

An aerial photograph of the Brookland neighborhood in Atlanta, Georgia, showing a mix of residential and commercial buildings, trees, and streets. A black street signpost is visible on the left side of the image. A green rectangular sign is attached to the post, featuring the number '12' in large white font and 'St NE' in smaller white font to its right.

**12 St  
NE**

**Say “Yes” to 12<sup>th</sup> Street  
Strengthening Brookland’s  
Historic Retail Corridor**

## About BNCA

For over 75 years, the mission of the Brookland Neighborhood Civic Association (BNCA) has been to provide a forum for considering and advancing the interests of Brookland residents on issues affecting the Brookland community. With the support of our members, we advocate on issues that are important to Brookland such as real estate development projects, public safety, and traffic and transit concerns. We convene monthly meetings as well as special neighborhood events like clean-ups, social hours, and the annual Great Brookland Yard Sale. Our all-volunteer board is elected annually. Learn more about BNCA on our [website](#).

## Executive Summary

12th Street NE has functioned, for more than a century, as Brookland’s walkable main street: a place to shop for daily needs, meet neighbors, and build community. Today, the corridor is at an inflection point. While several stalwart businesses continue to anchor the street, other longstanding businesses have closed, vacant storefronts persist, foot traffic is down, and the cost of operating a small enterprise has escalated markedly. Yet the underlying assets—a loyal and civically engaged community, a compact and legible street network, adjacency to Catholic and Trinity Universities, and a tradition of neighborhood entrepreneurship—remain strengths to build on. This report presents a plan to protect and invigorate 12th Street so that it continues to anchor Brookland’s civic and economic life.

BNCA undertook three complementary workstreams to ground its analysis in real-world experience: (1) a May 20, 2025 business roundtable with current and former 12<sup>th</sup> Street proprietors; (2) one-on-one interviews with property owners, leasing agents, and a longtime 12<sup>th</sup> Street business owner; and (3) a neighborhood survey with 340 responses fielded September 5-28, 2025.

Our survey reveals that spending on 12th Street has slightly declined compared with the pre-COVID period, no doubt in large part as part of a nationwide trend away from bricks and mortar retail to online shopping and delivery services. Our analysis also highlights other issues that are more specific to 12<sup>th</sup> Street, including concerns about the retail mix, dissatisfaction about the streetscape, and the challenge of meeting the needs of new businesses in aging storefront spaces.

But there are also reasons to be encouraged. Services-oriented businesses, such as hair and nail salons, dry cleaning, child daycare, and pet care, appear to be doing well. Additionally, several stalwart restaurants and shops, with very loyal customer bases, continue to anchor the 12<sup>th</sup> Street corridor.

However, our survey indicates that the neighborhood would benefit from more variety, particularly “third place” venues such as cafes, bookstores, and other gathering locations.<sup>1</sup> The desire for third places is substantiated by the popularity of some newer 12th Street arrivals such as Cool Coffee and The Harp. The opening of Trader Joe’s at Monroe Street Market and the

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<sup>1</sup> The term “third place” was coined by urban sociologist Ray Oldenburg in his book *The Great Good Place: Cafés, Coffee Shops, Bookstores, Bars, Hair Salons and Other Hangouts at the Heart of a Community* (1989). The term refers to informal gathering places where neighbors can interact outside the home and workplace.

impending redevelopment of the old Colonel Brooks lot at 901 Monroe Street creates opportunity for increased retail connectivity across the Monroe Street Bridge.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, Edgewood/University Heights has experienced significant growth and densification over the past several years, which could translate into more foot traffic on the Brookland side of the tracks.

This report recommends a three-horizon strategy for 12<sup>th</sup> Street:

- **Immediate Horizon: Say “Yes” to 12<sup>th</sup> Street.** Priorities focus on business owner coordination and communication, visible upkeep, predictable hours, and recurring activations that rebuild consumer habits.
- **Medium-term Horizon: Build Institutional Capacity.** Medium-term steps include establishing an organization dedicated to the ongoing vitality of 12th Street, formalizing partnerships with Catholic and Trinity Universities, and delivering a micro-grant program for storefronts.
- **Long-Term Horizon: An Actionable 12<sup>th</sup> Street “Vitalization Plan”.** Longer-term steps include investments in the streetscape, including pedestrian-scale lighting, electrical undergrounding, safer crossings, planters, public art, and small plazas.

BNCA presents these recommendations to the Brookland community and 12<sup>th</sup> Street stakeholders. BNCA will advocate for funds and in-kind support to begin implementing these strategies.

BNCA also recommends larger policy reforms, such as expanding the small retail property tax credit for qualifying leases, calibrating the vacancy tax at the storefront level, and piloting a tenant-improvement loan/guarantee program. These steps will address structural barriers to occupancy that affect many other similar streets throughout the city.

The message is simple: we have tools to address 12<sup>th</sup> Street’s challenges. With coordinated local stewardship and targeted city support, 12th Street NE can again be the everyday main street Brookland deserves. It can also demonstrate an approach to retail resiliency that serves the needs of a vibrantly diverse neighborhood, which may be applicable in other parts of DC.

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<sup>2</sup> The potential for 901 Monroe to increase connectivity between 12<sup>th</sup> Street and Monroe Street Market will be greatly enhanced if a retail tenant can be secured at the corner of 10<sup>th</sup> and Monroe. See Condition #4 in the 901 developers’ [proffer letter](#), which was incorporated into the Planned Unit Development application that was approved by the Zoning Commission. This condition resulted from productive discussions between the developers and Brookland community members.

## 1. Background and Context

BNCA launched this initiative in 2025 following several years of visible change. Popular establishments had shuttered, prominent spaces sat dark for extended periods, and merchants described growing business challenges. Residents expressed ambivalence in surveys and meetings—deep affection for the corridor’s role in neighborhood identity, coupled with frustration at limited options and inconsistent hours. The objective of this study is to document current conditions, synthesize stakeholder perspectives, and recommend a practical path forward that aligns community energy with public policy and private investment.

### 1.1 Corridor Geography and Study Area

For purposes of this report, “12th Street NE retail corridor” refers to the stretch from Rhode Island Avenue to Michigan Avenue, with emphasis on the Monroe Street node—widely regarded as

Map of Study Area



the corridor’s focal point. Land uses along the study area consist of one- to three-story mixed use and residential buildings with frequent narrow storefronts, interspersed with service businesses, houses of worship, and small surface lots. Sidewalk widths vary and are generally adequate but constrained in places by utility elements. Bus stops and crosswalks are present but unevenly designed in terms of comfort and visibility.

### 1.2 A Brief History of 12th Street

The street took shape as Brookland’s commercial heart after the 1908 opening of the Monroe Street Bridge resolved the hazardous grade crossing at what is now Michigan Avenue. In November 1910 the streetcar line was redirected onto Monroe Street and extended north to 12th Street, making the corridor the neighborhood’s logical trading place and social center. In 1911 the Masonic Hall at 12th and Monroe opened with a ballroom and retail at the ground level; in 1924 Brookland Hardware was established, becoming a beloved institution for decades. Together, these investments and enterprises solidified 12th Street’s identity as “downtown Brookland.” The 2015 closure of Brookland Hardware symbolized a broader transition in the corridor’s business mix and economics (Bygone Brookland, 2014 & 2015).

The historical lesson is instructive. Transit and public works altered the geography of demand; civic leadership and small business initiative turned that demand into a resilient local economy. The contemporary challenge echoes that arc: coordinated action is required to refresh the corridor’s value proposition in a marketplace shaped by remote work, shifting leisure patterns, online shopping, and regional competition.

## 2. Methods and Sources

Between May and October 2025, BNCA ran a process to triangulate perspectives of 12<sup>th</sup> Street among three stakeholder groups: business proprietors, property owners (and their agents), and neighborhood residents. On May 20, 2025, BNCA convened a well-attended roundtable at the Brooks Mansion, which provided a forum for merchants to speak candidly about costs, customer behavior, staffing, and safety in a forum that also included MPD and DC Council staff. Over the summer, BNCA leadership conducted one-on-one interviews with landlords and leasing professionals to better understand the real estate dynamics on 12<sup>th</sup> Street. These discussions explored costs to fit out spaces for retail use, rent expectations, storefront condition, and the role of professional brokerage and placemaking, among other issues. In September, BNCA fielded a community survey yielding responses from 340 neighbors regarding their attitudes and habits regarding the 12<sup>th</sup> Street retail corridor. A summary of findings from the survey can be found on the [BNCA website](#).

## 3. Current Conditions and Trends: Insights from BNCA's Research

### 3.1 Roundtable Discussion

Current and former restaurant owners described a paradoxical landscape. On the one hand, Brookland sustains loyal regulars and a strong sense of neighborhood ownership over 12<sup>th</sup> Street's fate; on the other, operating conditions have grown materially more difficult. Roundtable participants reported payroll costs dramatically increasing since 2019, alongside steep increases in food inputs, utilities, and insurance. Several discussed the administrative and financial complexity associated with tipping and credit-card processing for tips, and the challenge of adjusting menu pricing or service models without alienating regulars.

Participants generally noted that weekday demand remains soft, with activity concentrating on Thursday-Sunday. Owners attribute this to remote work and the decline of weekday, after-work socializing that once buoyed casual restaurants. One owner of a beloved, recently closed business decried the “bowling alone” effect of today's online culture.<sup>3</sup> Participants reported closing earlier or restricting service days to manage costs and concentrate demand.

The owner of a hair salon had a different perspective than the restaurateurs. Business is good, with a growing base of customers from inside and outside of Brookland. This contrasting perspective may reflect robust demand for bricks and mortar personal services businesses (salons, pet groomers, and the like), which are inherently more resistant to displacement by online shopping.

Lastly, the DC Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) participant at the roundtable reported low levels of violent crime on the corridor in 2025, with robberies and burglaries down compared with prior years. Merchants nonetheless linked perceptions of safety directly to lighting, cleanliness, and the absence of other people on the street in the evening. Several cited the CVS corner as a challenging node. The perception of safety may matter as much as the crime statistics for driving evening activity.

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<sup>3</sup> See Robert Putman, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (2000).

### 3.2 Stakeholder Interviews

BNCA reached out to various other stakeholders to get a more fulsome understanding of the business dynamics on 12th Street. The following synthesis integrates four vantage points: staff from one of the largest property owners/managers along 12<sup>th</sup> Street, a leasing advisor for another key 12<sup>th</sup> Street property owner, a recently retired store owner with decades of day-to-day operating experience and “institutional knowledge” about the corridor; and a Ward 5 DC Council staffer who regularly interfaces with District agencies and small business constituents in the neighborhood. While each stakeholder sees the corridor from a different seat, their observations converge on a common set of frictions and opportunities.

Property owners/managers emphasized the gap between what small tenants can afford and what most spaces need to reach “deal-ready” condition. Asking rents on 12th Street were generally cited in the \$25-\$55 per square foot range depending on size, condition, and co-tenancy. Fit-out budgets for older, non-conforming spaces frequently land in the \$200-\$500 per square foot range, particularly when basic systems upgrades or other renovations are required. In this environment, many independent operators lack the balance sheets—or the borrowing options—to cross the finish line without substantial tenant-improvement (TI) support. Yet it is difficult for landlords to provide TI incentives without a 5- to 10-year lease commitment from tenants, as they cannot be sure they will earn their money back.

This concern leads to caution about over-investing in speculative improvements and a preference for tenants with demonstrated success in other locations over new businesses. Owners prefer to wait for “credit-quality” tenants before committing to TI, which can extend vacancy and create dark stretches that may hurt the whole block. The vacancy effect may be magnified where property owners have assembled parcels for potential redevelopment, as appears to be the case on the Southwest portion of the 3500 block of 12<sup>th</sup> Street NE. The property owners also recommended undertaking market research to better understand demand dynamics for retail on 12<sup>th</sup> Street. (The BNCA Neighborhood Survey can be viewed as a “first cut” at this kind of research.)

The leasing agent, who has extensive experience in retail development across the DMV, perceived that Brookland does not articulate a clear retail “message” to attract customers from other neighborhoods. The street also needs a critical mass of compelling and up-to-date retail concepts, ideally with a strong anchor tenant. Additionally, the disconnect with Catholic University is notable as 12<sup>th</sup> Street should be attracting more customers from across the tracks.

The longtime store owner we interviewed highlighted irregular street activation as a problem. In the owner’s words, “The real issue is the walking. People on the street. If we can make 12th Street more walkable and encourage people to be on the street even in the evenings. If we had some nightlife and it was safe it would make a difference.” The owner also recalled an earlier era of 12<sup>th</sup> Street with more social connection between business owners. She discussed the role of the (long-defunct) Brookland Business Association, which helped proprietors along 12<sup>th</sup> Street to connect and coordinate with one another. (Apparently, a Main Street organization also once existed, though we could not find any record of its existence.)

The DC Council staffer framed 12th Street’s issues as a familiar but addressable pattern: small-tenant capital gaps, uneven storefront conditions, and limited corridor-level capacity. The

was cautious optimism that targeted policy initiatives could help 12<sup>th</sup> Street and other, similar retail corridors around the city. Ideas to explore might include a targeted expansion of small-retail property tax credits, vacancy tax calibration, micro loans to backstop small business tenant-improvements, and a neighborhood improvement organization like those proposed in the (pending) Neighborhood Management Authority Act of 2025.

Property representatives and business owners referenced regional peers—Takoma Park, Del Ray, and portions of H Street NE—to illustrate the importance of coordinated branding, placemaking, and event programming. Takoma Park is viewed as an aspirational comparison given its similar density and demographics but more active streetscape. These comparisons underscore how consistent hours, visible street care, and a reliable events rhythm can train customers to visit. One interviewee noted that well-performing anchor tenants can catalyze activity that benefits nearby independents. Interviewees chalked the difference up to a range of factors, including street safety and cleanliness, retail mix, and potentially jurisdictional issues such as ease of getting a new storefront permitted.

### 3.3 Neighborhood Survey

The September 2025 survey yielded 340 responses from Brookland and adjacent neighborhoods. Among respondents living in Brookland pre-pandemic, average household spending on 12th Street was estimated at \$267 per month before 2020 and \$204 per month in 2025, a meaningful decline. A majority reported visiting the corridor less often than before.

Neighbors acknowledge the strong potential of 12th Street but agree that it requires renewed attention and investment. Despite a continued sense of local pride, there has been a noticeable decline in spending and activity compared to the pre-COVID era. Residents value the corridor’s diverse mix of small businesses, though many are concerned about recent closures and hope to see more restaurants, cafés, and third places that foster social gathering—especially around Monroe Street, the area’s natural focal point. There is widespread support for coordinated programming, such as “First Friday” events or seasonal festivals, to energize the street and increase foot traffic. While Yes! Organic Market and CVS serve as the corridor’s retail anchors, CVS is frequently viewed as underperforming and detracting from the overall appeal of the street.

Open-ended responses sorted into ten recurring themes, which are summarized in the table below. These themes align closely with the testimony gathered at the roundtable and in interviews, strengthening confidence in the diagnosis.

Several respondents suggested that establishing a formal corridor organization—such as a Main Street program—might be necessary to coordinate revitalization, attract investment, and provide consistent stewardship for the long-term success of 12th Street. Ultimately, neighbors recognize that the street faces significant structural challenges that will require dedicated planning, investment, and ongoing collaboration among the community, local businesses, and city partners.

## Qualitative Themes from Neighbor Survey

Theme	Summary
Street Safety and Traffic Control	12th street feels unsafe to pedestrians.
Family-Friendly Amenities and Activities	Residents want more family-oriented venues like cafes, salons, and spaces for kids.
Development, Growth, and Density	Support for mixed-use and moderate growth to boost foot traffic and business viability.
Local Identity	Strong attachment to past venues and preference for local over chain businesses.
Streetscape and Aesthetic Appeal	Desire for trees, greenery, lighting, and improved pedestrian crossings.
CVS and Problematic Nodes	The CVS and nearby properties are seen as unsafe or underperforming anchors.
Vacancies and General Vitality	Vacancies and turnover dampen confidence in the corridor.
Operating Hours and Consistency	Limited or unpredictable hours reduce reliability of local retail options.
Need for Retail Cohesion	The corridor could benefit from a more cohesive retail mix.
Economic Vision for the Corridor	Call for planning and marketing under a Main Street-style model.

### 4. Key Challenges: 12th Street at a Crossroads

The different prongs of our research converge on a common diagnosis. The 12<sup>th</sup> Street retail corridor is a fragile ecosystem facing several key challenges:

1. **Vacancies.** Several storefronts along 12<sup>th</sup> Street have been persistently vacant. BNCA recently walked the core block between Monroe and Newton Streets and found the vacancy rate to be approximately 30% (7 of 24 storefronts). Some of these storefronts were once cornerstone businesses that brought activity and energy to the street, especially after hours.
2. **Changed Customer Habits.** Changes in consumer behavior due to online shopping and delivery services is a global challenge for brick-and-mortar retailers whose effects are demonstrated locally on 12<sup>th</sup> Street. The era of the local “general store” has long passed. Retailers that thrive in the current environment tend to offer what online merchants

cannot match. Successful retailers provide services or experiences that are hard to replicate online. These might take a variety of forms: personal care, grab and go convenience, welcoming gathering spots, etc.

3. **Rising Costs.** Inflation is challenging for any business—but especially a single-location store or restaurant. Merchants respond to rising costs by raising prices. Customers, in turn, respond by decreasing their number of visits, which makes covering fixed overhead costs, like rent, even more difficult. This pernicious cycle is, again, a widespread issue in America today, but its effects are quite apparent, especially in the hospitality sector, on 12<sup>th</sup> Street.
4. **Aging Buildings.** 12<sup>th</sup> Street’s century-plus history is potentially one of its best assets, but it is also a liability. Many buildings along 12<sup>th</sup> Street suffer from deferred maintenance. Opening a business in some of the more prominent locations requires more than a typical fit-out. In some cases, structural repairs are needed. Someone needs to bear these costs or at least the risk associated with paying for them over time. The resulting gap between landlord and tenants is a real problem that keeps storefronts vacant for long stretches.
5. **Lack of Coordination.** As a street full of independently operated businesses, 12<sup>th</sup> Street lacks one of the main advantages enjoyed by many newer retail districts: coordinated planning. Other districts have a common developer or organization whose job is to ensure that the “whole is greater than the sum of its parts”. This may happen by a single developer orchestrating a compelling retail mix, a special district providing shared services, or a non-profit organizing compelling events and public art displays. 12<sup>th</sup> Street, at present, has none of the above. Indeed, even basic communication among merchants seems to be much more infrequent and *ad hoc* than it has been in the past.
6. **Lackluster Public Realm.** 12<sup>th</sup> Street itself is due for a makeover. The perception that 12<sup>th</sup> Street is unpleasant and unsafe persists among neighbors and business owners alike. But in today’s highly competitive retail environment, pleasantness and safety are mere table stakes. Shoppers are attracted to retail districts that present an interesting and differentiated identity, reinforced by signage, art, lighting, and other public works that reinforce the “vibe” to nearby neighbors and visitors from other parts of the city.
7. **Real Estate Trends.** Development is a two-edged sword for an old commercial district like 12<sup>th</sup> Street. On the one hand, more housing density brings more customers to support local businesses. And larger scale developments can often anchor a street with core set of retail tenants and street-facing amenities. Yet, these benefits are not pre-ordained. Recent experience with some nearby developments has revealed a trend toward purposing ground-floor spaces for residential units, creating gaps in retail corridors and exacerbating the risk of “corridor collapse”. We are fortunate that, so far, the main stretch between Monroe and Newton, has retained many of its storefronts, despite persistent vacancies. Indeed, one recent plan to develop a significant part of that block included a significant retail component. But we are cognizant that in the current market such plans are under constant pressure and could change at any moment. A loss of storefront continuity could permanently damage the nature of 12<sup>th</sup> Street as Brookland’s main street.

The problems facing 12th Street are cumulative rather than singular. High operating costs constrain what individual businesses can offer. Fit-out costs inhibit new entrants. Inconsistent hours, lighting gaps, and visible vacancies dampen evening appeal. Absent a corridor-level organization, the burden of branding, events, and storefront improvements falls on individual

merchants and owners, who often lack bandwidth. Meanwhile, customers—who say they want to patronize local establishments—encounter a corridor that does not reliably reward spontaneous visits. Each element reinforces the others. Reversing the cycle requires coordinated action that improves visibility, viability, and velocity at once.

## 5. Strategy and Recommendations

BNCA proposes a three-horizon strategy organized around immediate activation and care, medium-term institution-building, and longer-term policy and capital investments. The recommendations below are written as general guidance and can be adopted in whole or phased to match capacity and funding. Ultimately, ownership of this strategy will need to reset with a purpose-built nonprofit dedicated to ensuring 12<sup>th</sup> Street’s vibrancy in the next decade and beyond.

### 5.1 Immediate Horizon: Say “Yes” to 12th Street

Establish a 12th Street Committee with named representatives of businesses, property owners, and community members. The group should meet monthly with a simple agenda: coordinate small but meaningful activities that will improve the corridor’s look and feel, making it easier for shoppers to say “yes” to 12<sup>th</sup> Street. Example activities might include:

- Convene 12<sup>th</sup> Street business owners monthly to share information and mutual concerns, maintain a contact list for business owners to reach one another
- Coordinate weekday business hours to build foot traffic and plan for a regular (e.g., monthly) street activation event
- Manage a basic cleanliness, lighting, and tree box maintenance checklist for retail-oriented blocks.
- Publish and regularly update an online Brookland business directory / map
- Work with existing neighborhood groups (e.g., BNCA, Garden Club) on beautification events

Small, synchronized improvements compound in perception; the goal is to re-train residents that 12th Street is a pleasant, predictable choice for an evening walk, especially in warmer months.

### 5.2 Medium-Term Horizon: Build Institutional Capacity

The 12<sup>th</sup> Street Committee should convene a founding board and incorporate a nonprofit dedicated to corridor management—a 12th Street Main Street or functional equivalent. Year one priorities for the organization might include:

- Raise money from city or private sources to fund a part-time Executive Director and to fund contractors for *ad hoc* projects
- Take ownership for ongoing coordination of the activities initiated by the 12<sup>th</sup> Street Committee in year 1
- Develop a simple, legible 12<sup>th</sup> Street brand, website, and social media channels
- Formalize a “campus-to-corridor” partnership with Catholic University to encourage student/staff patronage of 12<sup>th</sup> Street businesses
- Develop a neighborhood loyalty program (e.g., a Brookland Passport) that rewards local shopping in and around the 12<sup>th</sup> Street corridor

- Act as concierge for prospective tenants by keeping an active inventory of spaces and contact points

Some of these actions could be undertaken in advance through BNCA as an “incubator” of the new 12<sup>th</sup> street new organization.

### 5.3 Long-Term Horizon: An Actionable 12<sup>th</sup> Street “Vitalization Plan”

Perhaps most importantly, the new 12<sup>th</sup> Street organization should work to secure public and private funding for an actionable planning and placemaking study for 12<sup>th</sup> Street. Ideally, the grant would be used to procure the kind of professional expertise routinely used in private development districts to envision an augmented 12<sup>th</sup> Street experience that builds on the neighborhood’s authentic identity, diversity, and history. Key elements of the study might include:

- Streetscape improvements such as public art features, planters, etc.
- Infrastructure improvements such as utility undergrounding, curb management strategies, traffic safety improvements, etc.
- Shared services functions (e.g., supplemental street cleaning or safety monitoring) to the extent practical
- A “retail refresh” program to procure and coordinate a “blitz” of targeted (and ideally subsidized) façade and interior renovations for a cohort of participating 12<sup>th</sup> Street tenants

The study should include a strategy for funding the above activities, including by leveraging existing District programs (e.g., DSLBD Main Streets, Great Streets, MuralsDC).

### 5.4 Advocate for Policies that Support 12<sup>th</sup> Street and Similar Neighborhood Corridors

BNCA, ANC partners, and Ward 5 leadership should advocate for District-wide public policy tools to invigorate neighborhood retail corridors like 12<sup>th</sup> Street. Key policy levers might include:

- Expanding the small retail property tax credit for landlords who lease at accessible rates to qualified small businesses;
- Establishing a tenant-improvement loan or guarantee program that lowers the cost of capital for fit-outs
- Streamlining permitting for new retail businesses and for temporary uses inside retail locations (e.g., pop-ups); allow certain types of permits to “travel with the property” to avoid expensive and time-consuming re-permitting for similar uses
- Amending zoning to make retail a required or preferred use on 12<sup>th</sup> Street, at least between Monroe and Newton Street NE, to protect against “corridor collapse”
- Calibrating the vacancy tax at the storefront level to incentivize activation of long-dormant retail locations
- Dedicating funds to support the 12<sup>th</sup> Street organization and vitalization plan programs (e.g., street improvements, storefront grants) recommended above

Of course, neighbor and stakeholder input is essential to ensuring that policy advocacy meets the long-term needs of the Brookland community.

## 6. Conclusion: 12<sup>th</sup> Street at a Crossroads

12th Street NE is more than a row of storefronts. It is how Brooklanders experience neighborhood life—where routine errands, chance encounters, and small celebrations happen. The corridor’s value to the community is immeasurable; its challenges are real but solvable. This report translates what residents, merchants, and property stakeholders told us into a practical program of action. The core steps—immediate activation and care, institution-building through a Main Street, and policy and capital alignment—are mutually reinforcing. With partnership from city agencies and nearby institutions, BNCA and the Brookland community can return 12th Street to a position of strength and ensure that the next generation experiences a vibrant, walkable main street.

### Sources

BNCA Roundtable on 12<sup>th</sup> Street Businesses, May 20, 2025

BNCA Interviews with 12<sup>th</sup> Street Stakeholders, 2025

12th Street Retail Corridor: Neighborhood Survey Results (BNCA, 2025)

How the Monroe Street Bridge Changed the Face of Brookland (Bygone Brookland, 2014)

The End of a Brookland Institution (Bygone Brookland, 2015)

### Contact BNCA

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