



January 31, 2019

Sustainable Community Application
ATTN; Mary Kendall
Division of Neighborhood Revitalization
Department of Housing and Community Development
2 North Charles Street, Suite 450
Baltimore, MD 21201

Dear Ms. Kendall:

I am pleased to submit the Town of Easton's Sustainable Communities Designation Renewal Application. This document is the product of our SC Workgroup, as augmented with our Town Staff as needed.

We have found the Sustainable Communities Program to be a useful tool in prioritizing our redevelopment efforts and look forward to taking even more advantage of it in this second version of our Action Plan.

I have attempted to follow the format and instructions as provided to us. If there are any errors, and certainly, should anything require clarification, please let me know and I will address it at once.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of our request. I am happy to answer any questions you might have. Please feel free to contact me at (410) 822-2525 or via email at lthomas@eastonmd.gov if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Lynn B. Thomas, Jr., AICP
Town Planner

*.. Flash Drive w/ GIS Files & Pictures enclosed



Town of Easton
Sustainable Communities

Application for Designation Renewal

January 31, 2019

CHECKLIST AND TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPLICANT: The Town of Easton

NAME OF SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY: Town of Easton Sustainable Community

Please review the checklist of attachments and furnish all of the attachments that are applicable. Contents of the application should be tabbed and organized as follows:

- ☐ **Section A - Sustainable Community Renewal Applicant Information**
- ☐ **Section B – Sustainable Community Renewal Report (Projects, Strategies and Partners)**
- ☐ **Section C – Sustainable Community Renewal Action Plan Update (Matrix)**
- ☐ **Section D – Sustainable Communities Workgroup Roster**
- ☐ **Section E – Signature Letter (acknowledging Disclosure Authorization and Certification)**
- ☐ **Section F – CD-ROM:** The CD-ROM should include the following contents:
 - If requesting a boundary modification, map in pdf format of the proposed Sustainable Community
 - **GIS shapefiles of the modified Sustainable Community boundary (if requesting a modification) and other GIS related data**
 - Pictures (jpeg format) of your accomplished projects of the last five years (as indicated in Section B)
 - Digital copy of completed Sustainable Communities Renewal Application

I. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY RENEWAL APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name of Sustainable Community:

Town of Easton Sustainable Community

Name of Renewal Applicant:

Town of Easton

Applicant's Federal Identification Number: 52-6000787

Applicant's Street Address: 14 South Harrison Street

City: Easton

County: Talbot

State: MD

Zip Code: 21601

Phone Number: (410) 822-2525

Fax Number: (410) 820-8016

Web Address: www.eastonmd.gov

Sustainable Community Renewal Application Local Contact:

Name: Lynn Thomas

Title: Town Planner

Address: 14 South Harrison Street

City: Easton

State: MD

Zip Code: 21601

Phone Number: (410) 822-1943

Fax Number: (410) 820-8016

E-mail Address: lthomas@eastonmd.gov

Other Sustainable Community Contacts:

Name: Robert C. Willey

Title: Mayor

Address: 14 South Harrison Street

City: Easton

State: MD

Zip Code: 21601

Phone Number (410) 822-2525

Fax Number: (410) 820-8016

E-mail Address: mayor@town-eastonmd.com

I. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY – General Information

A. Sustainable Community Boundary and Description

- (1) Are you requesting any changes to your Sustainable Community boundary? Describe why or why not?

Yes. We are requesting two relatively small additions. The first is the site of our existing hospital. With plans to build a new, regional-scale hospital by the University of Maryland Medical System, the site of their current facility, located immediately adjacent to our approved SC Boundary, becomes a prime potential redevelopment site. The second encompasses nine parcels that were annexed on Easton Point in December 2017. AS will be mentioned and described throughout this application, Easton Point and the Port Street Corridor is envisioned as a major redevelopment and infill project.

- (2) Include the following in as an attachment (if requesting a modification to your current boundary):

- a. PDF or JPEG of modified Sustainable Communities boundary map,
- b. GIS shapefiles of modified Sustainable Community boundary (mapped to the parcel boundary),

- (3) Approximate number of acres of entire SC Area: 616 (approximately 600 in original SC Area plus 16 acres of proposed expansion)

- (4) Existing federal, state or local designations:

X Main Street ☐ Maple Street

X National Register Historic District X Local Historic District ☐ Arts & Entertainment District

X State Enterprise Zone Special Taxing District ☐ BRAC ☐ State Designated TOD

X Other(s): Anticipating submission of A&E application in April of 2019. Also much of the area is part of locally-designated Planned Redevelopment Overlay District, Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area and Opportunity Zone

- (5) Describe the SC Area's current demographic trends (with respect to age, race, household size, household income, educational attainment, number of housing units, or other relevant factors). How have demographics changed in the last five years?

Given that we are between censuses and the ACS only updates total population estimates for the Town of Easton, this is difficult to answer. As detailed in our housing section, there has been some addition to the housing stock in the SC Area, some of which are the result of CL and SDSGIF grants received as a result of our SC Action Plan.

B. Organizational Structure, Experience and Public Input:

- (1) Describe any changes to the Applicant's organizational structure. Specifically, how has membership of the Sustainable Communities Workgroup changed in the last five years? Who are/were the leaders, and how will/did the Workgroup advisor or staff manage implementation of the SC Area Plan?

The members of the Town of Easton's SC Workgroup have changed, somewhat, all due to personnel changes at the Town. The current members of the group are:

Robert C. Willey, Mayor (same as in 2014)

Lynn Thomas, Jr., AICP – Town Planner (same as in 2014)

Trevor Newcomb, Planning Manager (Replaced Zach Smith who obtained Law Degree and left Town employment)

Megan Cook – Councilmember, Ward 4 (same as in 2014)

J. Edward Lynch – Easton Affordable Housing Board Member (same as in 2014)

Tracy Ward – Easton Economic Development Corporation, Executive Director (Replaced Mark Heckler who retired from Town Employment, after which the EEDC was formed)

Katie Reedy – Assistant Town Engineer (Replaced Brian Hause who retired from Town employment)

Ross Benincasa – Easton Business Alliance, Director (Replaced Jon Dynan as EBA became the successor to Easton Main Street)

Don Richardson, Town Manager (Replaced Robert Karge who retired from Town employment)

There have been two significant changes since 2014 that have influenced the make-up of the Town's SC Workgroup and the organizations associated with major activities in this area in general. The first was in the realm of economic development. Concurrent with the retirement of the Town's Economic Development Coordinator, the Easton Economic Development Corporation was formed to address a number of economic development tasks/issues on behalf of the Town, but intentionally formed outside of the structure of Town government. Also, at approximately the same time, the Easton Business Alliance became the successor organization to what was Easton Main Street, advocating for the interests of Downtown Easton and independent retailers throughout Easton.

The second change was with regard to engineering services. In 2014, the Town utilized the services of a private sector engineering firm for the majority of such services, with a single Town Employee responsible for coordination with the firm and for general project management. The Town has since hired a dedicated Town Engineer as a full time Town Employee and established an Office of Town Engineering, with a staff of five to provide both Town project management and plan review in-house.

Following approval of our SC application, the workgroup was convened by the Town Planner annually to discuss Community Legacy Applications, review their appropriateness in terms of consistency with the SC Action Plan, prioritize requests, etc.

- (2) What have been the strengths and challenges of the capacity of the Sustainable Communities Workgroup with respect to implementation of the SC Plan?

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section A

The strength of Easton's SC Workgroup lies in the diversity of the group, with two elected officials, two representatives of economic development agencies, and four Town employees who collectively are involved in the areas of Planning, Economic Development, Engineering, Overall Town Management, and all associated activities that those fields involve.

To the extent that there is a weakness, it is primarily with regards to our capacity to manage projects and plans given the host of other duties we all pursue. Easton is a progressive community that is increasingly proactive in addressing many of the issues associated with our Sustainable Community, and not solely in our SC Area. As one example, since our SC Program approval in 2014, we have annexed a partially developed Industrial Park and extended water and sewer to it to facilitate additional businesses and associated job growth, securing a CDBG to do so. More recently, we have just received a US Dept. of Commerce-EDA grant to develop a Town-owned parcel of land to create a number of relatively large, industrially zoned parcels to facilitate retention of existing Easton businesses needing room to expand, and attract new businesses to the community.

- (3) How did residents and other stakeholders in the community provide input to the Sustainable Communities Action Plan update? On which existing local plans (comprehensive plans, economic development plans, sector plans, etc.) is the Sustainable Communities Action Plan based?

Since a public hearing on the application for renewal is not required, there has been no public input directly on the SC Action Plan as detailed later in this application. However, it would be misleading to say there has been no community input. First, much of what is included is a continuation of our original SC Action Plan, and it was subject to an Easton Town Council Public Hearing. Second, and most significantly, many of the component parts of our SC Action Plan have been subject to community review and input. Just as one example, the Port Street Small Area Plan is referenced extensively throughout the SC Action Plan. That Plan was produced over the course of three years and is the direct result of the collective input of over 1,000 people, an unprecedented level of input for such a Plan.

The SC Action Plan Update, as was the case with the original SC Action Plan, relies heavily on the Town's overall Comprehensive Plan (which itself was produced with large-scale public participation throughout the update process). This is the same Comprehensive Plan that was in effect when our original SC Action Plan was created, although it has been amended to include a fairly extensive addition to describe the work, goals and objectives, etc., associated with the Port Street Small Area Plan.

- (4) Would you like any technical assistance from State agencies to help expand the capacity of your SC Workgroup or implement your SC plan? Please describe with which revitalization strategies you would like assistance.

One area where we might benefit from technical assistance concerns business improvement in a specific block of our SC Area. The 300 Block of Dover Street is within our SC Area, just beyond what is generally perceived to be Downtown Easton (and as such, is a gateway to Downtown) and part of the East End and Hill neighborhoods (practically identical in location). This block experiences problems with the physical quality of the structures, stability of the businesses located there, and at least the perception of code issues (Building, Property Maintenance). We have recently expanded our designated Main Street area to include this block, and hope this will allow for us to obtain façade improvement monies and that they will be utilized in this

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section A

block, but any additional resources that the State might be able to offer to stabilize and revitalize this block would be needed and appreciated.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY RENEWAL REPORT

PART I: QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT

Purpose:

The purpose of this assessment is to capture significant projects/ improvements that have been completed since the approval of your local government's Sustainable Communities designation.

In relation to the goals stated in your local government's Sustainable Community Action Plan, **please highlight at least three major accomplishments from the last five years**, including how you achieved them. When writing your narrative, consider the questions below and refer to the six elements discussed in the General Information section of this document (page iv) – Environment, Economy, Transportation, Housing, Quality of Life, and Land Use/Local Planning.

- 1) **Outcome:** Which outcomes identified in your Sustainable Community plan were you able to achieve?
- 2) **Projects:** Which projects did you implement in order to achieve the outcome? Also indicate when you started and completed these projects.
- 3) **Partners:** With whom (i.e. state agencies, local stakeholders) did you partner to complete projects?
- 4) **Impact:** What kind of measurable impact did the achieved outcome have on your community? Are there other intangible benefits?
- 5) **Pictures:** Please also include pictures that depict your accomplishments.

Descriptive Narrative: Please list the most significant accomplishments that apply.

Accomplishment 1:

Outcome: Adoption of Small Area Plan for Easton Point

Projects: In December of 2017, the Town Council adopted the Port Street Small Area Plan, which includes the Port Street Corridor and Easton Point.

Implementation of the Plan has been advanced through the creation and adoption of a new Mixed Use Waterfront (MXW) Zoning District. The MXW was originally adopted simultaneously with the Small Area Plan, and has since been refined with a modified code currently pending a Town Council Public Hearing (2/4/19).

Partners: The primary partner in the preparation of the Small Area Plan is the Easton Economic Development Corporation who supported the project when it was simply an academic exercise for the Applied Planning Class at Salisbury University, taught by Easton's Town Planner, Lynn Thomas. EEDC expanded the scope of that project, engaged a consultant (BCT Architects) to prepare a Plan, and shepherded the plan through 2 years of public input and scrutiny before handing off to the Town's Planning staff and Planning Commission who reviewed, revised, and saw the plan through to adoption. EEDC also remained instrumental in facilitating participation/input by the private sector throughout the MXW preparation and adoption process.

Impact: It is as yet still a bit early to assess the impact of this project. Suffice it to say that it has outlined and established a Vision for the redevelopment of Easton Point and Port Street and an innovative and flexible zoning mechanism is now in place to facilitate the realization of that Vision.

Accomplishment 2:

Outcome: Increase in Length of Rail-Trail

Projects: Southern Extension – A relatively short extension of the Rail-Trail was completed in 2018. This project extended the southern terminus of the trail from its previous end, across Dutchman's Lane and through a residential neighborhood for approximately 0.25 miles.

Spur Line – This is a significant new segment of the Rail-Trail which was referenced in our original application rather extensively. Although still not yet complete, a couple of milestones have occurred. Most notably, in December of 2018, the pedestrian bridge across the Tred Avon was completed and opened, linking the trail system of a Town subdivision (Easton Village) on the west, with what will be the extended Rail-Trail on the east. Second, the State grant that funds a significant portion of this project has recently been restructured in such a manner as to facilitate the project being able to move forward in a more expeditious manner.

Partners: Maryland Department of Transportation. Elm Street Development (responsible for the pedestrian bridge per terms of project approval).

Impact: An expanded Rail-trail positively impacts the Town by both increased recreational opportunities, as well as enhancing the Town's Bicycle/Pedestrian network.

Accomplishment 3:

Outcome: Increase the number of Affordable Units Built or Rehabilitated and Made Available for Occupancy

Projects: Housing on the Hill - The Town of Easton currently owns six houses purchased through a Strategic Demolition and Smart Growth Impact Fund in an area that has become known as the "Hill". An additional house is owned by the Housing Authority of the Town of Easton. These houses are located within a small four block area of the "Hill" where the slum, blight and demolition by neglect is apparent. The Hill initiative is wholly located within the sustainable community.

The continued goal is to maintain the historical significance of each house and so preserve the historical significance of the neighborhood and provide homes that meet or exceed minimum livability and modern energy efficiency standards while still providing affordable workforce housing.

A Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) totaling \$800,000 is the funding source for the Housing on the Hill rehabilitation initiative. In order to access funds, each home's restoration strategy is submitted for review and approval by the Maryland Historic Trust. As all of the home sites are located within the Town's Historic District, the Historic District Commission must also review and approve each project scope.

Easton Affordable Housing Board Renovation Program – The Town's Affordable Housing Board created and administers a Grant/Low Interest Loan Program for residents who won and occupy homes as their primary residence to provide funding assistance for approved renovations that improve the energy efficiency, safety, and livability of their home. The Program standards specify that the funds will be made available (if approved) as a grant for "Very Low Income" applicants; a Deferred No Interest Loan for "Low Income" applicants; and a Low Interest Loan (current rate of 2.75%) for "Moderate Income" applicants. Up to \$12,500 per year for a given property is potentially available, with a maximum of \$25,000 per applicant or property address. If the scope and cost of the required renovations exceeds these limits, the Board recommends and assists the applicant through other programs, such as the DHCD special loans program and the Be SMART Home low interest loans for Energy Efficiency Improvements.

Partners: MD Department of Housing and Community Development. Talbot Housing Authority.

Impact: The Housing on the Hill grant money allows for the full renovation of an initial four homes. Original materials are being salvaged and reused, as extensively as practical. The proceeds from the sale of each finished home will be reinvested by the Town into the completion of the remaining properties.

The Renovation Program is now available Town wide, but the predominance of their use is within our SC Area.

Both efforts will help to revitalize a historically significant neighborhood and will be a sustainable success.

Descriptive Narrative: Please use this section to describe any major outcomes or projects from your last Sustainable Communities Action Plan that have NOT been accomplished and why.

Outcome: Various projects related to Downtown and the recommendations of the AKRF Study

Narrative: The Town's original and approved SC Action Plan talked a great deal about Downtown projects in general, and projects identified in the "AKRF Study" specifically. With one notable exception, there has not been a lot of redevelopment/infill activity in Downtown Easton since 2014. This is likely merely a reflection of the economy at large, as the Eastern Shore seems to be at the tail-end of the economic recovery from the "Great Recession" and Easton is no exception.

The one exception to this lack of activity is for a segment of Federal Street, wrapping around to Washington Street and across to Goldsborough Street, where one individual has purchased a number of very old buildings and extensively (and exquisitely) restored them (or is in the process of doing so).

Given the time that has now passed since the AKRF Study, it seems logical to at least re-examine the recommendations therein, if not revisit a Plan for Downtown altogether.

Outcome: Improved Water Quality

Narrative: This is not so much a failure as it is a work in progress. Since the adoption of our SC Action Plan, the Town of Easton has become a MS-4 community. As such, significant enhancements/improvements are in the planning stages for water quality improvement. We are still in the early planning phases of this process. In addition, two stream restoration projects are designed. We are attempting to fund these projects.

Outcome:

Narrative:

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY RENEWAL REPORT

PART II: COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT

Purpose:

The purpose of the comprehensive assessment is to capture indicators of accomplishments in each Sustainable Community. Indicators should reflect the five year time period since the adoption of the Sustainable Communities Action Plan. Thus, the following questions focus on the common outcomes that were identified in the various Sustainable Community Action Plans approved by the State. The assessment will be grouped in the sections of Environment, Economy, Transportation, Housing, Quality of Life, and Land Use.

Please answer the following questions to the best of your knowledge.

Check “YES” if applicable to your community. If you answer “YES” please quantify the accomplishment (i.e. Q: Has there been an increase in the number of businesses in your Main Street/commercial district? A: YES 4 new businesses have opened in the past five years). If necessary, please also provide a short description of the accomplishment.

Please check “NO” if the question item did not have any impact on your community. If you answer “NO” please briefly summarize what kept you from achieving your plan’s desired outcomes.

Check “N/A”, if the question item does not apply to your Sustainable Community.

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

ENVIRONMENT				
	YES	NO	N/A	If YES, specify in quantifiable units and compare values from the last five years If NO, why not? What kept you from achieving your plan's desired outcomes?
1. Has there been an improvement in water quality?			XX	No quantifiable evidence at this point although we are always striving to improve water quality. Recent designation as MS4 Community should further this goal.
2. Has the amount of impervious surface in your Community been reduced? (Amount in SF)		XX		No, but with recent designation as a MS4 community, we are monitoring and planning reduction/treatment options.
3. Have there been improvements and/ or additions to your park and/ or recreational green space?	XX			Plans have advanced for the "development" of the former Town Public Works Property at Easton Point as a park. Structures have been removed and the site has been cleaned-up. Funds are budgeted for site clearing and tree planting. In addition, the Town is pursuing the purchase of adjacent property to expand this 11.5 acre site onto two adjacent parcels currently devoted to industrial use.
4. Did the Sustainable Community implement any recycling or waste reduction programs?	XX			The Town's Public Works Department has maintained and/or expanded leaf collection/composting, general recycling, and Christmas Tree recycling.
5. Do all residents have access to healthy food options (i.e. fresh food grocery stores, farmers markets etc.) within the Sustainable Community?	XX			Although the healthiness of the groceries at each store is something of an unknown, Easton has wide coverage of grocery stores. Acme, Weiss, Giant, and Harris-Teeter all have grocery stores in Town. Wal*Mart and Target feature grocery sections and there are a number of small, ethnic/specialty grocery stores in Town.
OTHER:				

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

ECONOMY				If YES, specify in quantifiable units and compare values from the last five years If NO, why not? What kept you from achieving your plan's desired outcomes?
1. Has there been an increase in the number of new businesses in your Main Street/ Commercial District?	XX			Difficult to assess at this point as we have just recently been tracking "Main Street" activity. However, for the Town as a whole, 1,273 jobs were added in this timeframe per the Executive Director of the Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board. It seems fair to assume, some (probably substantial) percentage of those jobs were located within the SC Area.
2. Did the Municipality/ Sustainable Community area receive any designations that support local economic development?	XX			Enterprise Zone and Opportunity Zone
3. Has there been an increase in foot traffic in the Main Street/commercial district?			XX	Cannot answer as (1) We have no historic data to compare to and (2) we do not currently capture data on foot traffic.
4. Have the number of commercial vacancies decreased?			XX	Same as above. Anecdotally we have seen a number of businesses relocate within the SC Area. We also are seeing the currently ongoing high-quality redevelopment of a number of historic structures along Federal, Washington and Goldsborough Streets by one investor.
5. Has there been an increase in local jobs within the Sustainable Community for its residents?	XX			There has been one significant new vacancy. That is the former Safeway grocery store which closed its Washington/Bay Street store and currently remains on the market. See #1 above.

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

OTHER:					Easton continues to receive a number of “accolades”. Just some of the most recent ones include:
Prestige of Easton					<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Most Charming Small Town in Maryland (Readers Digest)• Top 20 Small Arts Towns in America (USA Today)• 20 Best Small Towns to Visit in 2018 (Smithsonian Magazine)• Safest City to Raise Children in US (#1, Safewise)

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

TRANSPORTATION				If YES, specify in quantifiable units and compare values from the last five years If NO, why not? What kept you from achieving your plan's desired outcomes?
1. Has the amount of bike trails/paths increased? How many linear feet do the trails cover?	XX			The Town's Rail-Trail has recently been expanded by 1,600 feet (now 2.88 miles in length). The east-west oriented Spur Line will increase total trail length to 5.5 miles.
2. Have there been improvements to the public transit infrastructure?			XX	No action, other than recently approved major retail establishment were required to address passengers awaiting buses. Most chose to do so with an expanded entry-way where such individuals could wait out of the weather.
3. Has there been an increase in sidewalks? (Amount in linear feet)	XX			Additions made to Marlboro Avenue and repair/replacements on both sides of Aurora Street.
4. Have there been any roadway improvements that support "Complete" or "Green" streets?		XX		
5. Has traffic congestion along major roads decreased? (Amount in percent)			XX	Unknown
OTHER:				

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

HOUSING				YES	NO	N/A	If YES, specify in quantifiable units and compare values from the last five years If NO, why not? What kept you from achieving your plan's desired outcomes?
1.	Have any residential facades been improved?	XXX					There has been a CDBG funded project initiated that was originally contemplated in the Town's 2013 Sustainable Community Application, approved FY 2014 which has included the rehabilitation of 7 blighted properties. To date, the funds have been utilized for facade improvements and more of two of the seven units.
2.	Has the home ownership rate increased?	XXX					It is presumed that home ownership has increased based upon the construction of 45 residential units available for purchase (either single-family detached or townhome) The development communities where the units have been constructed, primarily attracts first-time or at-retirement/relocation buyers and it is presumed the purchaser's previous homes were not converted into rentals.
3.	Has there been an increase in the number of housing units in the Sustainable Community area? What number and/or percent are affordable?	XXX					There have been 2 residential units of which 100% "affordable" (Habitat for Humanity). There has been an increase of and 1 congregate living facility housing 23 units of which 100% are "affordable" and require qualification for occupancy. Not within the Sustainable Community area: There have been 6 residential apartment buildings constructed housing a total of 72 units, of which 100% are "affordable" and require qualification for occupancy.
4.	Has there been demolition of blighted properties?		XXX				There has not been demolition of blighted properties this year; however, there has been selective demolition of portions of blighted properties.
5.	Has the residential vacancy rate decreased?		XXX				There is no evidence that there has been a decrease in residential vacancy. Vacancy rates appear to be stable.
OTHER:							

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

4. Have there been any zoning or any policy changes that have fostered growth in your Sustainable Community?			XX	We believe the Mixed Use Waterfront Zoning District that we created in 2017 (effective 2018) will facilitate growth on Easton Point as those properties eventually annex into Town. There is currently a high-level of interest in developing on Easton Point, although nothing has yet advanced to the submission of a project.
5. Have there been any significant improvements to the municipal infrastructure within the Sustainable Community (i.e. street lighting, water/sewer lines)?	XX			\$12,000 dollars of Town budget is allotted for converting Street Lights to LED. Easton Utilities has used this money to convert 25 street lights a year since prior to 2014 with the intent of completing all the Colonial Street lights and then moving on to the Cobra head lights. It is expected that a very high percentage (and probably, all) of this money would have been spent in the SC Area given the location of the Colonial Street Lights.
OTHER:				

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

COMPETITIVE FUNDING: Use the rows below to list competed funds sought for sustainability or revitalization projects since receiving Sustainable Communities designation.		Source (federal, state, foundation, etc.)	Amount Received	If no funding was received, what technical or other assistance from the state would help with future applications?	Other Notes
Community Legacy (CL): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Port/Street Clay Street Sidewalks • Housing on the Hill (Acquisition and A&E) • Facade Improvement • Avalon Renovation 		DHCD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$40,000 • \$200,000 • \$25,000 • \$30,000 		
Strategic Demolition Fund (SDF): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing on The Hill • 		DHCD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$250,000 		This award is primarily to Talbot Housing Authority for Buffalo Soldier House. Town is subrecipient.
Community Safety & Enhancement Program:		MDOT			
Maryland Bikeways Program:		MDOT			
Sidewalk Retrofit Program:		MDOT			
Water Quality Revolving Loan Fund:		MDE			

COMPETITIVE FUNDING: Are there any types of projects/needs for which your Sustainable Community needs funding; however, there isn't a funding source?

The one issue that comes to mind is generally anything related to helping to offset the costs associated with the multi-million dollar public amenities to be provided at Easton Point to help implement and realize the Vision of the Port Street Small Area Plan. We currently have a DNR L WCF grant pre-application pending review to assist with property acquisition so that we can acquire a major industrial property with the idea that we will relocate the County Public Boat Ramp (with their approval) and expand upon the 11.5 acre Town Park to be located immediately adjacent. This cost (and other property acquisition that we may pursue) is above and beyond the price tag calculated in the Small Area Plan. Just three elements of these public amenities alone, the Boardwalk/Promenade, public parking, and transient boat slips, have an estimated cost of over \$9 million.

III. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN UPDATE

The Sustainable Community Action Plan (SC Plan or Plan) is meant to be a multi-year investment strategy – a strategic set of revitalization initiatives and projects that local partners believe will increase the economic vitality and livability of their community, increase prosperity for local households and improve the health of the surrounding environment. The Plan should be flexible enough to be updated regularly and renewed every five years as the community envisions new goals. The priority initiatives and projects identified in the action plan are your priorities for improving the livability of community places -- residential, commercial, or other public or private properties – and the sustainability of new work, retail, recreational and housing opportunities for residents. At the same time, the plan should only discuss the strategies that will impact the geographic area targeted for revitalization, so that resources have the best opportunity to have the intended effect. These projects can also be designed to reduce the environmental impact of the community through water and energy resource conservation and management strategies. In this way, the Plan can be a road map for local stakeholders as well as State agencies to work together to create a more a livable and sustainable community.

All communities submitted an SC Plan when the community earned its original designation. Some applicants may want to take advantage of the designation renewal process to outline new strategies, set new priorities or reaffirm existing strategies for their Sustainable Community. Changes to SC Plans may be due to changes in external factors affecting the community or changes in the priorities of the applicant.

Guidance for completing the Action Plan can be found on the next page.

Action Plan Guidance

The document has been broken down into the same six categories as the Comprehensive Assessment section of this document. These parts address key components of your Sustainable Community Action Plan. Follow the guidelines below to fill out the matrix.

- 1) **For each of the different sections, pinpoint essential strengths and weaknesses of your community.**
Example Transportation: Strength - Good sidewalk connectivity. Weakness - Insufficient amount of downtown parking.
- 2) **Based on those strengths and weaknesses, formulate specific outcomes that address the most pressing issues or greatest potentials. Include a means of measuring the success of said outcome.**
Example Economy: Outcome – Expand broadband fiber optics in Town. Progress Measure - Linear measurement of fiber laid and number of residential and business connections.
- 3) **After defining the outcomes, list detailed strategies (break down to several action steps if needed) that will serve as the means to achieve those goals.** Example Economy: Strategy - Increase number of Town sponsored events → Develop with community input, a series of weekend events that the Town could host.
- 4) **List potential partners that can support the successful implementation of these strategies through different types of resources.** Example Economy: DHCD (Community Legacy program), Small Business Administration (Services and financial assistance) etc.

Sustainable Community Action Plan

Town of Easton Sustainable Community

Submitted by The Town of Easton

1/31/2019

Environment

(Environmental strengths and weaknesses can include but are not limited to quality of land, water, air, watersheds, tree canopy, risk of sea level rise, carbon footprint, energy conservation, access to local foods, green infrastructure, stormwater infrastructure/management, parks, trails and recreation, recycling, water and sewer capacity, etc)

<u>Strengths</u>		<u>Weaknesses</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity - we have hired staff to implement and manage our MS4 program which is concerned with stormwater management in the Town of Easton. Tree Board - we have an invested tree board which monitors our urban canopy and seeks new opportunities for tree plantings in Town. Tree City Designation 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watershed and stream erosion are a prevalent concern and weakness in the Town. Large quantity of impervious surfaces with a vast availability to improve with green infrastructure.

<u>Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures</u>	<u>Strategies and Action Items</u>	<u>Implementation Partners</u>
<p>Based on the strengths and weaknesses identify the strengths on which you would like to build and the challenges you would like to address?</p> <p>What outcomes are you trying to achieve?</p> <p>Where/ in what area do you want those changes to happen?</p> <p>Progress Measure: Identify how you will know that you have achieved your outcome.</p>	<p>Identify strategies that will help your community to achieve each identified outcome to the left. If applicable, break down each strategy into specific action items that outline different steps of the strategy.</p> <p>Specify how you are planning to achieve the desired outcomes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↑</p>	<p>Which community stakeholders need to be involved to realize each action step and strategy?</p> <p>Name specific public and/or private sector partners.</p>
<p>Outcome 1: Stormwater quality and quantity improvements</p> <p>Progress Measures: Improved water quality. Decreased incidents of flooding</p>	<p>Strategy A: Analysis of the total impervious surface area in town, all BMPs, Outfalls and a mapped storm drain system.</p> <p>Strategy B: Implementation of Designed Stream Restoration Projects</p> <p>Strategy C: MS4 Implementation: will address specific areas to improve, treat or remove impervious surfaces and implement green infrastructure.</p>	<p>Town Engineering Department Consultants (TBD via competitive bidding process)</p> <p>DNR, Environmental Interest Groups</p>

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Outcome 2: Expanded and Enhanced Trail System Progress Measures: Additional length of Trail(s)	Strategy A: Complete the construction of the funded Rail-Trail Spur Line Strategy B: Construct Trails throughout Easton Point, including a Boardwalk/Promenade along the Waterfront	MDOT, DNR				
<h2>Economy</h2> <p>(Economic strengths and weaknesses can include but are not limited to regional accessibility, business attraction/retention, health of the business district and commercial vacancies, workforce/employment and economic drivers, local policies/regulations, marketing, tourism, cultural and historic assets)</p>						
<table><tr><th>Strengths</th><th>Weaknesses</th></tr><tr><td><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quality of Infrastructure (Town-owned Utility Company which supplies water, sewer, electricity, cable, high-speed internet, and natural gas)• Tax Rates• Political Leadership• Proximity of Easton Airport• General "Quality of Life"• County Seat and Regional Hub for employment, entertainment, government, etc.• Tourism, particularly heritage tourism• Nationally/Internationally recognized Festivals (.e. Waterfowl Festival, Plein Air, Chesapeake Film Festival)</td><td><ul style="list-style-type: none">• With a fairly significant amount of retail space, we are particularly concerned about the rapidly evolving nature of retail and its future prospects.• Real or perceived lack of attractions/jobs for "young people."• Housing costs• (Lack of) Tracking of economic statistics/data/measures• Location in a region that is the last to recover from the Great Recession</td></tr></table>			Strengths	Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quality of Infrastructure (Town-owned Utility Company which supplies water, sewer, electricity, cable, high-speed internet, and natural gas)• Tax Rates• Political Leadership• Proximity of Easton Airport• General "Quality of Life"• County Seat and Regional Hub for employment, entertainment, government, etc.• Tourism, particularly heritage tourism• Nationally/Internationally recognized Festivals (.e. Waterfowl Festival, Plein Air, Chesapeake Film Festival)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• With a fairly significant amount of retail space, we are particularly concerned about the rapidly evolving nature of retail and its future prospects.• Real or perceived lack of attractions/jobs for "young people."• Housing costs• (Lack of) Tracking of economic statistics/data/measures• Location in a region that is the last to recover from the Great Recession
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Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Establish Easton as a more fully Year-Round Tourist Destination</p> <p>Progress Measures: Increased Tourism Activity throughout the year, especially in the Winter "off-season"</p>	<p>Strategy A: Create a New Festival/Event to occur sometime between New Year's and Easter.</p> <p>Strategy B: Coordinate with local hospitality industry to incentivize visits to Easton during the "off-season".</p>	<p>Easton Business Alliance, Talbot County Tourism, Maryland Office of Tourism.</p>
<p>Outcome 2: Develop Tracking and Reporting of pertinent Economic Development Statistics</p> <p>Progress Measures: Consistent and reliable shared and readily available economic data</p>	<p>Strategy A: Identify who is collecting/maintaining what economic data and identify any gaps.</p> <p>Strategy B: Identify sources of appropriate data that is lacking and share amongst all economic development entities</p>	<p>Various State and federal Economic Development-related agencies. Easton Economic Development Corporation. Easton Business Alliance. Talbot County Office of Economic Development.</p>

[Type text]

Outcome 3 – Enhance the attractiveness of Easton to younger people. Progress Measures: Increased number of young individuals and families moving to Easton. Decreased median age.	Strategy A: Develop more Housing in and near Downtown. Strategy B: Expand Cultural, Recreational, and Entertainment Options in Easton. Strategy C: Identify employment segments attractive to younger employees that are missing in Easton.	MD DHCD
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Transportation

(Transportation strengths and weaknesses can include access to transit corridors, pedestrian safety and accessibility/sidewalks, alternative modes of transportation, such as bikeways and trails, public transit, such as bus and rail, carpooling, proximity to transportation centers, parking, road conditions)

Strengths

- Actual adequate supply (if not abundance) of public parking Downtown
- Popular and Expanding Rail-Trail
- Delmarva Community Transit public transportation
- Home of Maryland's second busiest airport
- Easton Point is an undiscovered gem for overnight boaters

Weaknesses

- Perception of a lack of parking Downtown (although there is rarely, if ever, such a lack, the perception likely causes some people to avoid Downtown)
- Discontinuous Sidewalk Network (fortunately, only in limited areas)
- Sidewalks in need of maintenance
- Finding/creating appropriate and safe crossing of Easton Parkway to connect our Rail-Trail Spur Line Extension to the recently constricted Pedestrian Bridge and Trail system beyond, as well as our to be constructed Easton Point Park and Easton Point in general
- Seasonal Route 50 Traffic impacts Town as a whole significantly and causes back-ups extending into our SC Area of cars waiting for signal changes at Route 50
- Lack of Bicycle Routes and facilities (i.e. Bike parking or lockers) Downtown
- Lack of public transient boat slips

[Type text]

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	
Strategies and Action Items	
Implementation Partners	
Outcome 1: Create a safe crossing(s) of Easton Parkway to connect trails, Easton Elementary School with Easton Point Park and Trail system, Easton Point Redevelopment with Downtown, etc. Progress Measures: New Crosswalks	Strategy A: Install traffic signal and crosswalk at Easton Parkway and Glenwood Avenue in spite of “warrants” not being satisfied Strategy B: Upgrade/enhance the existing crosswalk and signal at Easton Parkway and Port Street
Outcome 2: Establish/upgrade amenities for boaters coming to Easton Point Progress Measures: New Transient Boat Slips	Strategy A: Adopt the pending revisions to the MXW Zoning District which offer developers bonuses in exchange for providing public amenities, including transient boat slips Strategy B: Obtain grant funding for additional boating amenities
	DNR, MDOT (?)

Housing

(Housing strengths and weaknesses can include affordability, homeownership vs rental, housing stock diversity, housing condition and value, housing programs, foreclosures, residential vacancies, property values, home sale values)

Strengths		Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town utilizing grant funding to create affordable housing opportunities The Town continues to work with the Easton Housing Authority to assist in its mission of providing low to moderate income rental housing. The Town is willing to consider reimbursement of development costs for low-income rental housing rehabilitation projects for non-profits. The Town has a strong Code Enforcement division whose goal is to stop degradation of properties by requiring property owners to repair and restore their non-compliant properties. The rental housing program of the Town has been successful in requiring rental properties meet the minimum livability standards set forth in the Town Code. The Town has an Affordable Housing program which provides financial assistance to help those of lower financial means repair their homes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant funded project requirements are broad and numerous. Town projects often take more time than anticipated and often require extension requests. Rehabilitated property is located in areas with a higher concentration of property maintenance issues which may reduce potential sale of said rehabilitated properties. Limited staff available for property maintenance enforcement. Generally, property sale process exceeds that necessary for low to moderate income purchasers. Rental housing inventory is low and rental prices are higher than most surrounding areas. 	

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Develop streamlined approach to handling grant funded projects</p> <p>Progress Measures: More efficient project completions</p>	<p>Strategy A: Develop a checklist incorporating both project and grant requirements into one document.</p> <p>Strategy B: Utilize historical data as reference for new projects.</p>	CDBG Administrators
Outcome 2: revitalization of neighborhood(s)	Strategy A: Increase code enforcement	Affordable Housing Board

Quality of Life

(Strengths and weaknesses can include crime, socio-economic demographics, educational opportunities, museums, libraries, historic and cultural assets, civic amenities, faith-based organizations, economic health of households, sense of place, etc)

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality Public Library Large (and diverse) collection of Houses of Worship Variety and quality of Civic Amenities (e.g., Academy Art Museum, Avalon Theatre Quality and reliability of Infrastructure The Hill – recently recognized as the oldest neighborhood established by Free African Americans in the United States A thriving healthcare community composed of multiple healthcare/emergency pavilions, private practice groups, and a regional hospital. Additionally, there are two primary healthcare providers, University of Maryland Shore Health and Anne Arundel Medical. 12 municipal parks as well as a boat landing/ramp are available for community use. A pedestrian/biking path that connects the northern limits of town to the southern and extensions are in progress to connect the existing pathway to eastern points including water access ways. Crime is low as there is a strong police presence and outreach programs dedicated to connecting the community to their public safety counterparts. Two examples include “Coffee with a Cop” and bike safety programs. There are multiple sports fields and a community center with indoor ice skating and curling. Many faiths are represented within the Town of Easton and from large congregations including the Catholic and Methodist to smaller such as Unitarian as well as many start-up worship centers. There are three private schools located within the Town’s limits. Multiple private gyms and exercise businesses exist as well as two non-profit YMCA locations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceived lack of Downtown Parking Proximity to Colleges/Universities Unattractive Gateways to Easton in general and Downtown in Particular There is a lack of non-sport centric social activity centers and businesses for local youth. Increased traffic with little plan for arresting its continued increase. Slow economic development of “clean industry”. Cost-of-living can outsize typical at-place workers’ income

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Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
Outcome 1: Expand access to higher education Progress Measures: Increased number of college students living in Easton	Strategy A: Partner with regional colleges and universities to establish a satellite campus/remote classroom in Easton. Strategy B: Attract a new, small college or university to Easton.	Interested colleges or universities, MD Higher Education Commission
Outcome 2: Improve the appearance of Gateways/Entrances to Downtown Progress Measures: Number of Plans and/or implemented projects at Downtown Gateways	Strategy A: Develop plans for the key entrances to Downtown. Strategy B: Establish special Zoning/Design criteria for Gateways for development on privately-owned land. Strategy C: Plan for physical enhancements to the public-realm at Downtown Gateways	MDOT, Talbot County Engineering (depending on jurisdiction of the road at identified Gateways)
Outcome 1: Creation of additional park spaces Progress Measures: Park lands	Strategy A: Secure funding through budget management and grant awards Strategy B: Community outreach to solicit involvement and influence Council funding and support for development.	DNR

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Local Planning and Land Use

(Strengths and weaknesses in the local planning and land use subject area include but are not limited to zoning, land use, policies, taxes and fees, historical patterns of development, lot sizes and shapes, etc)

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strong land use policies based on Smart Growth Principles as specified in the Town's Comprehensive Plan and supported by an ongoing series of Small Area Plans• Support from, and coordination with, Talbot County concerning these principles• Political Leadership which supports forward-thinking, sustainable growth and economic development• Creation of a new and innovative flexible mixed use waterfront zoning district to accommodate redevelopment of Easton Point	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Zoning Ordinance is somewhat outdated, although generally still consistent with Comp. Plan• Lack of development activity makes it difficult to evaluate effectiveness of measures adopted and intended to improve the quality of development• General support for improvement in the quality of project design not supported by outdated/misguided/ineffective Design Guidelines• On occasion, there remains an element of the greater community that generally opposes most growth, is well-organized and twists Smart Growth to mean "no growth"

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
Outcome 1: Improvement in the Quality of Design Progress Measures: A Built-environment that is judged to be of a higher standard or quality	Strategy A: Revise and Adopt new and effective Design Guidelines Strategy B: Incorporate standards to improve design in Town Codes and regulations Strategy C: Invest in improvements/enhancements to the public realm	MDP, DHCD for technical assistance and/or funding
Outcome 2: Redevelopment of the Port Street Corridor and Easton Point consistent with the recently adopted Port Street Small Area Plan Progress Measures: Number/Acreage of parcels annexed into Town on Easton Point	Strategy A: Adopt the Mixed Use Waterfront Zoning District and monitor its effectiveness in achieving the vision as expressed in the Port Street Small Area Plan Strategy B: Facilitate/Incentivize Annexation	Any State agency with grant funds to assist in funding property acquisition and improvement with public amenities (e.g., parks, boardwalk, public parking, transient boat slips, relocated boat ramp, etc.)

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	Strategy C: Catalyze redevelopment through the provision of public amenities as envisioned in the Small Area Plan	
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Photograph Key Sheet

Photo File Name	Explanation/Description
Federal Street Rehab 1 and 2	Buildings on Federal Street that have been extensively renovated. Same property-owner has extended this effort along Washington and Goldsborough Streets
Infill Cottage	First constructed unit at Infill project on Federal/Dover/Hammond Streets
Infill Townhouse Project	Townhomes under Construction on land of Shopping Center fronting Marlboro
Pedestrian Bridge	Recently constructed pedestrian bridge which is a part of the Rail-Trail system and will eventually link our Trail system with that of a private development (Easton Village) and across St. Michael's road to a Trailhead.
Rail-Trail Extension	Recently completed Rail-Trail extension
Rail-Trail	The Rail-Trail as it exists in our SC Area
Safeway Site	Significant Downtown Vacancy with Incredible Redevelopment Potential
Southern States Property	Property adjacent to Town-owned 11.5 acre future park site that we would like to acquire to expand this park and to construct a new, relocated public boat ramp
Town Easton Point Property 2	The Town-owned former Public Works site, destined to be a park
Housing on the Hill 1, 2, and 3	Rehabbed houses that are part of the Town's Housing on the Hill Initiative

SIGNATURE LETTER

On behalf of The Town of Easton, Maryland, I hereby approve the application for renewal of the Sustainable Communities designation for The Town of Easton Sustainable Community Area. I understand that the Disclosure Authorization and Certification from the original Sustainable Communities application continues to apply to the applicant local government, and as such the applicant agrees that not attaching an objection constitutes consent to the information being made available to the public, and a waiver of any rights the applicant may have regarding this information under Maryland's Access to Public Records Act, State Government Article, Section 10-611 et seq. of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

I also confirm that I am named or a former holder of my current title is named as an authorized official for the Sustainable Communities designation for my local government in the Local Government Authorization submitted with the original application.

Robert C. Willey
Authorized Signature

Robert C. Willey, Mayor
Type Name and Title

1/25/19
Date