

## **SECTION A - SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY RENEWAL**

### **APPLICANT INFORMATION**

Name of Sustainable Community:		Town of Chestertown	
Name of Applicant:		Town of Chestertown	
Applicant's Federal Identification Number:		52-6000783	
Applicant's Street Address:		118 N. Cross Street	
City: <b>Chestertown</b>	County: <b>Kent</b>		State: <b>MD</b> Zip Code: <b>21620</b>
Phone Number: <b>410-778- 0500</b>	Fax Number: <b>410-778-4378</b>		Web Address: <b>townofchestertown.com</b>

#### **(1) Sustainable Community Boundary and Description**

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

**No changes are needed, as the existing boundary incorporates all of the sites that are designated for current and future grant projects. The last modification to the boundary was the incorporation of a 78.9 acre annexation of the Dixon Valve-owned Chestertown Business Campus.**

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

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

**Not applicable.**

- (3) Approximate number of acres of entire SC Area: **1,200 ac.**

(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): **National Historic Landmark District, MHAA Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area, Sustainable Maryland Certified, Target Investment Zone, Community Legacy Area.**

(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 2020 Census shows that Chestertown's population has seen a modest 6 percent increase from 5,252 in 2010 to 5,532 in 2020. The population age breakdown is 3.1 percent under 5 years old, 13.6 percent under 18, and 25.4 percent 65 and over. This leaves 57.9 percent of the population in the 18 and 65 cohort. The percentage of people over 65 has increased by 2 percent since 2010, while the number of people under 18 has increased by 5 percent. (All Census numbers are taken directly from US Census QuickFacts unless otherwise indicated.)**

**The 2020 racial composition of the population is 72.5 percent White, 21.8 percent Black, 3 percent Hispanic and 2.6 percent Asian. These numbers show a slight decrease in the White population of 1.8 percent and a corresponding increase in the percentage of Black residents since 2010.**

**The number of households increased by 19 percent since 2010, from 1,971 to 2,365, which does not match up with the relatively small size in population increase but does make sense when the average size of the number of people per household is considered. That number decreased from 2.0 in 2010 to 1.73 in 2020. In other words, the average number of people per household decreased by 15 percent between 2010 and 2020, meaning that there are more households but with smaller families.**

**The median household income in Chestertown increased substantially from \$31,809 in 2010 to \$44,665, an increase of 40 percent. This increase can be most likely be attributed to the number of retirees moving to Chestertown from outside of Kent County, who tend to be more affluent than the average local household. This opinion is supported by the large number of relatively expensive new homes that have been constructed in Chestertown within the past five years after a nearly complete standstill in new home construction before and during Covid.**

**Related to the increase in median household income is the level of educational attainment, which has seen a rise in the number of high school graduates over the age of 25 between 2010 and 2020, from 80.5 percent to 88.4 percent, an increase of nearly 10 percent. The number of people with a bachelor's degree or higher is also quite high at 42.3 percent, which is nearly 2 percent higher than the number for Maryland and an increase of 6 percent over the 2010 rate of 36.5 percent. These numbers are most likely attributable to the number of affluent retirees moving to Chestertown.**

**The number of housing units in Chestertown has increased from 2,361 to 2,542 between 2010 and 2021 (source: Census Reporter), a 7.6 percent increase that reflects – in part – the large number of single-family homes constructed since the COVID downturn. The trend has continued, with 38 single-family homes constructed in 2022. The median value of owner-occupied homes decreased by 8 percent over the previous five years, from \$289,800 to \$267,800**

in 2020 (American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates). The decrease is likely due to the aftereffects of the recession and Covid. However, the margin for error in median home values is over 10 percent, so they may be incorrect. Redfin data shows that the most recent average home price is \$420,000, which is up 19.1 percent over last year, and the price per square foot is \$257, up 35.6 percent over last year (Source: Redfin – Chestertown, MD Housing Market). The number of owner-occupied housing units stands at 45.5 percent, so just over half of all housing units are rented.

In 2010 the poverty rate for Chestertown was 26.6 percent, which fell to 19.3 percent in 2020 but still high given that the rate for Maryland is 9.16 percent. This trend is, as was the case with household income and educational attainment, attributable to the influx of wealthier retirees. While the poverty rate for the town has gone down, the number of children who are below the poverty line in local Title I schools is a better indication of family poverty levels. The number of children considered below poverty is 82.27 percent at Garnett Elementary and 59.44 percent at Kent County Middle School (Source: MD Department of Education 2022-2023 Maryland Title I Schools).

**(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?

The Sustainable Communities Workgroup membership has evolved substantially in the last five years. As was the case during the development of the last version of the application, the Chestertown Mayor, Council, and staff are the primary points of contact for the development of the plan, augmented by input from various town bodies including Chestertown Main Street, Greater Chestertown Initiative, Chestertown Environmental Committee, Chestertown Planning Commission, Kent Forward, Chestertown Public Art Committee, ShoreRivers and others. One notable addition to the Workgroup and additions to the Action Plan resulted from the hiring of a consultant to create a Strategic Agenda for the Town, which relied on considerable input from local agencies, nonprofits, businesses, commissions, committees and individuals.

Leaders for the various groups that have contributed to the Sustainable Communities Master Plan include the following:

Town of Chestertown Mayor David Foster, Council Members Tim O'Brien, Tom Herz, Jose Medrano and Meghan Efland, Town Manager Larry DiRe, Zoning Administrator Kees de Mooy

Chestertown Main Street Nina Fleegle (Director)

Greater Chestertown Initiative Carla Massoni

Chestertown Environmental Committee Jenny Lee Freebery (Chair), Secethia Boardley-Davis, Jim Bogden, Andy Goddard, Erin Heckles, Krista Lamoreaux, Joe Maisano, Annie Richards, Ford Schuman, David Sobers, Darran Tilghman, Carole Trippe, Wendy Wander, Kevin Denice

Chestertown Planning Commission John Hutchison (Chair), Jim Gatto, Cinda Pitcock, Jay Silcox, Elizabeth Watson, Owen Bailey, Heidi Usilton

Kent Forward Bryan Matthews (Executive Director), Kate Gray, Charlie Athey

Public Arts Committee Ben Tilghman (Chair), Kate Dowd, Elizabeth Healy, David Hegland, Carla Massoni, Yuk Okano, Robert Ortiz, Marianne Sade, Hester Sachse, John Schratwieser

ShoreRivers Isabel Hardesty (Executive Director), Annie Richards(Riverkeeper), Rebekah Hock, Darran White Tilghman, Katie Drummond

Chestertown Strategic Agenda Elizabeth Watson (Consultant)

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

**Chestertown is very fortunate to have a large number of people who are dedicated to improving the town's environmental, economic, social, and cultural wellbeing. For a town with a relatively small population, it is remarkable to find so many who are willing to volunteer for our mutual betterment. This is especially true for the people who have moved here from elsewhere, in many cases because they see the Town's strengths: a small, quiet town in a beautiful waterfront setting and surrounded by farmland, a beautiful downtown with brick sidewalks and historic buildings protected by a National Historic Landmark Historic District, a vibrant college that is intimately involved in the Town's cultural and artistic life, a diverse and growing artistic community anchored by an Arts & Entertainment District, and a stunning public art collection that has made Chestertown a destination. All of these amenities strengthen the will and commitment of the many volunteers who have contributed to this Action Plan.**

**While the small size of Chestertown is an asset for the reasons stated above, it also makes it challenging to find people with the professional and technical background needed to contribute to a plan of this type.**

- (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?

**The Sustainable Communities Action Plan update received input primarily from the recently completed Strategic Agenda, the ongoing Comprehensive Plan update by the Chestertown Planning Commission, and from the volunteer groups mentioned above.**

- (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.

**Technical assistance is needed to determine whether MDOT's low rating of the Chestertown Bypass Project could be improved in any way, and if not, whether there are alternative strategies short of a bypass to relieve heavy truck traffic over the Chester River Bridge and through Chestertown.**

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

#### **Accomplishment 1: Chestertown Marina**

***Outcome:*** Although parts of this project were featured in the last Sustainable Communities application, the project was not yet completed. The Marina has now been operating for four years. The project consisted of the revitalization of a rundown waterfront facility into a first-class, publicly owned, 56-slip marina attracting residents, visitors and boaters from throughout Chesapeake Bay and beyond. The impetus for the purchase of the Marina property by the Town of Chestertown was informed by the findings of the Chestertown Port Committee. The revitalization of the Chestertown Marina was listed in the previous Sustainable Communities Action Plan as a Highest Priority item and is the Town's most successful realization of that stated goal. The facility was recently certified by the Department of Natural Resources as a Clean Marina in recognition of its pollution prevention and sustainability efforts.

***Project 1:*** The grade of the Chestertown Marina was raised by approximately two feet to mitigate nuisance flooding, which was accomplished through the construction of 800 linear feet of new bulkheading and sloping the newly graded areas toward 34,900 square feet of native-landscaped areas and bioswales and 6,100 square feet of pervious brick plazas and walkways. New utilities including electric, water, sewer, lighting, security, and fuel infrastructure were installed as part of this phase of the project.

***Project 2:*** A 3,000 square-foot building known as the Cerino Center was constructed to house the Marina Office, boater bathrooms and showers, and a rental space now occupied by ShoreRivers, a non-profit group dedicated to science-based advocacy, restoration and education. ShoreRivers, with a grant funded by a private funder, bioretention, rain garden, and bird and pollinator habitat next to



*the Cerino Center with 3,500 square feet of restoration and demonstration practices that show the benefits of watershed stewardship, including restoration and placemaking. These planted areas provide treatment for an estimated .592 acres, of which about 68% is impervious.*

**Project 3:** *Construction of 545 feet of new floating docks and 58-foot extension to the existing fixed dock, featuring new power and water pedestals for each boat slip, plus a sewage pump-out station connected to Town sewer on the largest floating dock T-head, adjacent to the fuel dispensing pump. The head of the fixed dock is the home berth for the Sultana, a reproduction 1768 schooner used to fulfil the Sultana Education Foundation's mission, to provide hands-on educational opportunities that promote stewardship of the Chesapeake's historic, cultural, and environmental resources.*

**Project 4:** *A new reinforced concrete boat ramp, boat washdown area and boat lift track on pilings were constructed in a centrally located area at the Marina. The washdown area was tied into a new settling tank and stormwater line connected to Town sewer to prevent runoff and boat debris from going into the Chester River.*

**Project 5:** *An initial 4,950 cubic yards was dredged to remove heavy siltation and to provide adequate depth for boats. The Town has received a FY 2024 DNR Dredging Grant to conduct an additional 7,250 cubic yards of maintenance dredging in the Marina basin to enlarge the extent of navigable water and clear newly silted areas.*

**Partners:** *USDA Water & Waste Disposal Grant Program (\$1,298,000), DNR Waterway Improvement Fund (\$2,064,000), MD Capital Budget Grants (\$1,000,000), Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (\$80,000), DHCD Strategic Demolition Fund (\$400,000), MD DNR Sewage Pumpout Grant (\$16,000), and private donations (\$870,000).*

**Impacts:** *The Chestertown Marina project has been a resounding success as indicated by a dramatic increase in waterfront foot and boat traffic. The raised grade has prevented nuisance flooding and the newly paved parking lots, boardwalks with bollard lighting, pervious brick plazas and landscaping have transformed this once rundown facility into a beacon for the Town, County and State. The stormwater infrastructure has turned a once impervious site into one that captures almost all of the runoff through infiltrative measures. The effect of the Marina's revitalization can be seen in the number of out-of-town boaters to the Marina over the past five years, which has remained relatively steady at approximately 500 overnight visitors despite the negative effect of the vacant waterfront restaurant, which sustained a major fire in 2022. In addition, the Marina is the site for the annual Sultana Downrigging Weekend, a three-day festival in early November which brings thousands of visitors to Chestertown to sail on one of many tall ships docked at the Marina, and who visit the Sultana tent set up on the Marina parking lot where folks can listen to music, hear lectures, and enjoy food and beverages from local restaurateurs. Prior to the renovation of the Marina, Downrigging Weekend was in danger of being discontinued due to the dilapidated and dangerous condition of the existing, privately owned marina. With the updated facilities, the survival of Downrigging and public access to the waterfront is assured.*

## **Accomplishment 2: Gilchrest Rail Trail Phase IV**

**Outcome:** *This project was listed as unfinished in the previous Sustainable Communities application. The project has now been finished and features the completion of a .3-mile section representing the final phase of the Gilchrest Rail Trail, which includes a safe pedestrian and bicycle crossing at Rt. 298/Morgnec Road. The section runs between the terminus of the section that runs through the*

*property of Washington College and ends at a connector road in the Foxley Manor subdivision, which is located at the northernmost edge of Chestertown.*

**Project 1:** *Installation of a Hazard Identification Beacon (HIB) at the intersection of the Rail Trail and Rt. 298/Morgnac Road. This pedestrian-activated beacon warns oncoming motorists that someone is crossing this heavily traveled roadway. The intersection has bollards at both ends so that cyclists are forced to dismount.*

**Project 2:** *Grading and paving of a .3-mile section of a former rail bed. Side slopes were re-graded and planted with native grasses.*

**Project 3:** *Installation of 400 linear feet of safety railing along the section of the Rail Trail where steep slopes create a hazard for pedestrians and cyclists.*

**Partners:** *Town of Chestertown (\$70,000 in in-kind and cash matching funds), MDOT Kim Lamphier Bikeways Network Program (FY 2018 \$70,000), Kent County Local Parks and Playgrounds Infrastructure grant (\$31,660 for safety railing and matching costs).*

**Impacts:** *As stated in the previous Sustainable Communities Action Plan, the completion of the Gilcrest Rail Trail was delayed during the construction of the Chestertown Marina project, as the Town's financial resources were completely taken up by that effort. Once the Marina project was completed, attention once again turned to completing the final phase of the Rail Trail. The completed trail now allows the adjacent residents of the Foxley Manor subdivision to have a safe walking and cycling path into downtown Chestertown and the waterfront, while also providing users of the Rail Trail the experience of walking and riding through an undeveloped, wooded area. This section of the Rail Trail also creates the opportunity to extend the Trail northwards through Kent County to Worton, an effort that is already seeing a great deal of support. The National Park Service awarded a grant to the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy to create a regional trail network, to include the section between Chestertown and Worton. In addition, a planned residential development of 150 units at the end of Talbot Boulevard and on the other side of the Rail Trail from Foxley Manor – 80 multi-family and 70 single-family – will benefit from access to the Rail Trail, and the marketing of the project will include access to the Rail Trail as a selling point.*

### **Accomplishment 3: Sultana Education Foundation – Lawrence Wetland Preserve**

**Outcome:** *The Lawrence Wetlands Preserve (LWP) is an 8.5-acre urban nature center featuring a variety of ecosystems including upland forest, swamp, marsh, shrublands, meadows, and a freshwater pond. The Preserve is located just outside of the Historic District in Chestertown within easy walking distance of the Sultana Foundation's Holt Education Center. LWP programs provide an opportunity for students to explore fresh-water and terrestrial ecosystems while learning how land use in the watershed ultimately impacts the health of Chesapeake Bay. The Preserve is also an ideal site for the implementation of student-led action projects.*

**Project 1:** *Constructed a 1,200 square-foot education building called the Harwood Center to LEED Gold standard, which is now being used as a classroom for pre-K-12 programs that introduce students to the ecosystems comprising the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, encouraging them to become stewards of this unique resource. The Town of Chestertown secured a DHCD Community Legacy Grant (CL-2023-Chestertown-00320) for the project. The Harwood Center operates as a component of the National Park Service's Chestertown Contact Center, which is located at Sultana's Holt*

*Education Center in downtown Chestertown and is co-branded as part of the Park Service's Chesapeake Gateways Network.*

**Project 2:** *Converted 2+ acres of monoculture agricultural fescue into a diverse meadow and pollinator habitat. Over 450 native species of trees were planted over .75 acres.*

**Project 3:** *Constructed a 450-foot-long raised wood boardwalk with viewing platforms, connected by an approximately .3-mile trail of crushed gravel. The boardwalk and trails are used by educators to lead students through the diverse habitats that have been created.*

**Partners:** *DHCD Community Legacy Program (\$150,000), National Park Service (\$200,000), France Merrick Foundation (\$150,000), John Ben Snow Foundation (\$25,000), Gosnell Foundation (\$25,000), Salmon Foundation (\$15,000), MidShore Community Foundation (\$10,115), and private donors.*

**Impacts:** *The impacts of the project include the successful promotion of environmental literacy and stewardship, enhanced understanding of human impacts in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, establishment of a sanctuary for indigenous plants and animal species, and promotion of inclusion and access through consultation with a representative cross section of the community.*

**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.



## **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
<b>Community Legacy (CL): (2010-2023)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sumner Hall renovations</li> <li>● Sultana Education Foundation buildings</li> <li>● Kent Cultural Alliance renovations</li> </ul>	DHCD	\$674,000		
<b>Strategic Demolition Fund (SDF):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Chestertown Business</li> <li>● Chestertown Marina Interpretive Center</li> <li>● Kent Cultural Alliance 2020</li> </ul>	DHCD	\$2,150,000		
<b>Community Safety &amp; Enhancement Program:</b>	MDOT		All of the Town's Rail Trail funds have utilized the Bikeways Program, but TAP is a potential source for ongoing projects like the Chestertown History Trail.	
<b>Maryland Bikeways Program:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Gilchrest Rail Trail Phases II and III</li> <li>● Gilchrest Rail Trail Phase IV</li> </ul>	MDOT	\$446,226		
<b>Sidewalk Retrofit Program:</b>	MDOT		Fund 79 could potentially be used to fund a new sidewalk along Flatland Road, which was included in the 2022 and 2023 Transportation Priority Letters for Kent County. The program website states that construction may be funded entirely by SHA. Fund 88 could help to enhance the Town's existing Rail Trail network with on-road improvements, which also do not require local funding.	
<b>Water Quality Revolving Loan Fund:</b>	MDE	\$5,252,160		The Town used two loans for BNR/ENR systems at the WWTP about 18 years ago. The first (\$1.8M) will be paid off on Feb. 1, 2025, the second (\$3.452M) on Feb. 1, 2027.

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<b>Other Funding Programs:</b> <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>				
<b>SAFETEA-LU Earmark (2012)</b>	FEDERAL	\$220,000		Used for engineering and to seed Phases I & II of Gilcrest Rail Trail.
<b>Chesapeake &amp; Atlantic Bays Trust Fund (2014)</b>	STATE	\$440,000		Used to construct a Step Pool Conveyance stormwater project.
<b>Maryland Heritage Areas (2010, 2015, 2017)</b>	STATE	\$165,000		Used for purchase of former trailer parking lot to create Gateway Park and to construct Marina offices.
<b>USDA Rural Business Development Program &amp; RUS Loan</b>	FEDERAL	\$1,764,400		Used to fund improvements at Chestertown Marina, with \$598,000 in the form of a loan.
<b>Chesapeake Bay Trust (2009)</b>	STATE	\$115,000		Used to construct Wilmer Park Living Shoreline
<b>National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) (2013)</b>	FEDERAL	\$61,408		Used to fund a national public art competition, create the Chestertown Public Art Master Plan and seed the construction of Broad Reach at Wilmer Park, the inaugural public art installation in Chestertown.
<b>DNR Community Parks &amp; Playgrounds Program</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Remembrance Park</li> <li>● Gateway Park</li> <li>● Wilmer Park Community Playground</li> <li>● Washington Park</li> </ul>	STATE	\$952,002		Used to improve park amenities, including basketball courts, tennis courts, picnic tables, walking paths, exercise stations, benches, chess tables.
<b>Kent County Middle School Field</b>				

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<b>DNR Waterway Improvement Fund</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Chestertown Marina Bulkheads</b></li><li>● <b>Chestertown Marina Piers</b></li><li>● <b>Chestertown Marina Dredging</b></li></ul>	STATE	\$3,336,300		
<b>DHCD Community Health and Safety Works Program</b>	STATE	\$100,000		Used to install safety cameras downtown.
<b>Community Development Block Grant Program</b>	STATE	\$100,000		Used to replace Senior Center roof in 2023.

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

**SECTION C - SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ACTION PLAN**

Town of Chestertown

## 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.

### Strengths

- Chestertown is dedicated to preserving the environment and finding ways to become more sustainable. The Town was one of the first four communities in Maryland to achieve Sustainable Maryland Certified status and has an active Environmental Committee (formerly the Green Team). As part of the Town's sustainability efforts, Town Hall was retrofitted with LED lighting, solar rooftop panels, and a high-efficiency boiler. A 1.3 MW solar field consisting of 4,700 panels was installed at the Town's wastewater treatment plant, which yields about 1,800 MWhr at 4.5 cents/KWhr until 2037.
- The Town has had a long relationship with ShoreRivers, a non-profit group dedicated to science-based advocacy, restoration and education. Their office is located at the Town-owned Chestertown Marina, and they frequently partner with the Town on restoration projects. ShoreRivers developed the 2021 Chestertown Stormwater Management Plan in cooperation with the Town, and with funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.
- There are currently 27 EV charging stations at 13 locations throughout Chestertown, including two Level 2 charge points at the downtown

### Weaknesses

- The Town's budget is not sufficient to pay for many of the environmental projects that they would like to carry out, so grant funding is essential.
- Chestertown took over recycling when the County ceased its recycling program, but after several years the Town was also forced to discontinue recycling due to the relatively low participation rate and cessation of operations by its provider. Attempts to find an alternate contractor failed.
- The maintenance of existing restoration projects has been problematic due to insufficient training of Town personnel.

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municipal parking lot. The rest of the sites are on private property, public property and at Washington College.

- Chestertown was one of the first municipalities in Maryland to attain Tree City USA status. The Town's Tree Committee, one of the requirements of certification, has been functioning for over thirty years. The Tree Committee makes recommendations for the care, preservation, pruning, planting and removal of Town-owned and public trees.
- ShoreRivers and Town are working on a Chesapeake Bay Trust-funded grant project to plant 1,000 trees on the Eastern Shore, including Chestertown, where locations for approximately 100 street trees have been identified in the historically underserved areas targeted by the grant.
- The Chestertown Environmental Committee has a recycling booth at the Farmers Market every Saturday, collecting plastic bottlecaps, batteries, toothbrushes, toothpaste, floss, makeup, Britta filters, holiday lights, hair dryers, curling irons, CFL lightbulbs and 4-foot fluorescent tubes. The Committee has an electronic newsletter that goes to more than 500 residents.
- The Town's parks have been greatly improved during the past fifteen years, primarily with grants from DNR's Community Parks & Playgrounds Program. These DNR-funded projects include: Kent County Middle School field improvements including a basketball court, tennis courts, walking trail, exercise stations, baseball diamond and 40 trees (\$230,200); Louisa d'Andelot Carpenter Park improvements including a picnic pavilion, basketball court, street lighting and 30 trees (\$138,400); and the creation of Gateway Park, including a basketball court, picnic tables, walking trail, 12 trees and a .3-acre native meadow (\$155,000).
- Chestertown, in cooperation with its Recreation Commission, installed a public playground at Wilmer Park, the Town's most-visited public waterfront park. The playground received citizen input through public charrettes and the equipment was installed with \$209,394 in funding from DNR Community Parks & Playgrounds.



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- Chestertown has 12 pet waste stations located at all local parks and downtown.

<u>Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures</u>	<u>Strategies and Action Items</u>	<u>Implementation Partners</u>
<p><b>Outcome 1:</b> Expand Chestertown's tree canopy.</p> <p><b>Progress Measures:</b> Increase in the number of canopy trees within Town limits.</p>	<p><b>Strategy A:</b> Plant 100 street trees in areas identified by ShoreRivers, Town of Chestertown and the Tree Committee.</p> <p><b>Strategy B:</b> Plant approximately 20 trees at the wastewater treatment plant solar field when it is expanded, in conjunction with the project to plant warm-season grasses habitat (see Outcome 2).</p> <p><b>Strategy C:</b> Continue to encourage the use of native trees for all development projects in the Town.</p>	<p>ShoreRivers, Chestertown Environmental Committee, Horizons Kent County, Center for Environment &amp; Society, Tree Committee, Chestertown Planning Commission</p>
<p><b>Outcome 2:</b> Increase the amount of bird and pollinator habitat while reducing stormwater runoff. Reduce non-point source pollution and nutrient runoff and decrease the Town's carbon footprint by carbon sequestration performed by native warm season grasses.</p> <p><b>Progress Measures:</b> Increase in acres of grassland and numbers of Eastern forest bird populations, such as Northern Bobwhite, Field Sparrow, Common Yellowthroat, Indigo Bunting and Grasshopper Sparrow. Achieve Bird City Maryland designation. Decrease stormwater runoff.</p>	<p><b>Strategy A:</b> Convert 30 acres of currently rented monoculture cropland at the Town-owned wastewater treatment plant into early successional bird and pollinator habitat to encourage grassland and Eastern forest bird populations.</p> <p><b>Strategy B:</b> Achieve Bird City Maryland certification.</p> <p><b>Strategy C:</b> Convert about 6 acres of lawn at Bailey Park into bird and pollinator habitat. Bailey Park consists of 18 acres with an adjoining 2 acres owned by the hospital that the Town hopes to acquire.</p> <p><b>Strategy D:</b> Improve the function of existing habitat restorations by eradicating invasive species at existing projects including the Wilmer Park Living Shoreline and the Washington Avenue Stormwater Step Pool Conveyance.</p>	<p>Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund, Bird City Maryland, DNR, Washington College Center for Environment &amp; Society, ShoreRivers, Environmental Committee, Town of Chestertown.</p>
<p><b>Outcome 3:</b> Increase the use of solar power to offset the Town's electricity usage.</p> <p><b>Progress Measures:</b> Increase the MWhr per year generated at the existing solar field at the WWTP to between 3,636 and 4,359 through the use of either fixed or tracking arrays. The Town's current consumption is about 3,300 MWhr/year, so the resulting output and installation costs could potentially be shared with another municipality,</p>	<p><b>Strategy A:</b> Expand the Town's existing 1.3MW solar array at the wastewater treatment plant to double the output to 2.6MW. The Mayor and Council are on board with this recommendation depending on funding availability and buy-in from another municipality.</p>	<p>Town of Chestertown, Sunrise Solar, Environmental Committee.</p>

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which would result in a payback period of about 6 years.		
<b>Outcome 4:</b> Increase training for town crew in the maintenance of existing and planned stormwater and habitat restoration projects, as well as tree pruning and maintenance.  <b>Progress Measures:</b> Better maintained stormwater and habitat projects, and street and municipal park trees.	<b>Strategy A:</b> Send Town personnel to half-day or full-day trainings through the Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professional (CBLP) course, for which ShoreRivers provides scholarships.	ShoreRivers, Chestertown Tree Committee

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.

Strengths	Weaknesses
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## Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section C

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Chestertown has long worked on improving business conditions for local businesses through the efforts of Chestertown Main Street, Downtown Chestertown, Greater Chestertown Initiative, Kent Forward, and other non-profit groups.</li><li>• Main Street, which is financially supported by the Town, is embarking on a Downtown Master Plan with a focus on infrastructure, streetscapes, utilities, tourism and more. The Downtown Master Plan will develop a vision, strategy, list of projects and implementation plans.</li><li>• Chestertown purchased the Chestertown Marina using a 2012 Local Government Infrastructure Finance Program bond of \$2.04 million. The Town subsequently invested close to \$7 million to completely rehabilitate the Marina. This facility is a major economic driver for the Town by providing public waterfront access and by creating a first-class facility that draws boaters and visitors from all over the region.</li><li>• The Town has worked with several local groups and the largest local employer to secure DHCD grants. Dixon Valve recently completed their Chestertown Business Campus, which is anchored by the Dixon Valve Headquarters (60,000 square feet), Dixon Distribution Building (150,000 square feet), Dixon Manufacturing Building (100,000 square feet) and Kent County YMCA (58,000 square feet). These projects were aided by \$1.75 million in DHCD Strategic Demolition Fund grants secured by the Town of Chestertown, and which were used to help defray the cost of infrastructure.</li><li>• Chestertown has a vibrant National Historic Landmark Historic District, one of only five in Maryland. The Chestertown Historic District Commission has been active since the late 1960's, making it second only to Annapolis. The preservation of historic structures and features, and support for heritage tourism, is a vital component of the Town's economic development goals.</li><li>• The Town, in coordination with Main Street, installed new wayfinding signage throughout the downtown to help tourists find important landmarks. The signage was funded by DHCD Community Legacy</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• As with the Environmental section above, Chestertown's budget is not sufficiently robust to implement many of the projects and strategies that would improve the Town's economic sustainability and vibrancy.</li></ul> |
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<p>(\$100,000), Town of Chestertown (\$5,000), and Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (\$1,125).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Town coordinates with the Chestertown Garden Club on sidewalk beautification projects downtown, which includes the installation of planters that are maintained by the Garden Club and watered by the Town of Chestertown’s maintenance crew.</li><li>• The Town coordinates with Kent County Economic Development and Tourism on strategies to cultivate business retention, expansion, and attraction.</li><li>• Main Street has coordinated twelve outdoor public events and festivals, including Dickens of a Christmas in early December, Carnival on High during the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend, the monthly Cars on High and other events.</li><li>• Chestertown Main Street has several ongoing grant initiatives for local businesses. One is the Façade Improvement Program, which uses DHCD funds (\$280,000) and, most recently, ARPA (\$63,625) funds to grant matching funds to business owners for sprucing up their storefronts. Thirty storefronts have benefited from this program. The Lighting Program has used DHCD (\$85,000) and MSHC (\$10,000) funds to grant funds with no match requirement to 21 local businesses to upgrade their lighting to a set of standards approved by the Chestertown Historic District Commission.</li></ul>	
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Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
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<p><b>Outcome 1:</b> Improve the Town’s economic planning, sustainability and vibrancy.</p> <p><b>Progress Measures:</b> Feasibility studies, project priority lists, proposed schedules, and cost estimates. Goals include a list of economic and business initiatives, housing programs, infrastructure enhancements, transportation initiatives, arts and entertainment programs, historic preservation initiatives, environmental protection, architectural standards and cross-initiative support. The Downtown Master Plan will inform the Chestertown Comprehensive Plan and vice versa.</p>	<p><b>Strategy A:</b> Create a Downtown Master Plan that includes a vision for Chestertown’s future and a strategy for growth and development that reflects, respects, enhances, and complements the existing qualities of the Town and advances the interests of all citizens and the business community. Main Street is spearheading this effort with numerous stakeholders already involved, and the consulting firm Design Collective has started gathering information that will be used to create the Downtown Master Plan.</p>	<p>The Town of Chestertown contributed \$75,00 towards the project and Main Street \$25,000. The primary partners are the Chestertown Mayor and Council, Planning Commission, Historic District Commission, Utilities Commission and Downtown Chestertown Association. Secondary partners include the Chestertown Equity Advisory Committee, Environmental Committee, Tree Committee, Kent County Planning and Zoning, Eastern Shore Land Conservancy, ShoreRivers, Kent Cultural Alliance, Public Arts Committee, Chestertown Police Department, Chestertown Emergency Responders, Washington College, and Delmarva Power and other utilities.</p>
<p><b>Outcome 2:</b> Increase the number of restaurants and hotels.</p> <p><b>Progress Measures:</b> Increase in number of hotel rooms, conference, banquet and meeting facilities. Increased tourism measured in nights stayed and dollars spent.</p>	<p><b>Strategy A:</b> Tear down the existing 98 Cannon Street restaurant and construct a new restaurant and hotel. The facility will complement the Chestertown Marina and create an attractive destination for visitors to the Town.</p> <p><b>Strategy B:</b> Convert the Washington College-owned Chestertown Armory into a boutique hotel and conference center.</p>	<p>Town of Chestertown, Uργο Hotels and Resorts, Washington College, Chestertown Main Street,</p>

## 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



## Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section C

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within the past two years, Chestertown completed the Wayne Gilchrest Rail Trail, which converted 2.2 miles of abandoned railroad tracks into a paved walking and cycling trail. The Rail Trail runs from the south end of Cross Street to the Foxley Manor Subdivision and a .3-mile spur extends to Gateway Park. The last .2-mile section from Morgnec Road to Foxley Manor was completed in 2021 and includes a Hazard Identification Beacon crossing on Morgnec Road/Rt/ 291.</li> <li>• The Town is currently working on plans for the approximately .5-mile Chestertown Heritage Trail, which is an elevated pedestrian and cycling trail that will run along the Town's waterfront from Wilmer Park to Radcliffe Creek.</li> <li>• Chestertown converted a residential lot and part of its Town Yard totaling .35 acres near downtown into a public parking lot to alleviate downtown parking.</li> <li>• Two providers operate public transportation in the area. Maryland Upper Shore Transit (MUST) is a cooperative venture between Kent and Queen Anne's Counties and operates between Rock Hall, Chestertown, Centreville and Easton, and is funded by grants from MTA. Delmarva Community Transit is a non-profit that serves individuals with disabilities, seniors, persons living in poverty, the transportation disadvantaged, and medically frail individuals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pedestrian safety is compromised in several locations around Town, to include the absence of contiguous sidewalks linking residential communities to shopping centers at the north end of Chestertown, no sidewalks on Flatland Road to connect several residential communities to Gateway Park and Gilchrest Rail Trail, the lack of safe crossings on Cross Street and Quaker Neck Road from downtown to Wilmer Park, and no sidewalks or bike trails at the south end of town along Quaker Neck Road.</li> <li>• Additional blocks in Chestertown where curb, gutter and sidewalks are needed include the 600 block of Cannon Street, Lynchburg Avenue between High Street and the Gilchrest Rail Trail, Poplar Avenue, Prospect Street, Talbot Boulevard, Morgnec Road/Rt. 291 between High Street and Washington Avenue, Haacke Drive, and Scheeler Road.</li> </ul>
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Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
<p><b>Outcome 1:</b> Improve walkability in Town by building additional sidewalks, traffic calming strategies, and related infrastructure.</p> <p><b>Progress Measures:</b> Measurable increase in sidewalks, crossings and traffic calming devices.</p>	<p><b>Strategy A:</b> Construct a sidewalk on Flatland Road according to a 2013 study done by Kittelson &amp; Associates for the Town of Chestertown, which was funded by SHA. The sidewalk is included in the 2024 Kent County Priority Letter to MDOT. The letter is currently being drafted. Apply to MDOT's Sidewalk Retrofit Program Fund 79, which would potentially have SHA construct the sidewalk with no matching funds required of the Town.</p>	<p>Town of Chestertown, MDOT, CDBG, CBT Green Streets, Green Jobs, Green Towns Grant Program.</p>

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	<p><b>Strategy B:</b> Secure a planning grant for Quaker Neck Road between Chester River Landing and Cross Street to address pedestrian and cycling access, safe crossings and other issues.</p> <p><b>Strategy C:</b> Create a prioritized schedule to construct additional sidewalks on the 600 block of Cannon Street, Lynchburg Avenue between High Street and the Gilcrest Rail Trail, Poplar Avenue, Prospect Street, Talbot Boulevard, Morgnec Road/Rt. 291 between High Street and Washington Avenue, Haacke Drive, and Scheeler Road.</p>	
<p>Outcome 2:</p> <p>Progress Measures:</p>	<p>Strategy A:</p> <p>Strategy B:</p>	

## 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"> <li>Chestertown's new housing starts hit 31 last year, the most since prior to the 2008 economic recession. The Town is experiencing a robust housing market and bustling building permit activity. The vacancy rate for residential housing and apartments is very low.</li> <li>A major housing development by Ryland Homes is being considered for upper Talbot Boulevard, consisting of 80 multi-family and 70 single-family units.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affordable housing is in very short supply, driven in part by the rapid escalation of construction material costs in the past five years.</li> <li>The Maryland 2020 Poverty Profile estimates that 12 percent of Kent County residents live in poverty, and Kent County is the highest ranking in Maryland for deep poverty, so not only is affordable housing a challenge, but providing resources to residents so that they can continue to live in their housing is also a serious challenge.</li> </ul>

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low-income housing is helped by Rebuilding Together Kent County, which repairs and rehabilitates homes for income-eligible seniors, veterans, those living with disabilities, as well as families with children in Chestertown and the surrounding County.</li> <li>• Affordable housing is helped by Kent Attainable Housing, which constructs and renovates homes for first-time buyers and supports first-time homeowners with financial literacy and support services. The target population earns between 30 and 80 percent of the annual medium income in Kent County, which applies to more 1,289 households in Chestertown. KAH works with approximately 90 applicants annually.</li> <li>• As part of the ongoing update to the Chestertown Comprehensive Plan, a Housing Element is being developed to address affordable and low-income housing, as well as other housing-related issues.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Town of Chestertown formerly owned and operated two subsidized apartment buildings, Satterfield Court and High Steps, for over 25 years. Satterfield Court has 16 apartments, while High Steps has 6 units. In 2014, the Mayor and Council unanimously voted to sell these rental units to the Delaware Valley Development Company, which continues to operate the units as subsidized housing. The Town sold the apartments because management pressure on Town staff had become too onerous, and the units also needed major renovations that the Town could not afford. Since that time, the Town has not owned or operated any subsidized housing.</li> <li>• Chestertown's Zoning Ordinance restricts Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU's) through overly restrictive requirements including minimum lot area, off-street parking, separate water and sewer, zoning, and other requirements that add significant cost and time barriers to ADU construction. ADU's are currently allowed by-right in R-3 to R-6 unless excluded by deed restrictions or covenants. The lot area requirement states that ADU's must meet the same lot area requirement as two-family units. Only one bedroom is allowed in an ADU, and whether an ADU requires separate water and sewer lines is left to the discretion of the Director of Utilities. The Planning Commission will utilize recommendations in the Final Report of the Accessory Dwelling Unit Policy Task Force, which has just been published.</li> </ul> |
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Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
<p><b>Outcome 1:</b> Increase the number of low-income and affordable housing.</p> <p><b>Progress Measures:</b> New affordable housing policies, increased number of affordable housing units and Accessory Dwelling Units.</p>	<p><b>Strategy A:</b> The Planning Commission will develop a draft Housing Element with input from the Downtown Master Plan and local stakeholders. The Housing Element will identify strengths and weaknesses and plans to address the shortcomings.</p> <p><b>Strategy B:</b> In tandem with the Comprehensive Plan, the Planning Commission will review and revise the existing Accessory Dwelling Unit requirements to allow greater flexibility.</p>	<p>Chestertown Planning Commission, Chestertown Main Street, Kent Attainable Housing, Rebuilding Together Kent County, Kent County Planning &amp; Zoning, Maryland Department of Planning, Upper Shore Community Development Partners and local stakeholders.</p>

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	<p><b>Strategy C:</b> Housing is one of the elements being addressed by the Downtown Master Plan, so this document will likewise help identify policies, strategies and projects that could be implemented.</p> <p><b>Strategy D:</b> ARPA funding has been provided to Kent Attainable Housing, a non-profit that constructs and renovates affordable housing for first-time homeowners and provides financial literacy and support services. Funding will be used to assist families with down payments, match savings to enable families to become first-time homeowners, subsidize half of the salary of a program manager and community revitalization manager, and pay for safety enhancements such as lighting and doorbell cameras.</p> <p><b>Strategy E:</b> ARPA funds were provided to Upper Shore Community Development Partners to improve access to resources for affordable housing, provide small business and entrepreneur assistance, and improve job readiness training, with the goals of reducing income inequality and closing the wealth gap for historically disenfranchised communities.</p>	
<p><b>Outcome 2:</b> Provide repairs to income-eligible residents living in low-income housing.</p> <p><b>Progress Measures:</b> Improved living conditions, quality of life, reduced health issues, and safe aging in place where possible.</p>	<p><b>Strategy A:</b> ARPA funding is being provided to Rebuilding Together Kent County, a non-profit that provides free home repairs and accessibility improvements for income-eligible seniors.</p>	

## 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"><li>• The Kent County Health Department is located on Lynchburg Street and provides numerous health-related services including evaluation, cancer screening, chronic disease prevention, emergency preparedness, immunizations, and HIV/AIDS screening.</li><li>• Kent County Behavioral Health is located on Scheeler Road and provides inpatient residential and outpatient treatment, substance abuse prevention classes, mental health therapy, psychiatric evaluations, psychological testing, and child and adolescent mental health services. No one is denied access to services due to an inability to pay.</li><li>• Chestertown has a wealth of cultural, artistic and educational opportunities that are available to residents and visitors alike. The organizations that provide these opportunities include Washington College, Kent Cultural Alliance, RiverArts, Sultana Education Foundation, and the Garfield Center for the Arts at Prince Theater.</li><li>• Washington College, founded in 1786 and an integral Chestertown institution, has a student population of approximately 1,300. The school offers courses and educational programs to local and County residents through their Academy of Lifelong Learning, a non-profit arm of the College that charges a flat rate per year that lets participants attend as many classes in a broad range of topics as they choose. The College also hosts a broad range of lectures, primarily through their three Centers of</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Although major health indicators are only available at the County level, these numbers provide an overall image that is relatively poor, such as the high rates of alcohol and substance abuse, obesity, motor vehicle injuries, and cancer. Poor health outcomes are influenced by factors such as the level of education, availability of good jobs, affordable housing, quality of medical care, clean water, and local, state, and national policies.</li><li>• Homelessness is becoming a more serious issue, and there is no local year-round facility to address this challenge.</li><li>• Rail Trail and sidewalk connections, as well as safe crossings, are desperately needed as described in the Transportation section.</li><li>• As with other sections of this application, funding availability for programs and services is very limited. The ARPA funding that is being distributed as described below is a one-time funding source.</li></ul>



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Excellence: the C.V. Starr Center for the Study of the American Experience, Center for Environment & Society, and the Rose O'Neill Literary House. The Kohl Gallery hosts exhibitions and lectures by visual artists.

- The relatively new Kent County Family YMCA located in Chestertown has had a very positive effect on community and individual health, with amenities that include a fitness center, group exercise and dance studio, indoor pool, youth and family programs, health and wellness personal training, and stay and play for parents with children.
- The Kent Cultural Alliance is located across from the Post Office in a restored home where Isaac Mason, an African American who was born into slavery, worked as a house slave. His experiences formed the basis of his autobiographical *Life of Isaac Mason as a Slave*, one of very few first-person slave narratives. Kent Cultural Alliance's vision is that all of Kent County's communities have access to transformational arts programs that celebrate our shared humanity, and their mission is to put arts to work creating opportunities for engagement, education, and connection across Kent County.
- RiverArts is a non-profit organization that fosters community, creativity and connection through the arts. Their main facility is located downtown and includes a gallery and store for local artists and KidSpot, a discovery and creativity center for children. RiverArts also has a Clay Studio and Arts Education Center located two blocks away. The organization runs the annual Studio Tour, has over 400 members and draws over 5,000 people annually to their gallery and events.
- Sultana Education Foundation operates out of a restored former Methodist church in downtown Chestertown. Its primary mission is to provide hands-on educational opportunities that promote stewardship of Chesapeake Bay's historic, cultural, and environmental resources. The Foundation operates the schooner *Sultana*, a reproduction 1768 ship that was launched in 2001, and which has taken over 4,500 middle and high school students annually onto the Chesapeake Bay for hands-on

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<p>programs in environmental science and history. The Foundation’s newest educational facility is the Lawrence Wetlands Preserve, which is described above.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Garfield Center for the Arts is located at the edge of downtown in the Prince Theater, a 1928 former movie theater that retains its original appearance, including the marquee. The Garfield Center sponsors the annual Chestertown Jazz Festival, Chestertown Tea Party Festival, Playmakers, Live Playwrights Society and Open Mic Night. The Center is dedicated to a community where arts and artists thrive.</li> <li>• The Chestertown Farmers Market has been in continuous operation since 1981 and was twice voted “Best in Maryland.” It features locally produced vegetables, fruit, meats, flowers, and other products from the surrounding region, as well as offerings by local artisans. The Market operates on Saturdays from 8 until noon and has expanded to fill two blocks on High Street, which is blocked to traffic to ensure pedestrian safety.</li> <li>• The biggest project that has led to improvement in healthy behaviors is the Gilchrest Rail Trail, which is described in the Transportation section above. The planned Chestertown Heritage Trail will have a similarly large effect, as will the improvements to Quaker Neck Road, which is used by a lot of walkers and joggers. The construction of playgrounds, basketball courts and other park amenities listed elsewhere in this application have likewise had wonderful results.</li> </ul>	
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Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
<p><b>Outcome 1:</b> Increase the number of children’s park amenities.</p> <p><b>Progress Measures:</b> Number of playgrounds and construction of the Town’s first skate park.</p>	<p><b>Strategy A:</b> Construct a playground at Louisa d’Andelot Carpenter Park (grant applied for but not awarded).</p> <p><b>Strategy B:</b> Construct a playground and skate park at Bailey Park.</p>	Community Parks & Playgrounds Program, Kent County Middle School, Garnett Elementary School, Recreation Commission, Town of Chestertown.
<p><b>Outcome 2:</b> Improve community relations, events and visitor experiences.</p>	<p><b>Strategy A:</b> Fund local Juneteenth celebrations, which has been done through the Town’s distribution of ARPA funds to Bayside H.O.Y.A.S., which works</p>	Bayside H.O.Y.A.S., Chestertown Main Street, Downtown

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<p><b>Progress Measures:</b> Number of community events hosted, event infrastructure improvements, and visitor responses to improvements.</p>	<p>with disenfranchised youth and families, providing mentoring, educational programming, emergency resources and assistance with developing social and leadership skills.</p> <p><b>Strategy B:</b> Chestertown Main Street will use ARPA funds to purchase event materials including a stage, generator, pop-up tents, tables, chairs, and storage shed.</p> <p><b>Strategy C:</b> Main Street will use ARPA funds to provide safe, clean restroom facilities downtown.</p> <p><b>Strategy D:</b> Chestertown Main Street will improve resident and visitor experiences of Chestertown by using ARPA funds to enhance commercial facades, improve downtown streetscapes through landscaping, and subsidize lighting improvements to existing businesses.</p> <p><b>Strategy E:</b> ARPA funds were provided to Washington College to replace decking and conduct repairs to the Lelia Hynson Pavilion, a deteriorated facility in the Town's waterfront Wilmer Park. The Pavilion is on Town-owned land but was constructed and is maintained by Washington College. It serves as a venue for picnics, parties, and as a viewing stand for regattas and other events. It is also used for weddings and memorial services.</p>	<p>Chestertown Association, Washington College</p>
<p><b>Outcome 3:</b> Increase behavioral health services.</p> <p><b>Progress Measures:</b> Amount of health services</p>	<p><b>Strategy A:</b> Provide ARPA funding to For All Seasons, the largest behavioral health provider on the mid-Eastern Shore and with an office in Chestertown. For All Seasons provides psychiatric, medication management, therapeutic, urgent care, rape crisis response, English and Spanish hotlines and other services. Funding will be used to increase services by hiring a mental health provider and case manager.</p>	<p>For All Seasons,</p>
<p><b>Outcome 4:</b> Provide additional services to underserved elementary and middle school-age children attending summer programs.</p> <p><b>Progress Measures:</b> Amount of health services provided, improved literacy.</p>	<p><b>Strategy A:</b> ARPA funding is being provided to Horizons of Kent &amp; Queen Anne's, a non-profit that provides tuition-free summer academic, enrichment, and social/economics support programs at Kent School and Gunston School. The funds will be used to subsidize additional teachers, assistant teachers and bus transportation.</p> <p><b>Strategy B:</b> Provide ARPA funding to Open Doors Partners in Education, a non-profit organization providing literacy tutoring services to children in Chestertown who attend Kent County Public Schools.</p>	<p>Horizons of Kent &amp; Queen Anne's, Open Doors Partners in Education,</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.

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"><li>• The Chestertown Planning Commission is currently working on an update of the 2015 Comprehensive Plan. Completion is expected by the end of 2024.</li><li>• A review of the Town's Codes and Ordinances is being planned to update, edit and otherwise streamline policies, operations and enforcement.</li><li>• Fees charged by the Town for building permits have recently been increased. With a recent spate of FOIA requests, a cap on the amount of time devoted to responses has been implemented, beyond which the requester will have to pay a fee, likewise for copies of documents.</li><li>• The Town's Zoning Ordinance was last updated in 2016 and will be updated within the next year. No major changes are anticipated, as the previous update was substantial. The only exception is the Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) section, which will be updated once the results of the MDP ADU Taskforce have been finalized.</li><li>• Town Hall staffing has been increased by one person to alleviate the front counter workload that was previously shared by the Utilities Clerk, HR/Finance Associate and Accounting/Treasury Specialist. It is anticipated that one additional clerk will be hired.</li><li>• Office spaces on the first floor have been renovated and converted so that the Town Clerk and HR/Finance Associate have new offices. The server</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Public meetings have been problematic in some instances where people were spilling out into the hallway, thereby making it difficult for them to follow what was being discussed.</li><li>• The Town's Ordinances have not been systematically reviewed for efficiency, usefulness, legality, readability, repetition, and other issues.</li><li>• The Zoning Ordinance is due for an update, as well as the correction of a few errors in the current document.</li></ul>

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section C

and router for Town Hall were moved out of the Accounting/Treasury Specialist’s office to free up her space.	
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Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
<b>Outcome 1:</b> Increase the accessibility of Town meetings.  <b>Progress Measures:</b> Fewer complaints.	<b>Strategy A:</b> Install a sound system to improve meeting room acoustics (completed).  <b>Strategy B:</b> Install a video feed to the second-floor meeting room for overflow meetings.  <b>Strategy C:</b> Post all meeting materials on the Town website at least several days prior to meetings.	Town of Chestertown,
<b>Outcome 2:</b> Improve the Town website.  <b>Progress Measures:</b> Fewer complaints.	<b>Strategy A:</b> Create an exclusively Town website for meetings, ordinances, fee schedules, and so forth. The current website includes events and other matters that make finding things difficult.	