



SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES PROGRAM

APPLICATION FOR DESIGNATION RENEWAL

Eligible Applicants:

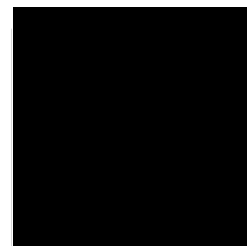
*Local Governments with a Sustainable Communities
Designation*

*Local Government Consortiums 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/>

SGSC Approved 12.04.2024



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 page of the electronic application is the Table of Contents. This should also serve as a checklist and be used to provide corresponding tabs.

Please submit all materials (application, maps, pictures, and/or shapefiles) via email to the Sustainable Communities project management team.

Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

Deliver Sustainable Community Applications via email:

To: Carter Reitman

carter.reitman@maryland.gov

Copy: Olivia Ceccarelli-McGonigal

olivia.ceccarelli@maryland.gov

Site Visits, Follow-up, and Technical Assistance

Attendance at a minimum of one application consultation session or training is mandatory for all applicants. Consult with Carter Reitman at 410-209-5849 or by email at carter.reitman@maryland.gov if you would like to schedule a meeting.

If requested, the Department can provide technical assistance to local governments to prepare their Sustainable Communities applications. 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.

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.

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 Carter Reitman at 410-209-5849 or by email at carter.reitman@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 and identify what state resources were used, if any, to achieve those outcomes. Renewal applicants are encouraged to discuss how priorities, actions, and objectives were or were not achieved across the Sustainable Communities plan elements, 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 details revitalization outcomes and strategies to achieve those outcomes over the next five years. 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.

ENVIRONMENT: Describes projects involving the natural environment, our use of natural resources, and our relationships to the natural environment.

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.

ECONOMY: Describes projects centered on economic growth and management.

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.

TRANSPORTATION: Describes projects involving the way people in your community get from place to place.

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.

HOUSING: Describes projects involving the homes in which people in your community live and which make it easier for them to find and stay in a place to call home.

This category includes projects focusing on (but not limited to): affordability; increasing homeownership; increasing rental housing; diversifying the kinds of housing available; improving housing conditions (interior or exterior); housing programs; aging in place; preventing foreclosures; and reducing residential vacancies.

COMMUNITY HEALTH & QUALITY OF LIFE: Describes projects 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 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.

LOCAL PLANNING & STAFFING CAPACITY: Describes projects concerned with a local government’s ability to plan for the community’s future and to meet the current needs of residents.

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.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES 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 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 reflect changes in external factors affecting the community or changes in the priorities of the applicant.

Action Plan Guidance

1) For each element, identify the essential strengths and weaknesses of your community.

Example:

Strength - Good sidewalk connectivity

Weakness - Insufficient bicycle infrastructure

2) Based on those strengths and weaknesses, formulate specific outcomes that address the most pressing issues or greatest opportunities. Identify a way to measure the success of that outcome.

Example:

Outcome - Expand fiber optic broadband Internet connections in Town

Progress Measure - Linear measurement of broadband fiber laid

3) After defining the outcomes, list detailed strategies and discrete actions that will serve as the means to achieve those goals.

Example:

Strategy A - Increase number of Town sponsored events

Action A - Organize a workgroup tasked with planning weekend events

Action B - 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:

Partner 1 - DHCD (Community Legacy program)

Partner 2 - Small Business Administration (Services and financial assistance)

CHECKLIST AND TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPLICANT: TOWN OF BERLIN

NAME OF SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY: TOWN OF BERLIN

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**

- [Applicant Information](#)

☐ **Section B – Sustainable Community Renewal Report (Projects, Strategies and Partners)**

- [Part 1: Qualitative Assessment](#)
- [Part 2: Competitive Funding](#)

☐ **Section C – Sustainable Community Renewal Action Plan Update (Matrix)**

- [Action Plan](#)

☐ **Section D – Sustainable Communities Workgroup Roster**

☐ **Section E – Signature Letter (acknowledging Disclosure Authorization and Certification)**

- [Disclosure Authorization](#)

☐ **Section F – Additional Files:** The following contents should be included:

- If requesting a boundary modification, map in pdf format and a GIS shapefile of the proposed Sustainable Community boundary
- Photos (jpeg format) of your aforementioned accomplished projects of the last five years

SECTION A - SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY RENEWAL **APPLICANT INFORMATION**

Name of Sustainable Community:		TOWN OF BERLIN	
Name of Applicant:		TOWN OF BERLIN	
Applicant's Federal Identification Number:		52-6000776	
Applicant's Street Address:		10 WILLIAM STREET	
City: BERLIN	County: WORCESTER	State: MD	Zip Code:21811
Phone Number:410-629-1722	Fax Number:	Web Address: BERLINMD.GOV	

Sustainable Community Application Local Contact:

Name: IVY WELLS		Title: DIRECTOR, ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	
██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████
████████████████████	██████████	██████████	████████████████████

Sustainable Community Contact for Application Status:

Name: SEE ABOVE		Title:	
Address:	City:	State:	Zip Code:
Phone Number:	Fax Number:	E-mail Address:	

Other Sustainable Community Contacts:

Name: MARY BOHLEN		Title: TOWN ADMINISTRATOR	
██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████

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(1) Sustainable Community Boundary and Description

(1) Are you requesting any changes to your Sustainable Community boundary? Describe why or why not? *We are not requesting changes to our Sustainable Community boundary as the majority of the town is already included.*

(2) If yes, Include the following in as an attachment:

- 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: 2000

(4) Existing federal, state or local designations:

- ☒ Main 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 Population of the Town of Berlin has not had a significant change in population over the last 5 years.

1. ****Age****: Berlin's population falls within the working-age range (25-64 years old). However, like many areas in the United States, there has been an increasing population of older adults due to the aging baby boomer generation.

2. ****Race****: The racial composition of Berlin includes a mix of White, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, and other racial groups. There have been no significant changes over the last 5 years.

3. ****Household Size****: Household sizes in Berlin range from single-person households to larger families. There is a trend towards smaller household sizes due to an aging population and economic factors influencing living arrangements.

4. ****Household Income****: Median household income is trending higher in Berlin and is currently listed \$80,465 with a poverty rate of 9.3%.

5. ****Educational Attainment****: Berlin residents have varying levels of educational attainment, including high school diplomas, bachelor's degrees, and advanced degrees.

6. ****Number of Housing Units****: New Single Family Homes: 34
New Townhomes: 62 New Apartments: 215

(2) Organizational Structure, Experience and Public Input:

- (3) 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?

We have added an additional component group called the Berlin Horticultural Advisory Group focusing on our rain gardens, container gardens and the overall wellbeing of Berlin's gardening, parks and trees. A new position has been added to assist all town departments with special projects. A new mayor and several council members have been elected as well. The Workgroup consists of Town Staff, Volunteers and the GREEN team from the Main Street Program. We will continue to uphold the highest standards for the Town of Berlin.

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

The strengths have been the continuous effort from town staff and stakeholders to learn new sustainable initiatives to assist developers and new businesses. The only challenges are many overlapping groups with many members serving in a variety of capacities.

- (5) 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?

We have had a number of Strategic Planning meetings coordinated by BEACON out of Salisbury University where ALL citizens of the Town were invited. There were 2 listening sessions at 2 different locations and 2 stakeholder meetings with town staff, elected officials, group members and other notable residents of Berlin.

- (6) 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 Town of Berlin is always open to assistance and suggestions on anything and everything that would help better our town and its citizens.

SECTION B - 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:

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section C

Chesapeake Bay Trust – provided technical assistance.

MD DHCD – provided financial assistance in the 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: Stormwater Achievements

Projects: STORMWATER

GRAHAM AVE SUBMERGED GRAVEL WETLAND

In 2019, The Town of Berlin converted vacant land that once housed an electrical substation into a submerged gravel wetland as part of its ongoing effort to reduce flooding from stormwater runoff and improve water quality in the receiving Maryland coastal bays. A submerged gravel wetland is an example of green infrastructure, an approach to water management that protects, restores, or mimics the natural water cycle. It serves both to store stormwater runoff and provide a small-scale filter using wetland plants in a rock media to provide water quality treatment. Runoff drains into the wetland, is dispersed throughout the system, and releases treated water. Pollutant removal is attained in a submerged gravel wetland through biological uptake from algae and bacteria within the wetland media. Wetland plants also provide nutrient uptake. Project highlights Approximately 155,000 square feet (3.55 acres) of impervious area treated within a 10.86 acres drainage area Approximately 15,000 cubic feet of stormwater storage in the submerged gravel wetland Reduction of flooding severity in the neighborhood Detrimental nutrients removed per year include approximately · 165 pounds of nitrogen · 16 pounds of phosphorus · 8,400 pounds of suspended sediment This project was a partnership of The Town of Berlin; EA Engineering, Science, And Technology, Inc. Pbc; Goody Hill Groundwork, Inc.; and Maryland Coastal Bays Program. It was supported through generous grant funding from the Chesapeake Bay Trust and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources through the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund.

Partners:

Maryland Coastal Bays

Impact:

Relieved flooding for Graham, Nelson, Pine Streets

Accomplishment 2:

Outcome: Strategic Planning

Projects: Updating the town's outdated Strategic Plan

The Town of Berlin is currently developing an updated strategic plan specifically dealing with growth.

Partners: Salisbury University, Atlantic General Hospital, Worcester County Economic Development

Impact: The plan will help guide staff and elected officials on future plans for growth, housing and annexation.

Accomplishment 3:

Outcome: Addition of Public Art

Projects: The Rev. Charles Albert Tindley mural celebrating the life of the 'Godfather of Gospel Music' was added to our downtown. He was born here in Berlin.

The Pollinator Way Mural and Bio Retention Gardens were added to an alley which consistently flooded.

Pollinator Way is an interactive sidewalk mural where kids hop from flower to flower and learn about pollinators.

The historic advertisement murals on Pitts Street will be renovated this month showcasing the legacy of the downtown business district.

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section C

Partners: Maryland State Arts Council, Beach to Bay Heritage Area, Shelly Bruder owner of Bruder Home, Troy Purnell, owner of Pollinator Way property, William Esham, owner of the Pitts Street Treasures building, The Rev. Tindley Family and members of Tyree Church.

Impact: Learning about the history and future of Berlin through our public art and how we far we've come as a town.

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: IMPROVED STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

PHASE 2: PINE/NELSON/FRANKLIN STORMWATER UPGRADE

Narrative: Phase 2 has been planned but has not come to fruition for a number of years due to the lack of funding. Phase 2 just began in December 2023. Maryland Coastal Bays has been awarded \$400,000 for this project and the remaining balance will be financed in the amount of \$800,000 through ARPA.

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section C

Outcome: HERON PARK

Narrative: As of this writing, the approximate 70 acres of land purchased in 2016 and designated as Heron Park (formerly Berlin Falls Park) has parcels containing a former chicken processing plant, open areas with miscellaneous accessory buildings, and an area of approximately 45 acres in use as a passive park. The park area consists of a natural walking trail around three lagoons that were originally built and used as part of the chicken processing operation. This area is frequently used by dog-walkers and others who enjoy the space for exercise and observing nature.

The former processing plant is currently being demolished under a Strategic Demolition Grant and other areas of the property are readying for development as a new Public Works facility for the Town as well as a skatepark being developed by a local grassroots organization working with the Town and the Berlin Parks Commission.

Additional formal development of the passive park area is incorporated into the Town of Berlin Parks Development Plan.

Outcome: POLICE STATION AND EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER

Narrative: Outcome: The Town has constructed a new/state of the art Police Station and Emergency Operations Center Projects: In 2018 we constructed a new 7,500 sq/ft Police Station. Energy efficient. 100% natural gas generator with 100% coverage of the existing structure.

Partners: DBF, Willow Construction, Crosby and Assoc.

Impact: We have a state of the art facility. Quality of life for this department has been significantly enhanced.

Many regulatory standards have now been met. The new facility is located on one of our major highways therefore making it smarter and easier for our police department as well as our partners to gain access.

Part II: 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"> 2019 2021 2023 	DHCD	\$125,000		
Strategic Demolition Fund (SDF): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2022 	DHCD	\$500,000		
Community Safety & Enhancement Program:	MDOT	\$76,300		
Maryland Bikeways Program:	MDOT	\$30,000		
Water Quality Revolving Loan Fund: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead Service Line Inventory Lead Service Line Replacements Water Supply Well & Treatment 	MDE	\$172,040 \$1,126,400 \$867,640		Awarded Fall 2023 50/50 split loan/grant

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

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				
American Rescue Plan Act <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drill new Well 3 • Broad St Lift Station replacement • Smart Meters • Smart Meter installation • Pine/Nelson/Franklin Stormwater 	Federal	\$350,000 \$1,000,000 \$775,000 \$800,000 \$800,000		Awarded 2021
Maryland Coastal Bays <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pine/Nelson/Franklin Stormwater 		\$400,000		Awarded 2021
Maryland Department of Natural Resources Community Parks and Playgrounds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stephen Decatur Park Permanent Restrooms • William Henry Park Basketball Court Lighting 	Maryland	\$99,000 \$111,650		Awarded SFY2022 SFY 2023
Neighborhood Access and Equity (NAE) Grant Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The design of a bicycle and pedestrian bridge over Rt. 113 and the addition of sidewalks and bike trails. 	Federal DOT	\$1.2 Million		Awarded March 2024

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

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

We are in need of a funding source for stream restoration of Hudson Branch and a submerged gravel wetland for Westminster/Abbey to relieve flooding and improve stormwater quality.

SECTION C - SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ACTION PLAN

[TOWN OF BERLIN]

Example Section

Strengths

- Insert bulleted list of strengths (provide some detail as to why and how this is a strength in your community)

Weaknesses

- Insert bulleted list of weaknesses (provide some detail as to why and how this is a weakness in your community)

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures

Outcomes should be considered end results of actions and strategies. Based on the strengths and weaknesses, identify the strengths on which you would like to build and the challenges you would like to address.

Progress Measure: What will you use to measure success toward outcome? Is it quantifiable or qualifiable?

Strategies and Action Items

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.

Implementation Partners

Which community stakeholders need to be involved to realize each action step and strategy? Name specific public and/or private sector partners.

Example Strategy A: Review and revise, as needed, code compliance program to reduce frequency and number of residential code violations.

Maryland Department of Planning, Maryland Department of Housing, County Planning

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

<p>Example Outcome 1: Code violations and complaints are reduced in the Sustainable Community residential areas.</p> <p>Example Progress Measures: Code violations reduced by 25% in Sustainable Community residential areas</p>	<p>Example Action 1: Complete analysis of code violations over the past five years to determine areas, both geographically and topically, for which code violations are most frequent.</p> <p>Example Action 2: Conduct outreach program to determine barriers to code compliance.</p> <p>Example Action 3: Analyze code compliance program for potential inefficiencies and opportunities for proactive engagement.</p> <p>Example Action 4: Pursue façade improvement funding to assist low-income homeowners overcome barriers to code compliance.</p>	<p>Department, local homeowners association</p>
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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.

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature trails at the Heron Park • Offline wetlands installed at 2 locations (approx. 3 acres) • Submerged Gravel wetland completed on Graham Ave • The Town promotes environmentally friendly practices, like providing reusable shopping bags to visitors and residents at no charge • Engineered stormwater management plans are required of all new developments • The Town is Sustainable Maryland certified; corresponding workgroup conducts Clean Up Berlin Day and Pollinator Gardens in Town's parks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stormwater quality continues to be a problem; nitrogen and phosphorus runoff is a persistent issue. • Limited open space accessible to the public

<u>Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures</u>	<u>Strategies and Action Items</u>	<u>Implementation Partners</u>
<p>Outcome 1: Stormwater improvements Hudson Branch</p> <p>Progress Measures: Improve stormwater quality and reduce nuisance flooding.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Improve quality of stormwater runoff by exploring designs for submerged gravel wetlands.</p> <p>Action Items: - Conduct a feasibility study to assess the suitability of submerged gravel wetlands for Hudson Branch.</p> <p>- Collaborate with environmental engineers to develop preliminary designs.</p> <p>- Hold a community meeting to present potential designs and gather feedback.</p>	<p>Town Staff, EA Engineering, DNR, DHCD, MCB</p>

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

	<p>Strategy B: Increase the amount of permeable surface in new growth areas that can absorb stormwater by enforcing compliance with Town requirements for new developments.</p> <p>Action Items: Review and update current town ordinances to ensure strict enforcement of permeable surface requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Schedule inspections for new developments to ensure compliance with stormwater management regulations. - Provide educational materials to developers on the benefits of permeable surfaces and best practices for installation. <p>Strategy C: Explore alternate funding sources for stormwater upgrade</p> <p>Action Items: Research and apply for state and federal grants focused on stormwater management and environmental sustainability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Partner with local businesses and environmental organizations to seek matching funds or donations. - Explore opportunities for public-private partnerships to fund stormwater improvement projects. 	
<p>Outcome 2: Stormwater improvements Westminster/Abbey</p> <p>Progress Measures: Improve stormwater quality and reduce nuisance flooding</p>	<p>Strategy A: Improve quality of stormwater runoff by exploring design for submerged gravel wetlands</p> <p>Action Items: - Engage with landscape architects and hydrologists to draft preliminary designs for submerged gravel wetlands.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct site visits to similar projects to gather insights and best practices. 	<p>Town Staff, EA Engineering, DNR, DHCD, MCB</p>

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organize public workshops to involve the community in the planning process. <p>Strategy B: Explore alternate funding sources for stormwater upgrade</p> <p>Action Items: - Identify and apply for relevant environmental grants and funding programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approach local stakeholders and businesses for sponsorships or in-kind contributions. - Explore bonds or special assessments as potential funding mechanisms. <p>Strategy C: Increase the amount of permeable surface in new growth areas that can absorb stormwater by enforcing compliance with Town requirements for new developments.</p> <p>Action Items: Audit existing development plans for compliance with permeable surface regulations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish a monitoring system to track the effectiveness of permeable surfaces in new developments. - Provide incentives for developers who exceed the town's minimum requirements for permeable surfaces. 	
<p>Outcome 3: Explore revitalization of Heron Park</p> <p>Progress Measures: Improve multi use availability and implementation of park space</p>	<p>Strategy A: Explore possibilities of design and installation of skate park</p> <p>Action Items: Engage with skate park design firms to develop initial concepts and cost estimates.</p>	<p>Town Staff, DBF Engineering, outside contractors/developers</p>

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Conduct surveys and hold public meetings to gauge community interest and gather input on desired features.- Explore potential locations within Heron Park for the skate park and evaluate their suitability. <p>Strategy B: Explore multiuse options for area</p> <p>Action Items: - Organize focus groups with community members to brainstorm possible multi-use options for the park.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Work with urban planners to develop a comprehensive master plan for the park’s revitalization.- Pilot temporary multi-use installations (e.g., pop-up sports courts, community gardens) to test community response and usage patterns.	
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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

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

businesses; commercial building acquisition, rehabilitation and/or adaptive re-use; and creating a sense of place and vibrancy through streetscaping and beautification.

Strengths

- Business Attraction & Retention & Health of our downtown business district/Main Street: Berlin is a Maryland Main Street Designated Community, an Arts & Entertainment District, UMD Sustainable Maryland Community and Enterprise Zone. We offer a Commercial Façade Improvement program and energy audits to our business owners. All of these assets help to retain and attract businesses. We had zero businesses close due to the impacts of the COVID 19 pandemic.
- Berlin works closely with community partners such as the Worcester County Tourism and Economic Development Department, local chambers of commerce and non-profits to help market and promote our downtown businesses and events.
- The town staff including Public Works, Electric, Water Resources and Police all work together at each event to ensure they are successful.
- The Berlin Farmers Market has grown to include more than 50 farmers and food cultivators as one of the top Producers Only Farmers Market on the Eastern Shore
- The Berlin Welcome Center, run by the Town hosts the Berlin Chamber of Commerce and the Beach to Bay Heritage Area offices. Traffic during the summer months reaches 40,000+.
- The 'Heart of Berlin' historic buildings located on Main Street and Pitts Street completed a 3-year long renovation adding apartments to the 2nd

Weaknesses

- Parking: Due to the business and residential growth in downtown Berlin, parking is indeed an issue we are dealing with.
- Lighting: Side streets have added new businesses and updated lighting is desired.
- Aging Infrastructure and Over Head Powerlines
- Aging sidewalks and additional crosswalks desired.

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

level and is now home to new retail shops, bakeries, a coffee shop and new restaurant.	
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Desired Outcomes and Progress		
Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Maintain attractive, mixed use, business friendly downtown commercial district</p> <p>Progress Measures: Number of new businesses, new upper level apartments, number of Façade Grants distributed.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Continue the Towns Façade Improvement program and downtown beautification efforts.</p> <p>Action Items: Apply to DHCD for the continuation of the Berlin Façade Grant program, work with building owners on vacancies, work with property owners on infill development. Work closely with the Horticultural Advisory Board (Green Committee)</p> <p>Strategy B: Promote the advantages of being a Maryland Main Street and Arts & Entertainment district.</p> <p>Action Items: Develop new marketing strategies for promotion via social media and new direct mail campaign.</p>	<p>DHCD, Berlin Horticulture Advisory Board, Main Street Program Committees, Berlin Arts and Entertainment Advisory Board, Maryland State Arts Council, Worcester County Arts Council, Berlin Chamber of Commerce, Beach to Bay Heritage Area.</p>

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

<p>Outcome 2: Reduced reliance on personal vehicles, leading to decreased demand for parking.</p> <p>Progress Measures: Improvements that reduce the demand for parking.</p> <p>Outcome 3: Increased Lighting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved safety and security on side streets. - Enhanced aesthetic appeal and ambiance for businesses and customers. - Increased foot traffic and economic activity in newly developed areas. <p>Outcome 4: Aging Infrastructure and Over Head Powerlines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Modernized infrastructure that supports current and future community needs. - Reduced outages and increased reliability of power supply. - Improved visual aesthetics of the town by reducing overhead clutter. 	<p>Strategies and Action Plans:</p> <p>**1. Enhance Public Transit Accessibility**</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Action: Partner with local and regional transit agencies to improve public transportation routes and schedules, ensuring convenient access to downtown Berlin. <p>**2. Promote Active Transportation**</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Action: Expand and improve the network of bike lanes and pedestrian pathways. Implement bike-sharing programs and create pedestrian-friendly zones with ample crosswalks and signage. <p>**3. Implement Shared Mobility Solutions**</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Action: Encourage the use of car-sharing and ride-hailing services by designating pick-up/drop-off zones. <p>*4.. Community Engagement and Awareness Campaigns**</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - **Action:** Launch campaigns to educate the community about the benefits of reducing car usage, highlighting the environmental and economic advantages of alternative transportation. <p>Strategies</p> <p>A. Implement energy-efficient LED lighting to reduce energy costs and environmental impact.</p>	<p>Berlin Fire Company, St. Pauls United Methodist Church, Buckingham United Methodist Church, Burbage Funeral Home, Esham Properties, Bergey and Associates.</p> <p>Town electric and public works departments, Berlin Chamber of Commerce, AMP: Energy providers and lighting manufacturers, DHCD for Safety Grants and Community Legacy Grants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Berlin Utilities Department and Water Resources and assisting energy providers. - State and federal infrastructure programs. - DBF Engineering
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Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

<p>Progress Measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Miles of powerlines buried or replaced. - Reduction in power outages and maintenance costs. - Community satisfaction surveys regarding infrastructure improvements. - Increase in property values in areas with updated infrastructure. <p>Outcome #5: Aging sidewalks and additional crosswalks desired.</p> <p>Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhanced pedestrian safety and accessibility. - Improved walkability and connectivity within the town. - Increased use of sidewalks and crosswalks, promoting healthier lifestyles. <p>Progress Measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Linear feet of sidewalks repaired or added. 	<p>B. Collaborate with local businesses to share ideas and benefits of upgraded lighting and promote the town's energy audits conducted by our Utilities Department Director.</p> <p>Action: Apply for grants or funding opportunities to support the lighting upgrades</p> <p>Set up meetings with local businesses for energy audits.</p> <p>Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -A. Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the current infrastructure to identify critical areas needing updates. -B. Develop a phased plan for replacing aging infrastructure and burying powerlines. -C. Secure funding through municipal bonds, state or federal grants, and public-private partnerships. <p>Actions: Research consulting firms to assess our current infrastructure.</p> <p>Research and apply for funding to accomplish the plan for replacing infrastructure. Reach out to state and local partners for assistance.</p> <p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct an audit of existing sidewalks and crosswalks to identify areas needing repair or addition. - Develop a comprehensive sidewalk and crosswalk improvement plan, prioritizing areas with high pedestrian traffic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Town planning and public works departments. - Local and state transportation agencies. - Community organizations and advocacy groups for pedestrians. - Grant and funding agencies (Department of Transportation).
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Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Number of new crosswalks installed.- Pedestrian usage statistics before and after improvements.- Reduction in pedestrian-related accidents or incidents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Engage with the community to gather input and ensure the improvements meet residents' needs.- Apply for funding from state and federal programs dedicated to transportation and pedestrian infrastructure. <p>Actions: Research consulting firm to conduct audit of existing sidewalks and crosswalks. Work with them to develop a plan. Organize meetings with the community to assess the resident’s needs. Research funding and hire grant writer to apply for recommended grants.</p>	
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<h2>Transportation</h2> <p>This section describes the way people in your community get from place to place.</p> <p>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.</p>	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Proximity to US 50 and US 113, both major highways● 10 Miles from Ocean City and Assateague Island, 19 miles to Salisbury Airport	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Limited connectivity to other parts of the county via public transportation● Lack of public transportation

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ShoreTransit bus service to employment center in Salisbury• Additional sidewalks and curb cuts added for ADA Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of non-auto transportation networks, including bike and pedestrian trails• Not enough parking
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Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Increase in crosswalks and connectivity.</p> <p>Progress Measures: Amount of people using bikes, pedestrian pathways and public transportation.</p>	<p>Strategies: Add additional crosswalks</p> <p>Action: Meet with the community and SHA to determine where additional crosswalks can go. Work with SHA to add crosswalks in desired locations. Add crosswalks to Town owned roads where community desires them.</p>	<p>Shannon Baum Signs, Google and Apple maps</p> <p>Berlin Fire Company, St. Paul’s UMC, Buckingham UMC</p>
<p>Outcome 2: Increase pedestrian and bike opportunities for connection.</p> <p>Progress Measures: Increase linear feet of non-automotive pathways</p>	<p>Strategy A: 1. Conduct a Comprehensive Sidewalk and Crosswalk Audit</p> <p>2. Develop a Sidewalk and Crosswalk Improvement Plan</p> <p>3. Explore and Secure Funding and Resources and Grants</p> <p>4. Implement Phased Improvements</p> <p>5. Enhance Community Engagement and Education</p>	<p>SHA, Davis Bown and Friedel,</p> <p>Federal Dept of Transportation</p> <p>SHA, Davis Bown and Friedel, DNR</p>

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

<p>Aging Sidewalks and Insufficient Crosswalks</p>	<p>Action: Conduct community meetings and create a plan to determine where to prioritize and build new pathways and sidewalks. Hire a grant writer to research and apply for grant funding.</p>	
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Housing

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

Strengths, weaknesses and outcomes might focus on the following: affordability; increasing homeownership; increasing rental housing; diversifying the kinds of housing available; improving housing conditions (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 options including single family homes, town homes and apartments.• These options offer a wide range of affordable opportunities to reside here.• Within the last 5 years Berlin has added a significant amount of apartment buildings. A blighted townhouse community was redesigned and renovated.• New Townhouse are currently being constructed.• The town has invested in ADA compliant sidewalks and have added benches to the downtown area.• A new Senior Center has opened	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aging buildings and facades• Aging infrastructure• Lack of sufficient parking for additional apartments to be added downtown

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
Outcome 1 The town's strategic plan includes efforts to diversify housing types, such as considering multifamily dwellings and single family homes to meet different affordability needs.	<p>Strategy A: Implement our new strategic plan with recommendations.</p> <p>Action Items:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Form a cross-functional team consisting of town officials, community leaders, and stakeholders to oversee the implementation of these efforts. 2. Explore funding options, including grants, partnerships, and local revenue sources. 3. Host public meetings, workshops, and surveys to involve residents in the implementation process and gathering feedback. 4. Hire a grant writer to explore funding options, including grants, partnerships, and local revenue sources, to support the implementation of strategic initiatives. 5. Host public meetings, workshops, and surveys to involve residents in the implementation process, gathering feedback and fostering a sense of ownership. 	Salisbury University Beacon School of Business, Town Staff, Mayor and Council, Berlin Planning Commission

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

	<p>Strategy B: Work with the Berlin Planning Commission for both residential and commercial design standards</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assemble a task force of urban planners, architects, local officials, and community representatives to draft design standards for downtown development. 2. Review design standards from similar towns and cities, incorporating best practices that align with Berlin's character and development goals. 3. Create comprehensive design guidelines that address building materials, architectural styles, signage, landscaping, and pedestrian access. 4. Integrate the design standards into the town's zoning and permitting processes, with clear enforcement mechanisms and review procedures. 	
<p>Outcome 2: Fix Aging Infrastructure</p> <p>Aging infrastructure and repairs to aging infrastructure: The town aims to enhance safety, boost property values and make the area more attractive to current and prospective residents.</p> <p>Progress Measures:</p>	<p>Strategy A: Addressing Aging Infrastructure</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct a town-wide audit of aging infrastructure, focusing on housing-related issues. 2. Prioritize infrastructure repairs based on safety and impact on housing conditions. 3. Secure state and federal grants to support large-scale infrastructure repairs. <p>Action Items:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organize regular inspections and community surveys to identify critical areas where infrastructure is deteriorating. 	<p>DHCD, Town Staff, DNR, Salisbury University: John Hickman</p>

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

<p>1. **Infrastructure Condition Reports**: Regular assessments of roads, sidewalks, and crosswalks to identify areas needing repair or replacement.</p> <p>2. **Investment and Budget Allocation**: Tracking the funds allocated and spent on infrastructure projects, ensuring resources are directed to critical areas.</p> <p>3. **Completion of Planned Projects**: Monitoring the completion rates of scheduled infrastructure projects to ensure timely updates and maintenance.</p> <p>4. **Resident Feedback**: Collecting input from residents on infrastructure improvements and perceived changes in safety, accessibility, and overall satisfaction.</p> <p>5. **Property Value Trends**: Observing changes in property values in areas where infrastructure improvements have been made to gauge economic impact.</p> <p>6. **Safety Incident Reports**: Tracking the frequency and types of incidents related to infrastructure issues to measure improvements in safety.</p>	<p>2. Partner with local contractors to expedite small-scale repairs while applying for funding for larger projects.</p> <p>3. Establish a timeline for phased infrastructure improvements, prioritizing neighborhoods with the highest need.</p> <p>Strategy B: Increasing Homeownership and Rental Options</p> <p>1. Partner with local banks to create affordable homeownership programs.</p> <p>2. Develop incentives for landlords to renovate and offer rental properties at affordable rates.</p> <p>3. Promote housing developments that include a mix of affordable homes and rentals.</p> <p>Action Items: 1. Host homebuyer education workshops in partnership with local realtors and financial advisors.</p> <p>2. Work with developers to create mixed-use housing projects that include affordable rental units and homeownership opportunities.</p> <p>3. Research tax incentives for homeowners and landlords who renovate homes and make them available for sale or rent.</p> <p>Strategy C: Enhancing Housing Conditions for Aging in Place</p> <p>1. Launch a town-wide program offering grants or loans for home modifications (e.g., ramps, safer bathrooms).</p> <p>2. Partner with contractors to offer discounted home repair services for seniors.</p>	
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Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

	<p>3. Organize community volunteer events to assist elderly homeowners with exterior home maintenance.</p> <p>Action Items:</p> <p>1. Create an online portal to connect senior homeowners with local, vetted contractors who specialize in aging-in-place renovations.</p> <p>2. Develop partnerships with nonprofits to offer free or low-cost home safety assessments for seniors looking to modify their homes.</p>	
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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,

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

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 Berlin Commons is an public outdoor gathering space in our downtown for folks to relax, eat and gather. It is located on property owned by The Buzz Meadery and was helpful for outdoor social distancing during the pandemic. It contains 12 picnic tables and a small stage for live music.• Evermoore Park is another public outdoor gathering space with picnic tables offered by the property owner as an outdoor dining location.• The Berlin Library offers a community garden maintained by the local garden club growing a variety of produce and herbs.• The Spirit Kitchen is located in downtown Berlin and offers free lunch every Wednesday and is an official Maryland Food Bank location for folks to pickup food every week.• The Berlin Senior Center offers programs for adults 55 and older.• Berlin is home to Stephen Decatur Park with newly paved walking trails, playgrounds, tennis and pickleball courts and a disc golf course. Pavilions for parties are also offered.• Henry Park has basketball courts, bleachers and is lit in the evenings. Also features playgrounds and a picnic pavilion.• Burbage Park has 2 outdoor ping pong tables open to the public that include a shared paddle and ball box.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>The lack of a community center for multi-generational activities and new location for Shore-Up.</i>• <i>Increase Community Gardens</i>

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Berlin Library offers daily programs, classes, lectures and events for all ages.• The Calvin B. Taylor History Museum is open during the summer and offers a variety of concerts and events.• We have events during our Spring, Summer and Fall months with an emphasis on the holidays.• Town has ten churches, one masonic lodge, and two American Legion Posts with active memberships.• We have a weekly producers only farmers market May through September	
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Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
Community Center Outcomes	Strategy 1: Conduct Community Needs Assessment. Actions: Survey and Meetings: Hold a public meeting(s) to assess these needs; create a report with findings..	Shore-Up, Berlin Community Improvement Association, Worcester County Commissioners, Town Staff

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhanced Community Engagement: Increased opportunities for social interaction and community events. - Improved Access to Services: Provision of recreational, educational, and social services. - Economic Development: Boost local economy by attracting visitors and supporting local businesses. <p>Progress Measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community Participation: Number of events held and attendance rates. - Service Utilization: Usage statistics of the center's facilities and programs. - Economic Impact: Increase in local business revenue and employment opportunities. 	<p>Strategy 2: Secure Funding and Resources</p> <p>Action: Research and hire grant writer to apply for Grant Funding</p> <p>Strategy 3: Create Community Center Committee</p> <p>Action: Reach out to community partners with different backgrounds to join this committee to learn and incorporate different opinions.</p>	
<p>Increase Community Gardens</p> <p>Outcomes</p> <p>1. Increased Community Engagement by providing a shared space where residents can collaborate and interact.</p>	<p>Strategy 2:</p> <p>Identify Suitable Locations</p> <p>ACTION: Collaborate with local authorities to identify and secure public or privately owned land that can be converted into community gardens.</p> <p>Community Involvement</p>	

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

<p>2. **Improved Public Health**: Enhance access to fresh produce, encouraging healthy eating habits and physical activity.</p> <p>3. **Environmental Sustainability**: Promote sustainable practices such as composting, rainwater harvesting, and organic gardening.</p> <p>4. **Educational Opportunities**: Create a learning environment for residents of all ages to gain knowledge about gardening, nutrition, and environmental stewardship.</p> <p>5. **Aesthetic Improvement**: Beautify the town with green spaces, enhancing the overall appeal and attractiveness of the area.</p> <p>Progress Measures</p> <p>1. **Increased Community Engagement**</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of volunteers involved, attendance at community meetings and events, frequency of garden visits. <p>2. **Improved Public Health**</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quantity of produce harvested and distributed, number of residents 	<p>ACTION: Engage residents through surveys, town hall meetings, and social media to gather input and build support for the project.</p> <p>Create Partnerships</p> <p>ACTION: Partner with local schools, businesses, and non-profits to secure resources, funding, and volunteer support.</p> <p>Maintain Sustainable Practices</p> <p>ACTION: Implement eco-friendly gardening methods, such as composting, water conservation, and the use of organic fertilizers and pest control.</p> <p>Secure Funding and Resources</p> <p>ACTION: Hire grant writer to apply for grants. Seek donations, and organize fundraisers to cover the costs of establishing and maintaining the gardens.</p>	
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Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

<p>participating in gardening activities, surveys on residents' dietary habits.</p> <p>- Harvest and distribute to at least 50 residents actively participating.</p> <p>3. **Environmental Sustainability**</p> <p>-Amount of compost produced,</p> <p>Produce 200 pounds of compost annually;</p> <p>4. **Educational Opportunities**</p> <p>Number of workshops and training sessions held, attendance at educational events, feedback from participants.</p> <p>Conduct several workshops or training sessions per year; at least 15 attendees per session.</p> <p>5. **Aesthetic Improvement**</p> <p>Number of garden plots established, visual assessments of garden conditions, community feedback on the garden's appearance.</p> <p>- Establish at least 3 garden plots in the first year; maintain high visual standards as evidenced by regular positive community feedback.</p>		
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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.	
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">• We have hired a Special Projects Coordinator to assist with code enforcement• The Planning Commission meets once a month to review all building requests• Currently updating the town’s strategic plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of design standards for prospective developers• Lack of staff in the town’s planning department• AirBnB enforcement• Lack of perceived affordable housing

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
<p>1. Design Standards for Prospective Developers</p> <p>**Desired Outcomes:**</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear and consistent design guidelines are established and adopted. - Enhanced aesthetic and functional quality of new developments. - Increased developer compliance with town standards. <p>**Progress Measures:**</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of design guideline documents created and distributed. - Percentage of new developments adhering to the established design standards. 	<p>Form a Design Standards Task Force</p> <p>ACTION: Assemble a task force of planners, architects, local officials, and community representatives to draft design standards for downtown development.</p> <p>Research Best Practices</p> <p>Action: Review design standards from similar towns and cities, incorporating best practices that align with Berlin's character and development goals.</p> <p>Develop and Draft Design Guidelines</p> <p>Action: Create comprehensive design guidelines that address building materials, architectural styles, signage, landscaping, and pedestrian access.</p> <p>2. Addressing staffing shortages is a priority</p>	<p>Salisbury University Beacon School of Business, D3 Web Design, Berlin Community Improvement Association, Berlin Planning Commission, Berlin Historic District Commission</p>

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

<p>- Feedback from developers and community on the effectiveness of the guidelines.</p> <p>2. Staffing in the Planning Department</p> <p>**Desired Outcomes:**</p> <p>- Adequate staffing levels achieved to handle current and future planning needs.</p> <p>- Improved efficiency and responsiveness of the planning department.</p> <p>**Progress Measures:**</p> <p>- Number of new hires and retention rates within the planning department.</p> <p>- Average processing time for planning applications and permits.</p> <p>3. Airbnb Enforcement</p> <p>**Desired Outcomes:**</p> <p>- Effective regulation and monitoring of short-term rentals.</p> <p>- Preservation of neighborhood integrity and safety.</p> <p>- Balanced interests of residents and property owners.</p>	<p>ACTION: Recruit and retain skilled staff, ensuring the planning department has the capacity to effectively manage growth and development, providing better service to residents and developers alike.</p> <p>3. Airbnb Enforcement</p> <p>ACTION: Create a plan for monitoring and regulating short-term rentals. This will help maintain neighborhood integrity, ensure safety standards are met, and balance the interests of residents and property owners.</p> <p>4. Affordable Housing</p> <p>ACTION: Identify and promote incentives for affordable housing projects, the plan aims to increase the availability of affordable homes. Explore partnerships, zoning, and financial incentives to make housing more accessible for all income levels.</p>	
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Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

<p>**Progress Measures:**</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Number of short-term rentals registered and in compliance with regulations.- Incidents of non-compliance and enforcement actions taken.- Community feedback on the impact of Airbnb regulations. <p>4. Affordable Housing</p> <p>**Desired Outcomes:**</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Increased availability of affordable housing options.- Greater diversity in housing types and price points.- Enhanced community inclusivity and stability. <p>**Progress Measures:**</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Number of affordable housing units developed or renovated.- Percentage increase in affordable housing stock.		
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Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

<div>- Tracking of partnerships, zoning changes, and financial incentives implemented.</div> <div>- Resident satisfaction with housing affordability and accessibility.</div> <div>Progress Measures: Finalization of the strategic plan, increased enforcement of the town’s ordinances</div>		
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