant replacements, maintenance
September through November	Plantings and maintenance

4. Describe any other funding that the applicant has secured, or plans to secure, for the project

VNMS will continue fundraising for this program, continue to work with the businesses that are investing in the plantings, and obtain donations from the building owners. This will maintain and enhance the investment started with the last ANC Grant that included \$4000 for plantings.

5. Describe the project timeline, highlighting the use of the ANC 3F grant funding.

The funds will be fully utilized for our Spring, Summer and Fall 2024 planting program on Connecticut Avenue. We will add plantings, maintain our existing plantings that have created a pollinator corridor, and also welcome the new businesses as they open with support on beautification as needed.

6. Describe any involvement in the project, direct or indirect, by any ANC Commissioner.

NONE

7. Describe the project costs in detail, including the total project costs and detailed budgetary information about the activities that the grant funding will support.

The ANC grant funds will go to fully fund programmatic components of the project. No funds will be used for overhead.

Project Budget	ANC	VNMS	Total
Plants/Bulbs	\$4000	\$1000	\$5000
Supplies (dirt/planters)	\$1000	\$1000	\$2000
Total	\$5000	\$2000	\$7000