



SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES PROGRAM

APPLICATION FOR DESIGNATION RENEWAL

Eligible Applicants:

- *Local Governments with a Sustainable Communities Designation*
- *Local Government Consortia with a Sustainable Communities Designation*

Application must be submitted
on or before the expiration date of
Sustainable Communities designation.

Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development
Division of Neighborhood Revitalization
2 N Charles Street, Suite 450
Baltimore, MD 21201
410-209-5800
<http://dhcd.maryland.gov/>

APPROVED BY SGCC 4/13/2022

LARRY HOGAN
Governor
BOYD K. RUTHERFORD
Lt. Governor
KENNETH C. HOLT
Secretary
OWEN McEVROY
Deputy Secretary

Overview of Sustainable Communities

The Sustainable Communities Act of 2010 established a framework for reinvestment and revitalization of Maryland’s existing communities creating a single, locally designated geographic focus area. Since that time the “Sustainable Communities” designation has provided an efficient means of targeting scarce public and private resources for multiple State agency investments and prioritizations.

Purpose or Renewal and Streamlined Application

The Sustainable Communities (SC) designation must be renewed every five years. This renewal application provides an opportunity for local governments to update their existing SC action plan and report on the accomplishments made over the past five years. Through the renewal process, local governments can request additional technical assistance and highlight any areas from the original action plan for which progress must still be made.

Application Eligibility and Threshold Requirements

Local governments (municipal or county) are eligible to apply.

Eligible applicants are to reconvene their **Sustainable Communities Workgroup** to discuss the accomplishments and challenges of their Sustainable Community Action Plans in addition to any update they may like to make to the Action Plan. The applicant may choose to select new members to participate in the Workgroup. The purpose of this workgroup is to continue and reinforce working relationships and collaborations among local governmental departments and better align community development priorities and strategies. In addition, this is an opportunity to assess if the Workgroup would like technical assistance from State government agencies to implement certain action items or develop strategies to address local challenges.

Threshold Requirements

All Sustainable Community applications must meet the following threshold requirements:

1) Sustainable Community Area boundaries must be entirely within a Priority Funding Area (PFA) and should be an area in need of renewal and reinvestment that would benefit from a targeted long-term strategy.

Applicants can verify Priority Funding Area boundaries by visiting the MDP website at:

<http://www.mdp.state.md.us/OurProducts/pfamap.shtml> ;

2) The proposed Sustainable Community is within or near a town center or transportation center, or there is a need for financing assistance for small businesses, nonprofit organizations or microenterprises;

3) The updated Plan must be consistent with other existing community or comprehensive plans;

4) A Sustainable Communities Workgroup is re-convened and a roster of members should be provided with the application.

Applications that do not meet these threshold requirements will not be considered.

Application Submission and Evaluation

The Sustainable Community application will be evaluated based on thorough assessment of strengths and weaknesses and how well desired outcomes, strategies and action steps are connected to the local conditions.

The first printed page of the electronic application is a Table of Contents. This should also serve as a checklist and be used to provide corresponding tabs. In addition to the hard copies of an application, all pictures and maps are to be submitted on a CD-ROM, or send via email to the Sustainable Communities project management team. Pictures should be in a JPEG format and maps should be in a pdf format. Please also include GIS shapefiles of Sustainable Community boundaries and other GIS related data.

Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

Deliver Sustainable Community Applications to:

Sustainable Community Application
ATTN: Olivia Ceccarelli-McGonigal
Division of Neighborhood Revitalization
Department of Housing and Community Development
2 N Charles Street, Suite 450
Baltimore, MD 21201
410-209-5826

Site Visits. Follow-up Discussion, Technical Assistance

Attendance at a minimum of one application consultation session is mandatory for all applicants. Consult with Olivia Ceccarelli-McGonigal at 410-298-5826 or by email at olivia.ceccarelli@maryland.gov if you would like to schedule a meeting.

During the application review process, the review team may make site visits and/or hold meetings with applicants. In addition, applicants may be contacted by the Department for follow-up discussions prior to awards.

When needed, the Department may offer technical assistance, in collaboration with the Maryland Department of Planning, to local governments with limited capacity to prepare their Sustainable Communities applications.

Approval

Approval of applications will be made by the Governor’s Smart Growth Coordinating Committee on the recommendation of an inter-agency review team. The review team is coordinated by the Department of Housing and Community Development. The Governor’s Smart Growth Coordinating Committee can defer the approval of a Sustainable Communities renewal to the Governor’s Smart Growth Subcabinet.

All questions related to the application, please contact Olivia Ceccarelli-McGonigal at 410-209-5826 or by email at olivia.ceccarelli@maryland.gov or your regional project manager, found at this link:

<https://dhcd.maryland.gov/Communities/Documents/SRP/PM-Map-ContactInfo.pdf>

RENEWAL APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

The Sustainable Communities application for renewal has **three** sections:

A. Contact information, General Information, Organizational Capacity:

In this section, applicants are asked to update their contact information, provide information about demographic shifts over the past five years, discuss the strengths and weaknesses of their Sustainable Communities workgroup and share any technical assistance needs the workgroup may have.

B. Report on accomplishments over past five years:

The report is an opportunity to reflect on any accomplishments achieved in the Sustainable Community area. It is a tool used to evaluate if the SC applicant achieved its intended outcomes, implemented the strategies initially envisioned and identify what resources were used. Renewal applicants are encouraged to discuss how priorities, actions, and objectives were or were not achieved across the six elements listed on the previous page (v), including how any of the elements may have interrelated during the five initial years of SC designation.

C. Sustainable Communities Action Plan Update:

The Sustainable Communities Action Plan has been revised so that it is less time consuming and focused on developing a strategic implementation plan. Renewal applicants are encouraged to use their previous Sustainable Communities applications as a basis for their updated Action Plan. You may identify which weaknesses have not yet been addressed or which strategies have not yet been implemented. Include your revitalization priorities for the next five years, basing them on your community's current strengths and weaknesses.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES PLAN ELEMENTS

The table below provides a description of each subject area/element of the Sustainable Communities Action Plan. Included are examples of common strengths and weaknesses within each subject area and the types of projects that might be implemented to address said strengths and weaknesses.

<p><u>ENVIRONMENT:</u> Describes projects involving the natural environment, our use of natural resources, and our relationships to the natural environment.</p> <p>This category includes projects focusing on (but not limited to): the quality of land, water, and air; watershed maintenance and preservation; tree canopies and green spaces; climate change mitigation and adaptation; energy conservation; green infrastructure; stormwater infrastructure and management; water and sewer capacity; recycling, pet waste, and organic waste programs; the mitigation of environmental hazards; and parks and recreation.</p>
<p><u>ECONOMY:</u> Describes projects centered on economic growth and management.</p> <p>This category includes projects focusing on (but not limited to): business attraction & retention; improving and maintaining the health of business districts, downtowns, and main streets; commercial vacancy reduction; workforce attraction and retention; employment/job training; marketing, branding, and tourism; improving or creating economic impact of cultural and historic assets; providing technical and financial assistance to businesses; commercial building acquisition, rehabilitation and/or adaptive re-use; and creating a sense of place and vibrancy through streetscaping and beautification.</p>
<p><u>TRANSPORTATION:</u> Describes projects involving the way people in your community get from place to place.</p> <p>This category includes projects focusing on (but not limited to): 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; and road conditions.</p>
<p><u>HOUSING:</u> Describes projects involving the homes people in your community live or making it easier for them to find and stay in a place to call home.</p> <p>This category includes projects focusing on (but not limited to): affordability; increasing homeownership; increasing rental housing; diversifying the kinds of housing available; improving housing condition (interior or exterior); housing programs; aging in place; preventing foreclosures; and reducing residential vacancies.</p>
<p><u>COMMUNITY HEALTH & QUALITY OF LIFE:</u> Describes projects concerned with public health, community culture, and the day-to-day life of community residents.</p> <p>This category includes projects focusing on (but not limited to): improvement of public safety and the reduction of crime; libraries; educational facilities and programs; health and wellness facilities and programs; senior facilities and programs; youth facilities and programs; facilities and programs for the disabled; civic amenities, access to quality food options; collaborations with faith-based organizations; arts and entertainment education; and homelessness prevention, services, and facilities.</p>
<p><u>LOCAL PLANNING & STAFFING CAPACITY:</u> Describes projects concerned with a local government's ability to plan for the community's future and to meet the current needs of residents.</p> <p>This category includes projects focusing on (but not limited to): updating zoning ordinances or land use; updating municipal/local policies, taxes, fees, etc.; increasing local government staff capacity; and updating planning documents like sector plans or comprehensive plans.</p>

Additional Guidance for Developing the Sustainable Communities Action Plan

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.

Action Plan Guidance

The Action Plan section 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.

CHECKLIST AND TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPLICANT: City of Aberdeen

NAME OF SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY: Aberdeen 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**
- Photos (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:		Aberdeen Sustainable Community	
Name of Applicant:		City of Aberdeen	
Applicant's Federal Identification Number:		52-6000957	
Applicant's Street Address:		60 N. Parke Street	
City: Aberdeen	County: Harford	State: MD	Zip Code: 21001
Phone Number: 410-272-1600	Fax Number: 410-273-7402	Web Address: www.aberdeenmd.gov	

Sustainable Community Application Local Contact:

Name: Phyllis Grover		Title: Director of Planning and Community Development	
Address: 60 N. Parke St.	City: Aberdeen	State: MD	Zip Code: 21001
Phone Number: [REDACTED]	Fax Number: [REDACTED]	E-mail Address: [REDACTED]	

Sustainable Community Contact for Application Status:

Name: Phyllis Grover		Title: Director of Planning and Community Development	
Address: 60 N. Parke St.	City: Aberdeen	State: MD	Zip Code: 21001
Phone Number: [REDACTED]	Fax Number: [REDACTED]	E-mail Address: [REDACTED]	

Other Sustainable Community Contacts:

Name: Patrick McGrady		Title: Mayor	
Address: 60 N. Parke St.	City: Aberdeen	State: MD	Zip Code: 21001
Phone Number: [REDACTED]	Fax Number: [REDACTED]	E-mail Address: [REDACTED]	

II. 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, the proposed changes to the SC area boundaries includes 18 parcels along U.S. Route 40. The current boundary contains a gap between parcels located on U.S. Route 40 where there are future development opportunities. Within the requested area, there are two undeveloped parcels that have been available for development for the past seven years. There is also a shopping center space site that has

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

two vacant units and attracting tenants has been difficult. The zoning of the added parcels is M-1, light industrial and B-3, Highway Commercial.

(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: 942.69 acres

(4) Existing federal, state or local designations:

- Main Street Maple Street
 National Register Historic District Local Historic District Arts & Entertainment District
 State Enterprise Zone Special Taxing District BRAC State Designated TOD
 Other(s):

(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?

The SC Area is made up of three census tracts: 3024, 3029.01, and 3029.02. The demographic trends were identified through the American Community Survey 5-year Estimates 2015-2019.

The total 2019 population of the three census tracts combined is 10,724, which is a 3% increase from 2015. The white population makes up 58% of the SC area, the black population is 30%, Asian population is 4%, 3% is some other race, and 6% of the population is two or more races. The only two major changes in racial profile within the SC area from 2015 to 2019 is the Asian population, which increased by 46% and the percent of individuals that are two or more races, which increased by 24%.

In 2019, there were 4,710 housing units in all three census tracts, which is a 4% increase from 2015. The average housing price is \$185,267, which is an 11% increase from the 2015 average price. There was a 40% increase in the total number of vacant housing units from 2015 to 2019. Homeownership increased by 1% and renter-occupied housing units decreased by 1%.

The median household income of the three census tracts is \$54,088, which is an increase of 28% from 2015. The 2019 unemployment rate was 8%, which is a decrease of 41% from 2015.

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?

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The past Sustainable Communities Workgroup included Patrick McGrady, Mayor and the Aberdeen City Council; Randy Robertson, City Manager; Phyllis Grover, Director of Planning and Community Development; and the Economic Development Commission with the Tom Fidler as the Chairman. The SC Workgroup has changed in the following capacity: 1) new City Council members- Adam Hiob and Jason Kolligs; 2) Stefani Spector, Senior Planner and Sydnie Trionfo, Planning Assistant were added to the Department of Planning and Community Development and are part of the work group; 3) Vickie Horne, Main Street Coordinator and Jennifer Tuer, Main Street Assistant were added as Department of Planning and Community Development staff and are part of the SC workgroup; 4) the Chairman of the Economic Development Commission is Steve Horne; 5) Patrick McGrady is the Acting City Manager/ Mayor.

Phyllis Grover, Director of Planning and Community Development and Patrick McGrady, Acting City Manager/Mayor will manage the workgroup and lead the implementation of the SC Area Plan.

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

The challenge has been with turnover of the Aberdeen City Council and garnering support of the revitalization strategies outlined in the SC Action Plan of the U.S. Route 40 corridor and Main Street. In addition, feedback from the workgroup has been minimal. The strengths of the workgroup is a focus on the Main Street initiative and Transit Oriented Development (TOD) area.

- (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?

The SC Action Plan is based on the TOD Master Plan, 2011 Comprehensive Plan, Main Street Designation, and Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Station Square Feasibility Study. Aberdeen residents, businesses, and stakeholders were heavily involved in the adoption of all above studies and plans. In addition, the City is currently updating the 2011 Comprehensive Plan, and three community visioning sessions have occurred. The feedback from the community visioning workshops have been incorporated into the SC Action Plan update.

- (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.

The City of Aberdeen would like technical assistance on economic revitalization in the Main Street and U.S. Route 40 Corridor and to obtain funding for the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) - Station Square improvements. The city has requested a letter of support and inclusion in the FY2022-2025 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) with Secretary of Transportation James Ports. Aberdeen must be included in the STIP to receive federal funding for the proposed TOD Station Square improvements.

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) **Photos:** Please also include pictures that depict your accomplishments.

[EXAMPLE] Descriptive Narrative: Please list the most significant accomplishments that apply

Example – Accomplishment 1

Outcome: Improved stormwater management

Projects:

Project 1: Stormwater Retrofit Plan – In October 2014, the Town Council approved the Town's stormwater retrofit plan which outlines various strategies and capital budget expenditures over the next five years. Strategies include reducing the amount of impervious surface in the community and improving stormwater management. One of the plan recommendations is to pass an ordinance that assesses an environmental protection fee on municipal permits.

Project 2: Green Streets – The Town added green elements to approximately 600 linear feet of roadway that had been experiencing severe flooding. Specifically, bioswales were constructed and trees were planted.

Partners:

Chesapeake Bay Trust – provided technical assistance

MD DHCD – provided financial assistance in form of a Community Legacy grant (totaling \$50,000).

Impact: The implementation of the projects had a significant impact on the community by improving stormwater runoff. The streets with the newly constructed bioswales no longer experience flooding.

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

Accomplishment 1:

Outcome: Improved Environmental Impacts of development in the City

Projects:

- 1. Amendments to development review: The Department of Public Works (DPW) now requires three phases of review for stormwater management for new and redevelopment activity to include concept plan submission for preliminary site plan, preliminary stormwater management review, and final stormwater management review.*
- 2. MS4 and Stormwater Management Education Program: The Department of Public Works (DPW) held numerous public workshops to educate and inform the Aberdeen community on stormwater management and MS4 requirements. The DPW presented budget requests to the elected officials to implement the MS4 Program. They also created several informational brochures on educating the community about pollutants entering storm drains and roadside ditches which impact streams, rivers, and the Chesapeake Bay. They created a doorhanger indicating when a resident has illegally dumped and pollutants providing guidance instead of a violation notice.*
- 3. The City's Department of Public Works and Department of Planning and Community Development provided updates and adopted the following Ordinances that improve the environmental impacts of development: Ordinance #14-O-04 and Ordinance #17-0-12 Grading and Erosion and Sediment Control; Ordinance #16-O-03 Floodplain Management; Ordinance #16-O-17 Forest Conservation; Ordinance No. 18-O-22 Wellhead Protection; and Ordinance #18-O-25 Stormwater Management.*

Partners:

Aberdeen Department of Public Works- Provides Stormwater Management Review and facilitated the public education sessions

Maryland Department of the Environment- Oversees MS4 in the City

Harford Community College- Provided the Stormwater Management Education series

Impact: Improved awareness of stormwater management within the City and increased review of stormwater management for development led to more detection of illegal discharge and instilled confidence from MDE in the City's ability to delegate the stormwater management program.

Accomplishment 2:

Outcome: Expanded multi-modal transportation and transit opportunities

Projects:

- 1. Bus Shelter Installation: Four new bus shelters were placed in the following locations: U.S. Route 40 Train Station, Aberdeen Avenue and East Bel Air Avenue, Michael Lane and Old Post Road, and U.S. Route 40 Walmart. A second bus shelter was added to the U.S. Route 40 Train Station location due to increased ridership on the Harford Transit LINK.*
- 2. Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) Grant: The City received a TAP grant for the Aberdeen MARC Station Connectivity Enhancement Project in the amount of \$700,000 in January 2018 with contributions from Harford County Government and MDOT MTA. The grant will be used to improve the pedestrian and bicycle connectivity around the Aberdeen MARC/Amtrak Train Station. Enhancements will include new public sidewalks, hardscape, lighting, landscaping, seating, and pedestrian and ADA upgrades around the Train Station and transit stop.*

Partners: Harford County Transit- Aided with the Bus Shelters and TAP Grant

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MDOT SHA- Provided technical and financial assistance on the TAP Grant

MDOT MTA- Provided technical and financial assistance on the TAP Grant

Aberdeen DPW- Aided on the bus shelters

Harford County Office of Community and Economic Development- Provided financial assistance on the TAP Grant

Impact: The bus shelters and TAP Grant will improve the transit waiting area for commuters, enhance accessibility around the train station, promote multi-modal connections, and encourage residents to utilize public transportation.

Accomplishment 3:

Outcome: Improved business environment and economic development opportunities

Projects:

1) Advertisement of Opportunity Zone: The City has one census tract designated as an Opportunity Zone, which is in the Sustainable Community Area. The city worked with the Maryland Department of Commerce and DHCD to advertise the Opportunity Zone. One investor took advantage of the Opportunity Zone by purchasing and renovating the Parke Street Apartments located at 114-118 S. Parke Street.

2) New Business Incentives: The City passed two new business incentives for the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) area, which is in the SC Area. The new business incentives offer a real property tax credit on the total assessed value of the property available for commercial property owners, and a water/sewer connection charge waiver available to commercial and residential property owners. The City's water and sewer area connection charges are \$17,500 so this incentive is advantageous to the property owners.

3) Expansion of the Greater Aberdeen/Havre de Grace Enterprise Zone: The Enterprise Zone was expanded in 2017, which led to a \$1M capital investment from Prost German Restaurant.

4) The City received the following awards from the MD DHCD for the Strategic Demolition and Community Legacy Programs to improve our business environment, assist our business and property owners, and create economic development opportunities in the SC and Transit Oriented Development (TOD) area: FY2016 Strategic Demolition \$100,000 for acquisition and demolition of 21 N. Philadelphia Blvd., FY2017 Strategic Demolition \$100,000 for hazardous materials abatement at 34 N. Philadelphia Blvd., FY2016 Community Legacy for the Façade Improvement Program (FIP) - \$50,000, FY2017 Community Legacy for the FIP - \$50,000, FY2018 Community Legacy for the FIP - \$50,000, FY2019 Community Legacy for the FIP - \$50,000, FY2019 Community Legacy for Mural enhancements at the Aberdeen Train Station - \$30,000, FY2020 Community Legacy for the FIP - \$55,000, FY2021 Community Legacy for the Phase I Improvements at 34 N. Philadelphia Blvd. - \$100,000, and FY2022 Community Legacy for the FIP - \$50,000. Since 2016, the City has provided the Community Legacy FIP to assist 30 businesses.

Partners: Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development- Provided technical assistance of the Opportunity Zone

Maryland Department of Commerce- Approves Enterprise Zone Applications

Harford County Government- Approves Enterprise Zone Applications

Private Investors- Funded majority of the new business and redevelopment efforts.

Impact: The incentives created new private investment, new businesses, and redevelopment in the SC Area.

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: Retail Recruitment

Narrative:

The City hired MacKenzie Commercial Real Estate Services to assist with preparing a marketing brochure, data collection and analysis, and assist with attracting new business activity. Unfortunately, the new businesses located along MD 22 and Beards Hill Road. Additionally, the City's Department of Planning and Community Development staff added several updates to the website for business attraction and economic development purposes.

Outcome: Improve Pedestrian and Bicycle Connectivity

Narrative:

The City has recently prioritized pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and is working on improvements surrounding the Aberdeen MARC/Amtrak Train Station. However, lack of adequate funding sources and state-owned roads have prevented the city from broadening pedestrian and bicycle connectivity throughout the city and SC Area.

The City is partnering with Harford County Government and the Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC) to develop a multi-modal concept plan for a 5.1-mile segment of US 40 (Pulaski Highway) in Harford County, Maryland between Havre de Grace and Aberdeen. The primary goals include; develop a multimodal concept plan that can guide the development of a cohesive and low stress facility, evaluate options for the separation of multimodal facilities from motor vehicle traffic, create typical cross sections, identify the relationship of the concept plan with other modes of travel, develop an implementation and maintenance strategy, and identify funding opportunities and wayfinding/branding strategies.

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This document will be used for program specific construction projects and may be used to guide design standards for future development along the corridor. This task was identified in the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board's Fiscal Year 2022 Unified Planning Work Program with a consultant budget of \$100,000. Proposals are due to the BMC in March 2022.

The City's 2022 Comprehensive Plan update will also include identifying areas to improve pedestrian and bicycle connections throughout Aberdeen.

Outcome: Increase public awareness and support for a new Aberdeen Library

Narrative: Since the last SC Action Plan, the focus has shifted toward a new activity center for the city. The Harford County Public Library- Aberdeen Branch has renovated the existing library and expanded opportunities for children's learning. There are currently no additional funds programmed for the Harford County Public Library – Aberdeen Branch.

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.

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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? Have you completed any projects intended to improve water quality? Ex. impervious surface reduction, stormwater improvements etc.	X			The Department of Public Works has completed several projects to improve existing stormwater management facilities and improve water quality. The City is required to implement impervious surface reduction per MS4.
2. Have you improved wildlife habitat in your community? Ex. native plantings, pollinator gardens, rain gardens		X		The City has not had the staff capacity to create improved wildlife habitats. However, the Aberdeen Main Street and Sustainable Maryland Green Team has been established and will be engaged in building community rain gardens.
3. Have you increased access to green space, parks or outdoor recreational opportunities?	X			Within the last five years, the City has constructed two parks, Church Green Park and Victory Street Dog Park. In partnership with Harford County's Department of Parks and Recreation, the City will be constructing one new park, Rock Glenn Park and renovating/expanding an existing park, North Deen Skate Park. In addition, a new activity center will be constructed in 2023 by Harford County's Department of Parks and Recreation on land that the City purchased in 2019. The City also has an extensive list of community events and farmers market that is hosted in Festival Park.
4. Have you implemented operational sustainability practices (example: town hall enhancements) and or community-based practices? (ex. Rain barrels or rain gardens at residences, recycling, composting etc)	X			The City provides curbside recycling for all Aberdeen residents and yard-waste disposal. The City operates a composting facility and provides free compost annually to residents. The City also upgraded all exterior and interior lights at the Municipal Center and Festival Park with LED fixtures.

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

OTHER:				
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ECONOMY	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 increase in the number of new businesses in your Main Street/ Commercial District?	X			There have been 74 new businesses in the City of Aberdeen from 2018-2021.
2. Did the Municipality/ Sustainable Community area receive any designations that support local economic development?	X			The City received its MD Main Street designation in March 2020 and Opportunity Zone designation in March 2019.
3. Has there been an increase in foot traffic in the Main Street/commercial district?	X			Since implementation of the Main Street program, there has been an increase of activities in Festival Park to include Think Pink, 5K Runs by Blue Cheetah, Food Truck Festival, Farmers Market, Christmas Street Parade and Christmas Around the World, and Junk in the Trunk. New businesses have opened that bring a large customer base to the Main Street area such as Prost German Restaurant and Nova Vascular Specialist.
4. Have the number of commercial vacancies decreased?	X			There has been a decrease in vacant commercial spaces within the last five years. Key properties located within the Main Street area have been occupied by Nova Vascular Specialist and Prost German Restaurant. Commercial activity outside the Main Street area includes Lidl, McDonalds, Fanatics, and NTB.
5. Has there been an increase in local jobs within the Sustainable Community for its residents?	X			There has been a steady increase of new businesses within the SC Area, which led to increased opportunities for local jobs. Expansion of existing facilities and new warehouse and distribution facilities in the SC Area such as UPS, Frito-Lay, Fanatics, and Cranberry Run Business Park has led to substantial job creation.

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

OTHER:				
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TRANSPORTATION	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 the amount of bike trails/paths increased? How many linear feet do the trails cover?		X		State-owned roads and highways make up most of the SC Area. It has been a challenge to incorporate bike trails and paths on the state roads and there has been a lack of funding for design and implementation. However, the City is working to incorporate bike and walking trails in newly constructed parks and is partnering with the Harford County Department of Planning and Zoning and the Baltimore Metropolitan Council to improve bicycle connections on U.S. Route 40
2. Have there been improvements to the public transit infrastructure?	X			Public transit was improved by the addition of four bus shelters and Harford Transit has installed an electronic message sign and phone application to ease the bus route information to riders. Improvements to the Aberdeen MARC/Amtrak Train Station that were funded by the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant are underway and will enhance connectivity to public transportation. The City also applied for the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Railroad Administration FY21 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements grant to remove existing physical barriers, demolish the pedestrian overpass, and improve the pedestrian connections with an underpass that is safe and meets the ADA requirements at the Aberdeen MARC Train Station.
3. Has there been an increase in sidewalks? (Amount in linear feet)	X			5,002 linear feet of sidewalk will be constructed on the east side of the Aberdeen MARC/Amtrak Train Station as part of the MDOT SHA Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Grant.
4. Have there been any roadway improvements that support "Complete" or "Green" streets?		X		There has been no funding allocated toward implementing complete or green streets. The complete streets program is recommended in the Aberdeen Transit Oriented Development Master Plan, however MDOT SHA has not provided any funding towards this initiative to improve U.S. Route 40.

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

5. Has traffic congestion along major roads decreased? (Amount in percent)	X			There have been significant improvements to West Bel Air Avenue, U.S. Route 40, MD 715, and MD-7 by Maryland State Highway Administration.
OTHER:				
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?	X			There have been 12 residential facades improved within the SC Area.
2. Has the home ownership rate increased?	X			Homeownership in the SC Area has increased by 1%.
3. Has there been an increase in the number of housing units in the Sustainable Community area? What number and/or percent are affordable?	X			The number of housing units has increased by 4%.
4. Has there been demolition of blighted properties?	X			There has been demolition of five blighted properties: 21 N. Philadelphia Blvd., 25 N. Philadelphia Blvd., 11-17 Franklin Street, and 15 E. Bel Air Avenue. The removal of these properties benefits the Aberdeen Transit Oriented Development and SC area.

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

5. Has the residential vacancy rate decreased?		X		There has been a combined 40% increase in the number of vacant housing units within the three census tracts that comprise the Sustainable Community Area.
OTHER:				
COMMUNITY HEALTH & QUALITY OF LIFE	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 a decrease in crime rate?	X			There has been a 7.3% decrease in the overall crime rate from 2018 to 2021.
2. Have there been improvements and/ or additions to your public spaces (i.e. museums, community centers, public plazas)?	X			The City utilized \$98,000 of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for improvements to the Main Street area and Festival Park to include new game tables, picnic tables, planters, benches, signage, and recycling receptacles. MDOT SHA repaved W. Bel Air Avenue and implemented pedestrian safety features such as new crosswalks with solar-powered safety lights and sidewalk bump-outs.
3. Has there been an increase in public art/ arts & entertainment programs/venues (i.e. murals, movie theatre, music events)?	X			Two new murals were commissioned in 2020 at the Aberdeen MARC/Amtrak Train Station and funds were awarded by MD DHCD Community Legacy Program. Funding for a new mural in the Main Street area has been provided by Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. New bollards with murals have been installed at Festival Park using the Harford County Arts in Education Grant Program.
4. How many historic properties were renovated/improved?	X			The B&O Train Depot is a Maryland Historic Property and is in the process of a restoration effort. The roof has been replaced and the building has been stabilized. The Friends of the B&O Train Station have been created and they are seeking funding through the Maryland Historical Trust program.

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

<p>5. Are there any residential health and wellness opportunities in place (i.e. athletic facilities, recreational indoor/ outdoor courses or groups)?</p>	<p>X</p>			<p>The Victory Street Park contains a disc golf course and basketball court that was recently renovated with new basketball hoops. Festival Park contains a pedestrian walking loop. Church Green Park contains adult exercise and youth playground equipment. There are several playgrounds located within the SC Area.</p>
<p>6. Do all residents have access to healthy food options (i.e. fresh food grocery stores, farmers markets etc.) within the Sustainable Community?</p>	<p>X</p>			<p>Aberdeen contains four grocery stores, two of which are located within the SC Area. There are two international grocery stores located within the SC Area. Aberdeen's farmers market runs from May to October and offers fresh produce to residents.</p>
<p>OTHER:</p>				
<p>LOCAL PLANNING & STAFFING CAPACITY</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>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?</p>
<p>1. Have there been any infill developments?</p>	<p>X</p>			<p>Lidl and NTB were infill development sites as well as new Habitat for Humanity homes.</p>
<p>2. Has there been an increase in the amount of preserved/protected land?</p>		<p>X</p>		<p>The City does not have agricultural zoning and does not have an agricultural preservation program. However, several sites were acquired for new parks and recreation opportunities and the proposed Aberdeen Activity Center</p>

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

3. Have there been any developments hindered by growth constraints?		X		The City does not have any growth restraints within the SC Area. There is adequate water and sewer capacity and adequate road infrastructure to support growth in the SC area.
4. Have there been any zoning or any policy changes that have fostered growth in your Sustainable Community?	X			The City amended the zoning code to permit breweries, distilleries, and wineries in the TOD, B-2, B-3, M-1, and IBD zoning districts in order to attract a brewery in the Main Street area. Apartments were added as a permitted use in the B-3 zoning district. Parking requirements were waived in the TOD area.
5. Have there been any significant improvements to the municipal infrastructure within the Sustainable Community (i.e. street lighting, water/sewer lines)?	X			MDOT SHA completed a road improvement project on W. Bel Air Avenue which included resurfacing the road, installing crosswalks, and traffic calming measures. MDOT SHA also completed road improvement projects on U.S. Route 40, MD 715, and MD-7. The City of Aberdeen utilized CDBG funds for new light fixtures and upgraded LED lighting around Festival Park and on West Bel Air Avenue. As a result of the MDOT SHA project, there were storm drain improvements on West Bel Air Avenue to improve drainage and reduce flooding on the roadway.
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"> • Community Legacy- Façade Improvement Program FY17 • Community Legacy- Façade Improvement Program FY18 • Community Legacy- Façade Improvement Program FY19 • Community Legacy Program FY19 (murals) • Community Legacy- Façade Improvement Program FY20 • Community Legacy- Façade Improvement Program FY21 • Community Legacy Program FY21 (Phase I Redevelopment of former Aberdeen High School) 	DHCD	\$335,000	Typically, the City will only apply for Community Legacy Façade Improvement Program. In the past, the city has applied for the Façade Improvement program and another funding request through the Community Legacy Program, and only one application is awarded. The Façade Improvement Program has been heavily utilized and Aberdeen’s Mayor and Council prioritize this funding request.	
Strategic Demolition Fund (SDF): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maryland Strategic Demolition Fund FY17 (Hazardous Abatement at former Aberdeen High School) • Maryland Strategic Demolition Fund FY21 (Not Awarded) 	DHCD	\$100,000	The City received Strategic Demolition for the hazardous abatement of the former Aberdeen High School and applied for the FY21 Strategic Demolition Fund but was not successful due to the Community Legacy award in FY21. The City would appreciate feedback on applications that are submitted to MD DHCD so that changes or improvements can be made on the grant application for future funding requests.	
Community Safety & Enhancement Program:	MDOT			

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
Maryland Bikeways Program:	MDOT			
Sidewalk Retrofit Program:	MDOT			
Water Quality Revolving Loan Fund:	MDE			
Other Funding Programs: <i>examples are U.S. HUD Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), or grants from USDA, EPA, Appalachian Regional Commission, Chesapeake Bay Trust, Maryland Heritage Areas Association, Preservation Maryland, Safe Routes to School, Maryland Rural Development Corporation, Maryland Energy Administration, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, etc.</i> *Please add more rows if necessary				

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
Transportation Alternative Program Grant FY17 (Aberdeen MARC/Amtrak Train Station Connectivity Enhancement Project)	MDOT SHA	\$700,000		
Community Parks and Playgrounds FY17 (Festival Park Playground Expansion) Community Parks and Playgrounds FY21 (Rock Glenn Park)	MD Department of Natural Resources	\$450,000		
Maryland Main Street Operating/Technical Assistant FY20 (Marketing/Main Street Marketing, communication, and Design Study) Maryland Main Street Operating/Technical Assistant FY21 (Website and Social Media)	MD DHCD	\$35,000		
Main Street Improvement Program FY21 (Crosswalks, banners, murals)	MD DHCD	\$25,000		
SERI FY21 (grants for Main Street businesses and marketing material)	MD DHCD	\$73,208		
Arts in Education (Instructional murals)	Harford County Cultural Arts Board/Maryland State Arts Council	\$2,000		

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

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

The City of Aberdeen is seeking funding for the Aberdeen Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Station Square project for site acquisition, demolition, preliminary architectural and engineering design. The ultimate goal is to have the Station Square project constructed, the existing pedestrian overpass removed, all ADA barriers remove, and a new pedestrian underpass constructed next to the Aberdeen Train Station to improve the pedestrian connectivity on the east and west side of the station so that residents can access the multi-modal transportation hub and employment opportunities. There is minimal state funding to implement the planning, design, and construction phases of this project. The city is seeking federal funding opportunities to plan, design, and construct the Station Square project.

Sustainable Community Action Plan

Name of Sustainable Community

Aberdeen Sustainable Community

Example Section

<u>Example Section</u>	
<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insert bulleted list of strengths (provide some detail as to why and how this is a strength in your community) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insert bulleted list of weaknesses (provide some detail as to why and how this is a weakness in your community)

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures</u></p> <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? 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 style="text-align: center;"><u>Strategies and Action Items</u></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. Specify how you are planning to achieve the desired outcomes. →</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Implementation Partners</u></p> <p>Which community stakeholders need to be involved to realize each action step and strategy? Name specific public and/or private sector partners.</p>
<p>Outcome 1:</p> <p>Progress Measures:</p>	<p>Strategy A:</p> <p>Strategy B:</p> <p>Strategy C:</p>	
<p>Outcome 2:</p> <p>Progress Measures:</p>	<p>Strategy A:</p> <p>Strategy B:</p> <p>Strategy C:</p>	

Environment

This section describes projects involving the natural environment, our use of natural resources, and our relationships or access to the natural environment.

This category includes projects focusing on (but not limited to): the quality of land, water, and air; tree canopies and green spaces; green infrastructure; habitat improvement, climate change mitigation and adaptation; nuisance flooding,; stormwater infrastructure and management; water and sewer capacity; energy conservation; recycling, pet waste, and organic waste programs; the mitigation of environmental hazards; and parks and recreation improvements.

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Festival Park is a large passive recreational park with a playground, pavilion, and restrooms. This is a strength because it is centrally located within the Main Street area and provides a large space for community events. Single-stream recycling program for paper, plastic, metal, and glass items. This is a strength because it reduces the amount of refuse and waste. The City operates a farmers' market from May through October. This facilitates access to fresh produce. The City is actively pursuing the Sustainable Maryland Certification, which will solidify our commitment to environmental health and sustainability. The City revised its Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) to ensure capacity and reserve of water for future growth. Incorporation of electric vehicle charging stations in public spaces and private businesses. This is a strength because it furthers the initiative of clean energy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of pedestrian and bicycle trails, which is a weakness because residents have to drive to other communities for this recreational opportunity. Lack of green infrastructure to include raingardens, community gardens, green buildings, green highways. This is a weakness because green infrastructure promotes a healthy environment and clean air. No inventory of tree canopies, which hinders the ability of Aberdeen to determine where trees are located and where rotting trees exist.

<u>Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures</u>	<u>Strategies and Action Items</u>	<u>Implementation Partners</u>
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Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

<p>Outcome 1: Provide extended indoor and outdoor recreational opportunities.</p> <p>Progress Measures: Number of new recreational opportunities provided by either public or private entities.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Continue to apply for funding through the MD DNR Community Parks and Playground program.</p> <p>Strategy B: Work with Harford County’s Department of Parks and Recreation to provide recreational opportunities in the Activity Center and provide a connection to the Main Street area.</p> <p>Strategy C: Encourage businesses or the Main Street Committees to hold outdoor activities in the park.</p>	<p>MD DNR, Harford County Government, Aberdeen Main Street, Aberdeen business community</p>
<p>Outcome 2: Incorporate green infrastructure into the City</p> <p>Progress Measures: Creation of new green infrastructure in the City to include new rain gardens, community gardens, green buildings, etc.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Become a Sustainable Maryland Certified municipality and create a green team.</p> <p>Strategy B: Work with University of Maryland Upper Chesapeake Health-Aberdeen Campus to incorporate a community garden on their site.</p> <p>Strategy C: Obtain funding to implement green infrastructure on City-owned buildings.</p>	<p>University of Maryland, Maryland Municipal League, University of Maryland Upper Chesapeake Health, Aberdeen Green Team</p>

Economy

This section is centered on economic growth and management.

Strengths and weaknesses might focus on the following: business attraction & retention; improving and maintaining the health of business districts downtowns, and main streets; commercial vacancy reduction; workforce attraction and retention; employment/job training; marketing, branding, and tourism; improving or creating economic impact of cultural and historic assets; providing technical and financial assistance to businesses; commercial building acquisition, rehabilitation and/or adaptive re-use; and creating a sense of place and vibrancy through streetscaping and beautification.

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Greater Aberdeen-Havre de Grace Enterprise Zone was expanded and redesignated, which has provided more opportunities for redevelopment and investment. • Aberdeen is a desirable location for distribution, manufacturing, and warehouse uses, creating ample local job opportunities. • The City received its Main Street Designation in March 2020. • The City passed two new incentives and was designated as an Opportunity Zone. • Two key properties in the Main Street area- 102 N. Rogers Street and 34 N. Philadelphia Blvd were redeveloped. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many employers are challenged with finding skilled workforce, which hinders business retention. • The tenant mix of the Main Street area is not consistent with traditional main street areas and there is lack of foot-traffic. • There is a weak market for retail, restaurants, and entertainment in the Main Street and U.S. Route 40 corridor. • Lack of available undeveloped sites for new housing development. • Building inventory is old and investment has not been consistent in the SC Area.

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The B&O Train Depot is applying for funding to preserve the historical context and redevelop the dilapidated site. • The City and MDOT SHA invested funding into streetscape and roadway improvements, which provides infrastructure for new development. • There is new redevelopment of commercial properties on the U.S. Route 40 Corridor and residential properties on the east side. • The City has implemented a successful Facade Improvement grant program that has culminated private investment and enhanced the appearance of the Sustainable Community Area. • The City has applied to grant programs such as the Community Legacy Program for acquisition and demolition and redevelopment initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing gap between lower- and higher-income households and demographics of the SC Area are not desirable to attract national retailers. • Since the COVID-19 pandemic, daytime traffic from Aberdeen Proving Ground has significantly declined. Aberdeen Proving Ground is at 50% capacity which effects our restaurants and service industry.
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Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Economic Development and small business attraction/retention</p> <p>Progress Measures: New retail, entertainment, and dining establishments located in the Main Street and U.S. Route 40 Corridor</p>	<p>Strategy A: Advertise new business incentives to include the water/sewer connection charge waiver and real property tax credit to property owners and potential new businesses.</p> <p>Strategy B: Continue to host events in the downtown to encourage foot traffic for existing Main Street businesses.</p> <p>Strategy C: Implementation of the Main Street Marketing, Communication, and Design Study to create targeted marketing and branding to attract visitors and businesses in the downtown.</p> <p>Strategy D: Continue to implement the Facade and Interior Improvement Grant to enhance the appearance of the Sustainable Community Area and attract further retail in the commercial corridor</p> <p>Strategy F: The City is approving the annexation of land for residential development, which will increase the demographics and customer base for retail businesses.</p>	<p>MD DHCD, Visit Harford, Main Street Committees, Mahan Rykiel (consultants), Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce</p>

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

<p>Outcome 2: Attract skilled workforce to sustain employment base</p> <p>Progress Measures: Survey businesses in Aberdeen to see if employment needs have been fulfilled</p>	<p>Strategy A: Continue to approve annexations for new residential development. Strategy B: Enhance quality of life through parks and recreation and retail to attract workforce to Aberdeen. Strategy C: Advertise the Harford County Workforce Training Grant to employers. Strategy D: Connect employers to the Susquehanna Workforce Network and Harford County Leading Edge Training Center.</p>	<p>Harford County Government, Harford County Community College, Susquehanna Workforce Network</p>
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Transportation

This section describes the way people in your community get from place to place.

Strengths, weaknesses and outcomes can focus on: 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; and road conditions.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Aberdeen Train Station provides MARC and Amtrak daily commuter service, and the Harford County Transit LINK provides bus service. • Improved road safety conditions on West Bel Air Avenue, U.S. Route 40, and MD-7. • Implementation of the MDOT SHA Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Grant for pedestrian and bicycle connectivity at the Aberdeen MARC/Amtrak Train Station will increase access to public transit. • Covered bus shelters were placed at four bus stops to enhance the commuter experience. • The City is seeking funding for the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) - Station Square improvements to construct an ADA accessible underpass 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of pedestrian and bicycle lanes, which does not implement complete streets and discourages alternative modes of transportation. • Lack of bikeways and walking trails throughout the City. • Lack of sidewalks in older residential neighborhoods and inconsistent placement of sidewalks, which causes unsafe conditions for pedestrians. • Traffic congestion on MD-7 and MD-715 caused by tractor trailers from the warehouse distribution facilities in Aberdeen and Perryman Peninsula.

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

<p>and terraced plaza for enhanced connectivity between east and west side areas of Aberdeen and to public transit.</p>	
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Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures →	Strategies and Action Items →	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Improve pedestrian and bicycle connectivity</p> <p>Progress Measures: linear feet of new sidewalk added and number of streets converted to complete streets</p>	<p>Strategy A: Work with Department of Public Works to fund sidewalk construction through the capital budget.</p> <p>Strategy B: Explore additional funding opportunities to provide walking trails and bikeways in the Transit Oriented Development (TOD).</p> <p>Strategy C: Work with MDOT SHA on implementing complete streets on state-owned roads.</p> <p>Strategy D: Participate in the BMC/Harford County Department of Planning and Zoning Bicycle Connectivity Study.</p>	<p>DPW, MDOT SHA, BMC, Harford County Department of Planning and Zoning</p>
<p>Outcome 2: Promote multimodal transportation and transit opportunities</p> <p>Progress Measures: Increased ridership on the MARC train, Harford Link, and alternative modes of transportation such as biking and walking</p>	<p>Strategy A: Work with Harford County Government and Harford Transit to expand bus service and increase transit ridership awareness.</p> <p>Strategy B: Work with MDOT SHA to improve state-owned roads with bicycle lanes.</p> <p>Strategy C: Apply for funding for the TOD Station Square improvements.</p>	<p>Harford County Government, Harford Transit, MDOT SHA, Maryland Congress/Senate, U.S. DOT</p>

Housing

This section focuses on the homes in which people in your community live or making it easier for them to find and stay in a place to call home.

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

Strengths, weaknesses and outcomes might focus on the following: affordability; increasing homeownership; increasing rental housing; diversifying the kinds of housing available; improving housing condition (interior or exterior); housing programs; aging in place; preventing foreclosures; and reducing residential vacancies.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Variety of housing types including single-family, apartments, townhomes, duplexes, and low-income housing which supplies a product for every age group/income status. Several new apartment and housing developments have been approved and are under construction. There is redevelopment of older and dilapidated homes on the east side. Water and sewer connection charge waiver applies to residential construction in the TOD. Habitat for Humanity offers a home repair program so residents can continue to live in safe and decent homes. Cost of living is low, which promotes homeownership opportunities to professional, working-class individuals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The average property values are lower than Fallston, Bel Air, Havre de Grace, and Forest Hill. There have been no new housing opportunities in the TOD area. There are no programs to assist first time homebuyers or to entice workforce to live in Aberdeen. The City does not have a property maintenance code which decreases the value of surrounding homes and creates blight. There is no city funding available to assist homeowners with improvements or renovations, which prevents older housing stock from being renovated. There is no rental registration in the city to inspect housing units before they are rented, which leads to livability violations. There is an increase in the number of vacant housing units within the Sustainable Community Area

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Apply for funding to assist homeowners with renovations and façade improvements</p> <p>Progress Measures: Number of homes that are renovated and increased permit activity</p>	<p>Strategy A: Apply for Community Legacy funds through the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development.</p> <p>Strategy B: Streamline permitting process and offer fast-tracked permits for residential improvements.</p>	<p>MD DHCD, Harford County Department of Inspections, Licenses, and Permits</p>
<p>Outcome 2: Work with the City’s Code Enforcement Officer to decrease the number of code violations</p> <p>Progress Measures: Decreased number of residential code violations</p>	<p>Strategy A: Create an awareness program for residents on the city codes and importance of maintaining a clean environment.</p> <p>Strategy B: Encourage property owner and tenant communication to improve the appearance and living conditions of rental properties.</p> <p>Strategy C: Encourage neighborhood associations where HOA’s do not exist.</p>	<p>City of Aberdeen Code Enforcement Officer, Rental property owners, Residents</p>

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

Outcome 3: Focus on residential growth and vacancy reduction	Strategy A: Encourage the redevelopment of dilapidated housing units	Private investors, Harford County Office of Community and Economic
Progress Measures: Increase in owner-occupied dwellings and reduction in vacant rental units	<p>Strategy B: Work with Harford County to advertise homeownership workshops</p> <p>Strategy C: Create a partnership with local real estate agents to market available residential dwellings in the Sustainable Community Area.</p> <p>Strategy D: Create a Live Near Your Work Program to provide incentives to individuals that work in Aberdeen to live in Aberdeen.</p>	Development, Real Estate Agents, Aberdeen Businesses

Community Health and Quality of Life

This section is concerned with public health, community culture, and the day-to-day life of community residents.

This category includes projects focusing on (but not limited to): improvement of public health including improving community design to promote healthy behaviors such as walking and strengthening community support and connectedness through health and wellness programs and facilities that create inclusive communities. These projects may include built environment, indoor spaces, outdoor environments such as increasing community gardens and access to services including educational facilities and programs; health and wellness facilities and programs that serve multi-generations; senior facilities and programs; youth facilities and programs; facilities and programs for the disabled; civic amenities, access to quality food options; collaborations with faith-based organizations; arts and entertainment education; and homelessness prevention, services, and facilities. Projects should include community engagement that includes participation in the selection of strategies and outcomes, progress reports, and evaluation.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City owns and maintains several parks in different areas throughout the City that include amenities for all ages. • The City permits park rentals which encourages outdoor community events. • There are events scheduled throughout the year through the Aberdeen Main Street efforts. • The existing activity center offers programs for youth and seniors and will be expanded once the new Activity Center is constructed and opened in 2023 • The Boys and Girls Club offers education, sports, cultural, and health and life skills programs for youth. • A new dance studio opened in 2021 and is in walking distance to the Aberdeen MARC/Amtrak Train Station. • There are many places of religious worship within the SC Area and provide activities and programs for the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City does not have any art programs or organizations that provide a focus on the arts. • The City does not have walking trails or a built environment that encourages walking. • There is only one gym in the City of Aberdeen, which is not located in the SC Area. • There are no health and wellness facilities serving multi-generations in the SC area. • There are no arts and entertainment education available to Aberdeen residents, they have to drive to the Harford Community College. • Increasing homeless population without services to assist their needs. • Large number of Medicare-only behavioral health programs clustered within the SC Area and not enough full-service behavioral health offices.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Harford County Public Library-Aberdeen Branch offers programs for all age groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Harford County Public Library- Aberdeen Branch is not as large as the other branches in Harford County and cannot offer as many programs.
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Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	→ Strategies and Action Items →	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Work with Harford County to address growing homeless population</p> <p>Progress Measures: Additional services and homeless shelters available</p>	<p>Strategy A: Engage the existing homeless shelters to discuss needs in the County</p> <p>Strategy B: Work with Harford County Government to have outreach programs to the homeless population in Aberdeen</p>	<p>Harford County Department of Social Services, Aberdeen Police Department, Welcome One Shelter, Harford Family House, EpiCenter, Places of religious worship</p>
<p>Outcome 2: Work with the local arts community to facilitate art education and programs for the youth</p> <p>Progress Measures: New opportunities for art and culture in the community</p>	<p>Strategy A: Discuss opportunities with the Harford County Cultural Arts Board</p> <p>Strategy B: Apply for funding to create art education programs</p>	<p>Harford County Cultural Arts Board, Maryland State Arts Council, Harford Community College</p>

Local Planning and Staffing Capacity

This section is concerned with a local government's ability to plan for the community's future and to meet the current needs of residents.

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Strengths, weaknesses and outcomes might focus on the following: updating zoning ordinances or land use; updating municipal/local policies, taxes, fees, etc.; increasing local government staff capacity; and updating planning documents like sector plans or comprehensive plans.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2014, Aberdeen adopted a form-based code for the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) area and created a TOD Zoning District and sub-districts. • The 2011 Comprehensive Plan is currently being updated. • The City commissioned a TOD Feasibility Study in 2017 and will work with consultants in 2022 on a Main Street Marketing, Communication, and Design Plan. • The Baltimore Metropolitan Council and Harford County Department of Planning are commissioning a concept plan for bicycle and pedestrian improvements along U.S. 40. • The City of Aberdeen and Havre de Grace entered into an agreement for water purchasing, which will support future growth of the City. • The parking requirements in the TOD are waived to accommodate redevelopment. • The City purchased five lots in the TOD area for future redevelopment. • The City hired a part-time Main Street Coordinator to facilitate revitalization efforts. • The City passed new incentives (water/sewer connection charge waiver and real property tax credits) for the TOD Area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is not a comprehensive strategic plan for the Main Street or U.S. Route 40 corridor that incorporates land use and economic development strategies. • MDOT SHA owns both West Bel Air Avenue and U.S. Route 40 and does not permit sidewalk cafes or outdoor dining in their right-of-way. • The Harford County Health Department is not consistent with reviews in the County and contradicts the Aberdeen Department of Public Works. • The Department of Planning and Community Development only has three full-time staff members and one part-time staff member. • The recommendations of area plans are not implemented due to lack of funding.

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	→ Strategies and Action Items →	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Defined identity and vision of the Main Street and U.S. Route 40 Corridor.</p> <p>Progress Measures: New businesses that complement the vision of the Main Street and Route 40.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Create a cohesive Strategic Economic Development Plan for the Main Street and U.S. Route 40 Corridor that is complementary to the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Master Plan and vision of the MD Main Street Program.</p> <p>Strategy B: Work with the consultants (Mahan Rykiel) on the Main Street Marketing, Communication, and Design study to create an identity and brand of the Aberdeen Main Street area.</p>	<p>Aberdeen Mayor and City Council, Main Street Coordinator, Main Street Committees, Mahan Rykiel</p>

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SIGNATURE LETTER

On behalf of the City of Aberdeen, I hereby approve the application for renewal of the Sustainable Communities designation for the Aberdeen Sustainable Community. 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.

(PMD)

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.

Authorized Signature

Patrick McGrady Mayor

Type Name and Title

3/9/2022

Date