

**CHECKLIST AND TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**APPLICANT:** TOWN OF CHESTERTOWN

**NAME OF SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY:** CHESTERTOWN SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

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

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

**I. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY RENEWAL APPLICANT INFORMATION**

**Name of Sustainable Community:**

**CHESTERTOWN SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY**

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**Name of Renewal Applicant: Town of Chestertown**

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**Applicant's Federal Identification Number: 52-6000783**

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**Applicant's Street Address: 118 N. Cross Street**

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**City: Chestertown County: Kent State: MD Zip Code: 21620**

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**Phone Number: 410-778-0500 Fax Number: 410-778-4378 E-mail Address: townofchestertown.com**

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**Sustainable Community Renewal Application Local Contact:**

**Name: Kees de Mooy Title: Zoning Administrator**

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**Address: 118 N. Cross Street City: Chestertown State: MD Zip Code: 21620**

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**Phone Number: 410-778-0500 Fax Number: 410-778-4378 E-mail Address: kees@chestertown.com**

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**Other Sustainable Community Contacts:**

**Name: William S. Ingersoll Title: Town Manager**

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**Address: 118 N. Cross Street City: Chestertown State: MD Zip Code: 21620**

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**Phone Number: 410-778-0500 Fax Number: 410-778-4378 E-mail Address: bill@chestertown.com**

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**I. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY – General Information**

**A. Sustainable Community Boundary and Description**

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

**The Sustainable Community boundary was modified in 2017 to include a 78.9 acre annexation for the Chestertown Business Campus, which is owned by KRM Development Corporation. At this time no changes to the boundary are requested, as the existing one is sufficient.**

- (2) Include the following in as an attachment (if requesting a modification to your current boundary):
- a. PDF or JPEG of modified Sustainable Communities boundary map,
  - b. GIS shapefiles of modified Sustainable Community boundary (mapped to the parcel boundary),

- (3) Approximate number of acres of entire SC Area: **1,279 ac.**

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

Main Street    Maple Street  
 National Register Historic District    Local Historic District    Arts & Entertainment District  
 State Enterprise Zone Special Taxing District    BRAC    State Designated TOD  
 Other(s): **Community Legacy Area, MHAA Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area, Target Investment Zone, Sustainable Maryland Certified, Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail**

- (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?

**As of the 2010 Census, the population of Chestertown was 5,254 people, which included 1,971 households and 984 families. The population density was 2,020 inhabitants per square mile, and there were 2,361 housing units at an average density of 908.1 per square mile. The racial makeup of the town was 74.2% White, 20.4% African American, 0.3% Native American, 1.8% Asian, 1.0% from other races, and 2.2% from two or more races. Hispanic or Latino of any race constituted 4.2% of the population.**

**Of the 1,971 households in Chestertown, 18.6% had families with children under the age of 18, 32.7% were married couples living together, 13.8% had a female householder with no husband present, 3.5% had a male householder with no wife present, and 50.1% were classified as non-families. Individuals comprised 42.2% of all households and 22.3% of households had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 2.00 and the average family size was 2.65.**

The median age in the town as of 2010 was 34.9 years, with 12.4% of residents under the age of 18, 28.7% between the ages of 18 and 24, 16.4% from 25 to 44; 19.1% from 45 to 64; and 23.6% 65 years of age or older. The gender makeup of the town was 43.1% male and 56.9% female.

High school graduates totaled 80.5% of the population, and those with a Bachelor's degree or higher were 36.5%. Mean travel time to work for workers 16 and over was 27.8 minutes versus the 31.7 average for Maryland. The homeownership rate 2007-2010 was 46.9%, and the median value of a home was \$289,900 versus \$319,800 in the State. The poverty rate was 26.6% compared to 9% for the State. (Source: quickfacts.census.gov) More than 60% of children in the Town's elementary and middle school are Title I. The median income for Chestertown is \$43,977 compared to \$69,272 for the State. The median gross rent cost in 2009 was \$716.

In general, Chestertown experienced slow growth between the 2000 and 2010 Census, and it is anticipated that that trend will be the same in the 2020 Census. Its geographic isolation, dearth of large employers and low population are some of the many factors that explain the relatively high poverty rate.

## **B. Organizational Structure, Experience and Public Input:**

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

The Sustainable Communities Workgroup is made up of representatives of the Chestertown Mayor and Council, Chestertown Town Manager and Zoning Administrator, Chestertown Main Street, Chestertown Green Team, Washington College Center for Environment & Society, Greater Chestertown Initiative (GCI), Downtown Chestertown Association (DCA), Diversity Dialogue Group, Marina Study Group, and Tree Committee. The total number of participants in the Town's planning initiatives has remained fairly constant, with some groups no longer in existence, and others having formed to take on new issues.

Leaders for these groups include: Town of Chestertown Mayor Chris Cerino; Council Members Marty Stetson, Rev. Elsworth Tolliver, Linda Kuiper, and David Foster; Town Manager Bill Ingersoll, and Zoning Administrator Kees de Mooy; Chestertown Green Team members Jon Hanley, Andy Goddard, Bob Ingersoll, Ed Minch, Margo Bailey, Grant Samms, Carl Gallegos, David Sobers, Ford Schumann, Ruth Menefee, Samantha Howell, Shane Brill, and Katie Walker; Washington College Center for Environment & Society Director John Seidel and staff Doug Levin, Michael Hardesty, Erica McMaster, Elizabeth Seidel, Jamie Frees Miller, Benjamin Ford, Marisa Atkins, Jemima Clark, and Grant Samms; Greater Chestertown Initiative members Lani Seikaly, Carla Massoni, Kay MacIntosh, Andy Goddard, Bart Stolp, Kristen Owen, Jackie Adams, Barbara Jorgensen and others; Downtown Chestertown Association Board Members Kristen Owen, Barbara Jorgensen, Robert Ortiz, Bob Ramsey and others; Diversity Dialogue Group members Armond Fletcher, Donald

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section A

**Wilkerson, Jeanette Sherbondy, David Keating, Milford Murray, William Cooper, Hope Clark, Jane Jewel; Social Action Committee for Racial Justice members Ben Kohl, Rosie Ramsey, Airlee Johnson, Arlene Lee, Paul Toue, Barbie Glenn, Phil Dutton, Alice Walker and others, Chestertown Port Committee members Matthew Tobriner, Peter Sweetser, Tom Mack, Brooke Harwood, Ray Tarrach and Taylor Buckley; and Tree Committee members Teri Batchelor, Cynthia Saunders, Ruth Menefee and Nevin Dawson.**

**All of the people mentioned above provide input into the variety of social, sustainability and economic development issues that Chestertown faces, both through the respective groups and individually. Many serve in more than one group, as would be expected in a small community.**

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

**Strengths include the depth of expertise that individuals have brought to the various groups listed above, and the willingness of these volunteers to participate in addressing the variety of concerns that Chestertown faces. Chestertown's relatively small population from which the Workgroup can draw upon is mitigated by the presence of professionals – many of them retired – who have moved to our town from elsewhere in Maryland and other states. These retirees value the qualities of life found in the Town, and work tirelessly to address the sustainability, economic development and other challenges. The 223-year presence of Washington College is another great resource for Chestertown, and they are well represented.**

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

**The Sustainable Communities Action Plan is closely based on the Chestertown Comprehensive Plan, and contains elements of strategies and goals described in the Chestertown Arts & Entertainment District submission documents, Sustainable Maryland certification documentation, Chestertown Main Street's goals, Chestertown Waterfront Committee discussions and Chestertown Public Arts Master Plan. All Committee meetings related to these documents are open to the public, and Mayor and Council meetings where these were discussed and ratified are broadcast on local television and are covered by the press.**

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

**Help is needed in determining the appropriate funding sources for implementing the Action Plan as described below. These include funding for business owner training and education, and a consultant to determine the state of affordable housing.**

# **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY RENEWAL REPORT**

## **PART I: QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT**

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

### **Accomplishment 1:**

*Outcome: Improved stormwater management.*

*Project 1: Chestertown Marina Stormwater Improvements – Aided by a \$598,000 loan and \$700,000 grant from USDA, the Town installed over 600 linear feet of stormwater piping where none had existed previously, and 800 feet of failed bulkheading were replaced. The formerly completely impervious site was also enhanced with two pervious brick plazas totaling 6,100 square feet. Landscaped areas were increased from .25 acres to .8 acres, and 2.02 acres were raised approximately 2 feet to eliminate nuisance flooding on the site.*

*Project 2: Chestertown Business Campus – DHCD Strategic Demolition Fund grants contributed to the construction of 3,600 linear feet of stormwater lines.*

*Project 3: Gateway Park – Converted an 11 acre former parking lot into a park, featuring a 60% reduction in impervious area through the use of landscaped areas.*

*Partners: USDA provided funding in the form of a Rural Development grant and loan totaling \$1,298,000. Private donations totaling \$1.4 million was raised for the Marina. Other parts of the project utilized funding from DNR Waterway Improvement Fund (\$1,600,000), DHCD Strategic Demolition (\$400,000), Maryland Heritage Areas (17,500), and the Town of Chestertown (\$500,000). Two DHCD Strategic Demolition Fund grants totaling \$1,000,000 were utilized for the Chestertown Business Campus. The Gateway Park project started with a stream cleanup by the Chester River Association, a local nonprofit Riverkeeper organization that is now called ShoreRivers, which has its offices in the new Chestertown Marina Interpretive Center. This group has partnered several times on Town-initiated projects, and plans to partner with the Town on an upcoming Green Streets grant.*

*Impact: Improved stormwater infrastructure and reduction in nuisance flooding for the Marina, as well as the on-site restaurant located at the same site (privately owned).*

### **Accomplishment 2:**

*Outcome: Created a master-planned mixed use development.*

*Project 1: Chestertown Business Campus – Aided by two \$500,000 Strategic Demolition grants from DHCD, KRM Development Corporation in partnership with the Town was able to implement an approximately 70 acre mixed-use development consisting of an 180,000 sq. ft. distribution center, and, within the next one to two years, 6 3-story apartment buildings with a total of 174 apartments, a 60,000 sq. ft. corporate office building, and a 58,000 sq. ft. athletic facility. Several pad sites on the site will be developed over the next ten years.*

*Partners: Two DHCD Strategic Demolition Fund grants totaling \$1,000,000 were used to fund part of the infrastructure requirements for the project. The Town partnered with KRM Development on these grants.*

*Impact: The Chestertown Business Campus is the Town's largest mixed-use development of the last ten years, and is having a very positive impact on the Town's ability to retain one of the three largest employers in the County, provide apartment housing for local residents, and create new options for physical exercise and wellness.*

**Accomplishment 3:**

*Outcome: Increased tree cover for a healthier urban ecosystem.*

*Project 1: Chestertown Business Campus – As part of the development described above, over 300 native street trees will be planted during the first phases of development.*

*Project 2: Chestertown Middle School – Planted over 100 native trees and bushes as part of renovations to the Town’s Middle School, which serves the majority of children in Kent County.*

*Project 3: Gateway Park – Planted over 75 native trees and bushes in a former truck storage yard.*

*Project 4: Margo Bailey Community Park – Planted 130 trees around a walking path at the Town’s newest park, which was formerly a bare farm field.*

*Partners: DHCD Strategic Demolition Fund grants of \$1,000,000 for infrastructure helped leverage the tree planting portion of the Business Campus project, and DNR Community Parks & Playgrounds funding totaling \$385,000 was used for the Middle School and Gateway Park projects. A Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund surplus of \$32,110 of unused funds was used for Bailey Park. The Chestertown Tree Committee reviews all development landscaping plans as part of the requirements of the Town’s Tree City USA designation.*

*Impact: Made substantial contributions to the Town’s goal of increasing tree cover to 40%, which is being inventoried and monitored by the Washington College GIS Department.*

**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: Complete Phase IV of the Gilcrest Rail Trail and make Chestertown more bike friendly.*

*Narrative: The Town received a FY2018 MDOT Bikeways grant to complete the final phase of the Gilcrest Rail Trail, an approximately 1 mile section of rail trail and a pedestrian/bicycle crossing on Rt. 298/Morgnec Road. The grant of \$70,000 requires a 100% match, of which \$30,000 must be cash and the remaining \$40,000 in-kind. The Town’s resources have been stretched considerably with the \$6.5 million renovation of the Marina, so coming up with the cash match is especially difficult. It is hoped that development in the vicinity of this part of the Rail Trail may be able to offset the matching costs. To date the engineering for the Rt. 298 crossing has been completed, and the Town has the required crossing construction permit from SHA. The fuller implementation of the bicycling network requires additional bike lanes along the major corridors through Chestertown, including Washington Ave./Rt. 213, Morgnec Road/Rt. 298, and High Street. Part of High Street had an approximately .25 mile bike lane striped as part of the construction of a roundabout at the intersection of Morgnec Road and High Street/Rt. 20, but more lanes are needed to create a safer and interconnected network. The complete network would also include more bicycle parking areas, which are also lacking except at Town Hall, a few places downtown, and a couple of the parks.*

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

*Outcome: Construct a bypass from the intersection of MD 213 and MD 297 in Kent County to the intersection of MD 213 and MD 5444 in Queen Anne's County.*

*Narrative: Listed first in the highest priority initiatives in the Comprehensive Plan, the construction of a bypass has fallen prey to the funding issue at the State. The very high cost of the bypass, for which easements have been purchased in Queen Anne's but not Kent County, is not supported by the current budget. In addition, there is the concern about economic harm to Chestertown, which would see commercial – but also other – traffic diverted away from Washington Avenue, which runs one block parallel to the downtown area.*

*Outcome: Improve Arts & Entertainment infrastructure in Chestertown.*

*Narrative: As Chestertown has become a more arts friendly place, it has become clear that the Town needs better facilities and equipment for hosting indoor and outdoor events.*



Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>If YES, specify in quantifiable units and compare values from the last five years If NO, why not? What kept you from achieving your plan's desired outcomes?</b>
1. Has there been an improvement in water quality?	X			Over 800 feet of failing bulkhead (Chestertown Marina) and 4,200 feet of stormwater pipe (Chestertown Marina and Business Campus) were installed, thereby yielding significant improvements to water quality. Water quality was also improved by two LEED Platinum waterfront development projects by Washington College, consisting of a new boathouse and environmental education center, both of which utilize stormwater best practices.
2. Has the amount of impervious surface in your Community been reduced? (Amount in SF)	X			Impervious surface was reduced by 1.05 acres between two public projects outlined above: Chestertown Marina and Gateway Park.
3. Have there been improvements and/ or additions to your park and/ or recreational green space?	X			The Town installed two basketball courts (Gateway Park, Middle School), 1.15 miles of walking path (Gateway, Middle School, Bailey Park), a 2.8 acre dog park (Bailey Park), three sets of children's play equipment (Gilcrest Rail Trail, Bailey Park, and Washington Park), three reconditioned tennis courts (Chestertown Middle School), five multi-purpose exercise stations (Middle School), and four picnic tables (Gateway Park).
4. Did the Sustainable Community implement any recycling or waste reduction programs?	X			Chestertown took over recycling from Kent County within the past ten years, and each year has seen an increase in the number of households and businesses participating. Between 2016 and 2018, the total residential recycling increased from 479,223 lbs. to 559,346 lbs., and the total business recycling from 318,231 lbs. to 653,279 lbs. (source: Infinity Recycling).
5. Do all residents have access to healthy food options (i.e. fresh food grocery stores, farmers markets etc.) within the Sustainable Community?	X			Chestertown has a natural food store located downtown, which is located within walking distance of most of the Town's residents. The two largest food stores, Acme and Redner's, are located at the north end of Chestertown, which are accessible to all residents by automobile, less so by foot due to the busy intersections, few pedestrian crossings and sporadic sidewalks located nearby.
<b>OTHER:</b>				

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

<b>ECONOMY</b>	YES	NO	N/A	<b>If YES, specify in quantifiable units and compare values from the last five years If NO, why not? What kept you from achieving your plan's desired outcomes?</b>
1. Has there been an increase in the number of new businesses in your Main Street/ Commercial District?				About 25 new businesses have located in Chestertown in past five years, including Bloomin' Wild, Blackbird, Walnut and Wool, Linda Roy Walls, Listening Room, Brady Hart, Angela's Cottage, Bee Crafty, Kaleidoscope Art Studio, Jacqui von Voss Holistic Health, Elbe Body Massage, Food Lab, Figg's Ordinary, Spa Angels, Sarah Paige Salon, LTO & Decoy Bottle Shop, Welcome Home, Inspired Floral Designs, Riverside Unique, Tiny Tots.
2. Did the Municipality/ Sustainable Community area receive any designations that support local economic development?				Chestertown's Arts & Entertainment District was created in 2015, which brought with it tax credits that are being used by two artists who reside and create art in the District. The real estate tax credit has not been used, as it is too narrowly focused to benefit the types of renovations being done.
3. Has there been an increase in foot traffic in the Main Street/commercial district?				New and growing festivals (Harry Potter, Legacy Day, ChesterGras, Dickens of a Christmas) have added thousands of visitors on a half dozen weekends throughout the year, and new monthly events such as Cars on High and Second Saturdays have drawn a hundred or so people downtown after five. Overall more college students coming downtown for cafes and shopping, maybe a 5 percent increase there?
4. Have the number of commercial vacancies decreased?				Yes. Several commercial properties are undergoing major renovations – JR's, Lemon Leaf, Stam's – which will result in an exciting bar, outdoor beer garden, restaurant, ice cream parlor, offices and apartments in formerly rundown buildings. A flower shop – Bloomin' Wild – moved into a premier spot that was vacated several years ago when Royal Farms moved to a new location at the Rt. 20/Rt. 298 traffic circle.
5. Has there been an increase in local jobs within the Sustainable Community for its residents?				An estimated increase of 19 full-time positions and 10 part-time due to an increase in downtown businesses.

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>If YES, specify in quantifiable units and compare values from the last five years If NO, why not? What kept you from achieving your plan's desired outcomes?</b>
1. Has the amount of bike trails/paths increased? How many linear feet do the trails cover?		X		Phase I-III of the Gilchrest Rail Trail were constructed in the past ten years, and 50% of the funding for Phase IV – the last leg – is available from an existing Bikeways grant. No new construction has taken place in the last five years, although engineering has been completed for the Rail Trail crossing on Rt. 298/Morgnec Road. The existing Rail Trail is approximately 9,105 feet, with the remaining Phase IV approximately 1,500 feet.
2. Have there been improvements to the public transit infrastructure?		X		Public transit in Chestertown consists of two providers: Maryland Upper Shore Transit (MUST), which provides service between Rock Hall, Chestertown, Centreville and Easton; and Delmarva Community Transit, which covers the Eastern Shore and is primarily for seniors over 60 and people with disabilities.
3. Has there been an increase in sidewalks? (Amount in linear feet)	X			Approximately 3,000 feet of new sidewalk was constructed in the last five years, consisting primarily of the north end of High Street to Gateway Park, and within the Chestertown Business Campus.
4. Have there been any roadway improvements that support "Complete" or "Green" streets?		X		Green streets funding was requested from Chesapeake Bay Trust within the past two years to fund street improvements around the Chestertown Marina entrance, but the funding was denied. UMUC graduate students will be using the lower end of High Street as a study area for their Capstone Project most likely this fall, and it is hoped that recommendations coming out of that exercise will help an application for green street stormwater retrofits.
5. Has traffic congestion along major roads decreased? (Amount in percent)		X		Anecdotal evidence suggests that traffic has stayed fairly consistent, but would be dramatically reduced if a bypass was constructed, as described elsewhere in this report.
<b>OTHER:</b>				

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

<b>HOUSING</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>If YES, specify in quantifiable units and compare values from the last five years If NO, why not? What kept you from achieving your plan's desired outcomes?</b>
1. Have any residential facades been improved?	X			Not sure how many residences in the Sustainable Community have been improved, as the average façade improvement does not rise to the level of needing a building permit. Six formerly dilapidated residences were purchased, renovated, and have been rented back out. For these properties, the owners worked with the Historic District Commission to ensure that the renovations were done within the District Guidelines.
2. Has the home ownership rate increased?	X			The number is likely very low, but ownership has increased somewhat based on applications for building permits that the Town has received. A conservative estimate would be ten additional owned homes.
3. Has there been an increase in the number of housing units in the Sustainable Community area? What number and/or percent are affordable?	X			Approximately 35 new residential units have been constructed in the past five years, consisting primarily of condominiums at Chester River Landing and Silver Heel Drive, individual new homes on several formerly vacant properties, and second-floor apartments that were created or renovated in the downtown area. Several pending projects, including 174 units in two phases at the Chestertown Business Campus and another anticipated development on Talbot Boulevard, will increase the number substantially. There are no statistics available on affordable housing in Chestertown.
4. Has there been demolition of blighted properties?	X			There are several blighted properties standing in Chestertown, and in general most of these building sell and are gutted and rehabbed for resale or rental. A duplex on Queen Street was too far gone and was demolished with the cooperation of the two owners, and another residence on Water Street is slated for demolition within the next few months.
5. Has the residential vacancy rate decreased?	X			There has been a slight decrease based on the number derelict properties being rehabbed and rented, and in general an increase in demand due to retirees moving to Chestertown, a burgeoning Arts & Entertainment District, increased presence of Washington College in the Town's cultural and educational offerings, and a number of other factors.
<b>OTHER:</b> Commercial façades	X			Main Street's Façade Improvement Program has a total of six current and pending projects totaling nearly \$60,000. Businesses in the Main Street area have used these funds to renovate their front façade in order to improve their storefront and surrounding streetscape.

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

<b>QUALITY OF LIFE</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>If YES, specify in quantifiable units and compare values from the last five years If NO, why not? What kept you from achieving your plan's desired outcomes?</b>
1. Has there been a decrease in crime rate?	X			Part 1 crimes have decreased over the past five years, while Part 2 crimes have increased. In other words, aggravated assault, rape, armed robbery and other serious crimes have decreased, while less serious crimes such as fraud and theft have increased. In general, the crime rate is very low and it is very rare for something like a murder to occur in Chestertown. The low crime rate in this small rural community is certainly one factor in the decision of people from nearby metropolitan communities such as Baltimore, Washington, Philadelphia and Wilmington, to move here.
2. Have there been improvements and/ or additions to your public spaces (i.e. museums, community centers, public plazas)?	X			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The creation of the Public Arts Master Plan, Chestertown Arts &amp; Entertainment District and the Town's increasingly vibrant arts scene has yielded many important developments. Within the past two years, the inaugural sculpture Broad Reach was constructed at Wilmer Park. Based on three themes set forth in the Town's Public Arts Master Plan – art, environment, history – the sculpture's cost and installation was entirely paid by donations from a broad cross-section of residents, including the Chestertown High School Class of 1967.</li> <li>2. Two public plazas were created at the Chestertown Marina, providing space for musical and other types of public events, such as Downrigging Weekend, one of the largest tall ship events on the East Coast that brings upwards of 5,000 people to Chestertown.</li> <li>3. Renovations are currently ongoing at the Kent County Arts Council's new office, a formerly abandoned mixed-use building across from the post office that will house a gallery, office and apartments for visiting artists.</li> <li>4. RiverArts, a nonprofit downtown arts organization, has been growing steadily and now has four locations in Town –a gallery and retail outlet for local artists and artisans, along with the organization's office; KidSpot, a children's arts education center; a studio space for pastel, drawing and painting classes; and a clay studio.</li> <li>5. Fountain Park, the central gathering place downtown, has been upgraded to accommodate the local Farmers Market and Artisans Market, to include wider brick sidewalks, improved landscaping, removal of diseased or dying trees, and new electrical system for the regular musical events during the summer, and wintertime events such as the Dickens Christmas.</li> </ol>

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

<p>3. Has there been an increase in public art/ arts &amp; entertainment programs/venues (i.e. murals, movie theatre, music events)?</p>				<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Yes, the offerings have not only increased but diversified as well, to include the annual Legacy Day celebrating African American history and culture, and the first scheduled Midshore Pride Day on the Eastern Shore, which will take place in downtown Chestertown on May 3-5, 2019.</li> <li>2. The Morgnec Gateway Mural was painted on the rear façade of Acme market at Kent Plaza in 2016 on an otherwise nondescript wall facing Rt. 298/Morgnec Road. Washington College’s SANDBOX Program led by Alex Castro teamed up with acclaimed artists Jessie Unterhalter and Katey Truhn, organized middle school students, community members and college students in the day-long painting of the mural.</li> <li>3. Chester 5 theater was for many years the only movie theater in Chestertown. When the theater closed in 2016, Horizon Cinemas stepped in, installed new plush reclining seats and projection equipment, and the reopened the theater in late 2018. Chestertown teamed up with Kent County to provide a \$75,000 amusement tax rebate to assist with the project.</li> </ol>
<p>4. How many historic properties were renovated/improved?</p>				<p>Approximately six residential properties and three commercial properties in the Historic District have been completely renovated, with three additional commercial properties to be renovated by the end of 2019. Several of the commercial properties are using Main Street’s Façade Improvement Program grants to offset some of the costs.</p>
<p>5. Are there any residential health and wellness opportunities in place (i.e. athletic facilities, recreational indoor/ outdoor courses or groups)?</p>				<p>Chestertown has two private health clubs with exercise facilities, Kent Athletic Club on the grounds of Dixon Valve, and Aqua Fit, where the primary business is physical therapy and also housing two rented medical offices. Aqua Fit has a pool, multi-station weight room, spinning room and a multipurpose space for yoga and aerobics. Kent Athletic Club has a multi-station workout room with weights, a gym for basketball and volleyball, and several squash / racquetball courts. This facility will be supplanted by a much larger facility that will be located at the Chesapeake Business Campus.</p> <p>In addition, there is the Seed House, which has a large yoga and meditation room and offers wellness classes, massage, acupuncture, physical therapy, Reiki, and reflexology. Walking tracks are available at Kent County Middle School, Wilmer Park and Bailey Park. Washington College also provides their facilities at reasonable rates for public use, including indoor and outdoor tennis courts used by the Kent County Tennis League, and an Olympic-size swimming pool which offers memberships to the general public.</p>

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

<b>LAND USE/ LOCAL PLANNING</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>If YES, specify in quantifiable units and compare values from the last five years If NO, why not? What kept you from achieving your plan's desired outcomes?</b>
1. Have there been any infill developments?				The Chestertown Business Campus (described above) is being built on former farm land that was recently annexed. Six vacant residential lots have had new homes constructed within the past five years. Washington College is constructing the Semans Griswold Environmental Center on two formerly polluted, now remediated parcels on the Town's waterfront. Stepney Farm, the Town's largest vacant parcel, is owned by Washington College and has had two development plans that have not gone beyond the concept stage. There has also been discussion regarding two large vacant parcels on Talbot Boulevard adjoining the Phase IV section of the Rail Trail, but no firm plans have been submitted.
2. Has there been an increase in the amount of preserved/protected land?				N/A
3. Have there been any developments hindered by growth constraints?				No developments were hindered by growth constraints, although it should be noted that Chestertown's infrastructure – police, fire, schools, water, sewer, etc. – are not capable of absorbing a development larger than the space available within the current municipal boundaries.
4. Have there been any zoning or any policy changes that have fostered growth in your Sustainable Community?				Chestertown recently amended its Zoning Ordinance to allow mixed uses in the LI-2 Light Industrial District, which includes businesses located in the Chestertown Business Campus, along Flatland Road and industrial businesses off Dixon Drive. These mixed uses include banks, churches, grocery stores, live/work unites, health clubs, second-floor residential units and professional offices. Allowing a limited set of mixed uses provides developers with new options for developing properties in these otherwise industrial areas.
5. Have there been any significant improvements to the municipal infrastructure within the Sustainable Community (i.e. street lighting, water/sewer lines)?				The only improvements to existing infrastructure have been repairs done because of failing or broken water and sewer lines. Some street lighting was added in existing parts of Town such as Gateway Park and the relatively new roundabout.

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

<b>COMPETITIVE FUNDING:</b> Use the rows below to list competed funds sought for sustainability or revitalization projects since receiving Sustainable Communities designation.	<b>Source</b> (federal, state, foundation, etc.)	<b>Amount Received</b>	<b>If no funding was received, what technical or other assistance from the state would help with future applications?</b>	<b>Other Notes</b>
<b>Community Legacy (CL):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CL-2015-Chestertown 00177</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	DHCD	\$100,000		Sultana Education Center, for which the Town of Chestertown assisted with CL funding.
<b>Strategic Demolition Fund (SDF):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SDF-2017-Chestertown-00205</li> <li>• SDF-2018-Chestertown-00170</li> <li>• SDF-2019-Chestertown-00360</li> </ul>	DHCD	\$400,000 \$500,000 <u>\$500,000</u> <b>\$1,400,000</b>		Funds used for the Marina Interpretive Center and Chestertown Business Campus.
<b>Community Safety &amp; Enhancement Program:</b>	MDOT			
<b>Maryland Bikeways Program:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phase III Rail Trail</li> <li>• Phase IV Rail Trail</li> </ul>	MDOT	\$168,406 ( \$70,000) <b>\$238,406</b>		Phase IV funds not spent, project at a standstill.
<b>Sidewalk Retrofit Program:</b>	MDOT			
<b>Water Quality Revolving Loan Fund:</b>	MDE			



Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

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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>				
*Please add more rows if necessary				
<b>Chesapeake &amp; Atlantic Bays Trust Fund</b>	State	\$440,000 <u>\$ 32,110</u> <b>\$472,110</b>		Step Pool Conveyance (Rt. 213) and Bailey Park Trees
<b>Chesapeake Bay Trust</b>	State	<b>\$115,000</b>		Wilmer Park Living Shoreline
<b>DNR Community Parks &amp; Playgrounds</b>	State	\$ 155,000 \$ 230,200 <u>\$ 138,400</u> <b>\$ 523,600</b>		Gateway Park, KCMS Field, Washington Park (ongoing)
<b>MD State Capital Grants</b>	State	\$ 500,000 <u>\$ 500,000</u> <b>\$1,000,000</b>		Chestertown Marina, Marina Interpretive Center
<b>Maryland Heritage Areas</b>	State	<b>\$ 35,000</b>		Chestertown Marina Interpretive Center
<b>USDA Rural Utilities</b>	Federal	\$ 700,000 <u>\$ 598,000</u> <b>\$ 1,298,000</b>		Chestertown Marina Stormwater Improvements

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

<b>COMPETITIVE FUNDING:</b> Use the rows below to list competed funds sought for sustainability or revitalization projects since receiving Sustainable Communities designation.	<b>Source</b> (federal, state, foundation, etc.)	<b>Amount Received</b>	<b>If no funding was received, what technical or other assistance from the state would help with future applications?</b>	<b>Other Notes</b>
<b>MIP Main Street Operating Assistance Grant</b>	State	<b>\$25,000</b>		Main Street Manager
<b>DHCD Community Legacy Fund</b>	State	\$ 70,000 <u>\$100,000</u> <b>\$170,000</b>		2017-18 Façade Improvement
<b>DHCD Community Investment Tax Credit</b>	State	<b>\$30,000</b>		
<b>DHCD Community Legacy</b>	State	<b>\$100,000</b>		Wayfinding Signs
<b>MD Arts Council Public Arts Grant</b>	State	<b>\$5,000</b>		Broad Reach signage
<b>MD Environmental Trust, DHCD, SHA Keep America Beautiful</b>	State	<b>\$4,950</b>		Downtown planters and flowers

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?

1. Sidewalks are needed to connect Coventry Farms and Washington Park, two housing communities on Flatland Road, to Gateway Park and downtown Chestertown. SHA conducted an analysis of the project and as yet no timetable on when this work will get done, and whether the Town will be expected to shoulder any of the cost.
2. As one of only five National Historic Landmark Districts in the State, we would like to move overhead powerlines underground along some of the Town's most historic downtown streets, including High and Cross Streets.
3. Seed funding for the Town's Public Arts Master Plan would assist with public arts and other local arts funding.
4. Street beautification is an ongoing effort, a fund to leverage donations would be a great help.
5. Our small-town business owners need help branding, marketing and selling in the increasingly competitive market. A grant to fund a series of professional development workshops is needed.

# Sustainable Community Action Plan

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Name of Sustainable Community

Submitted by: Town of Chestertown

2/28/2019

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

## Environment

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

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tree canopy has increased and the goal of 40% cover is achievable.</li> <li>Nuisance flooding has been addressed at Chestertown Marina, where the site and restaurant were formerly impassible during high tides.</li> <li>Installation of new stormwater infrastructure has improved water quality.</li> <li>Municipal carbon footprint has been dramatically reduced with a 1.2Mw solar field at the Town’s waste water treatment facility (WWTP).</li> <li>Water quality was dramatically improved in 2008 with the addition of BNR-ENR technology at the waste water treatment plant.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional tree cover is needed to achieve 40% coverage.</li> <li>Phase IV of the Rail Trail, although funded, has stalled.</li> <li>The Historic District’s border on the waterfront is subject to risks including flooding, sea level rise, and stormwater issues.</li> </ul>

<u>Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures</u> →	<u>Strategies and Action Items</u> →	<u>Implementation Partners</u>
Outcome 1: Increase tree canopy Progress Measures: Achieve 40% coverage	Strategy A: Enforce current development requirements for green space Strategy B: Use existing partnerships to leverage grant funds Strategy C: Continue to use grant funds to increase tree cover	Planning Commission ShoreRivers DNR Community Parks & Playgrounds, Chesapeake Bay Trust
Outcome 2: Complete the Gilcrest Rail Trail Progress Measures: Signaled rail crossing on Morgnec Rd. and .6 mile paved trail to Foxley Manor.	Strategy A: Raise matching funds for the Rail Trail Strategy B: Complete rail trail construction Strategy C:	Private funders
Outcome 3: Improve stormwater infrastructure and flood resiliency on High Street.	Strategy A: Raise the foot of High Street to prevent nuisance flooding Strategy B: Research stormwater controls for the lower 1,000 feet of High Street Strategy C: Install stormwater controls on the lower 1,000 feet of High Street	Kent County UMUC Graduate Program Chesapeake Bay Trust

## Economy

(Economic strengths and weaknesses can include but are not limited to regional accessibility, business attraction/retention, health of the business district and commercial vacancies, workforce/employment and economic drivers, local policies/regulations, marketing, tourism, cultural and historic assets)

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New businesses locating in Chestertown have increased</li> <li>Visitor numbers have increased due to additional festivals and events</li> <li>Many neglected commercial properties have been rehabilitated</li> <li>Educational quality has increased over the last five years</li> <li>Main Street and Arts &amp; Entertainment committees are assisting local businesses and making positive contributions to the local economy with new events, marketing, and advertising</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business owners need resources to keep their businesses viable</li> <li>The pool of employees is limited due to young people leaving Chestertown for places with more opportunities</li> <li>The Town's and County's declining school enrollment means that the State provides correspondingly less funding for education</li> </ul>

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	 <b>Strategies and Action Items</b> 	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Develop resources to business owners</p> <p>Progress Measures: Business owners will have better knowledge of the branding, marketing and survival skills needed to stay in business.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Hire a consultant and provide workshops</p> <p>Strategy B:</p>	<p>SCORE (Service Corp of Retired Executives)</p> <p>Small Business Association</p>

## Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

<p>Outcome 2: Develop student graduate retention strategies Progress Measures:</p>	<p>Strategy A: Study and survey graduates to determine the factors that lead them to leave, and what is needed to get them to stay in Chestertown Strategy B: Develop programs to retain local graduates</p>	<p>Unsure of whether State funds are available to study this issue, or to develop strategies to retain local graduates.</p>
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## Transportation

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

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sidewalk improvements have been made to increase ADA accessibility</li> <li>• Two public bus lines provide service to the residents of Chestertown</li> <li>• Three phases of the Rail Trail have been constructed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sidewalk connectivity is lacking in the newer areas of town, thus limiting pedestrian access to downtown and the waterfront</li> <li>• ADA accessibility needs to be further improved</li> <li>• Phase IV of the Rail Trail is stalled despite funding from Bikeways</li> </ul>

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures →	Strategies and Action Items →	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Improve sidewalk connectivity Progress Measures: Install 25,000 feet of new sidewalk.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Enforce current development standards for sidewalks Strategy B: Construct approx. 1,000 feet of sidewalk on Flatland Road</p>	<p>Planning Commission SHA, Sidewalk Retrofit Program? Developers (where possible)</p>
<p>Outcome 2: Improve ADA accessibility Progress Measures: Ten additional intersections with depressed ADA ramps installed.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Prioritize downtown intersections where accessibility is an issue Strategy B: Steadily work towards constructing ADA ramps throughout downtown</p>	<p>Local advocates Town maintenance crew</p>
<p>Outcome 2: Complete the Gilcrest Rail Trail Progress Measures: Trail crossing on Morgnec Rd. and .6 mile extension to Foxley Manor will be completed.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Raise matching funds for Phase IV of the Rail Trail Strategy B: Strategy C:</p>	<p>Private funders, developers</p>

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

## Housing

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

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many derelict homes have been purchased and rehabilitated</li> <li>• Homes in the Town’s Historic District have retained, and increased in, value, in part through strict enforcement of the District’s Guidelines</li> <li>• Retirees and others are drawn to the town for its historic character</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affordable housing is lacking</li> <li>• Historic buildings are notoriously expensive to rehab, and Historic District Guidelines demand a higher standard for renovations which drives the cost up further</li> </ul>

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures →	Strategies and Action Items →	Implementation Partners
Outcome 1: Create more affordable housing Progress Measures: Increase affordable housing by X% (based on research that is needed before a percentage can be set)	Strategy A: Measure the amount of affordable housing in Chestertown and define reasonable goals Strategy B:	Not sure.
Outcome 2: Address cost issues related to Historic District requirements for commercial properties Progress Measures: Provide \$100,000 per year to fund an average of 5-6 façade improvements per year.	Strategy A: Continue using the Façade Improvement Program to offset costs Strategy B:	Main Street, DHCD, Downtown Chestertown Association



## Quality of Life

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

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crime in Chestertown is relatively low</li> <li>Arts and entertainment offerings have increased dramatically</li> <li>The Public Arts Master Plan has resulted in Broad Reach sculpture at Wilmer Park</li> <li>Washington College, Sultana Education Foundation, Garfield Center for the Arts, Charles Sumner Hall, RiverArts and other organizations are integral to Chestertown’s diverse cultural life</li> <li>Chestertown’s purchase and renovation of the Marina ensure public access to the waterfront, including boardwalks that connect to waterfront trails</li> <li>Steps have been taken to improve diversity on the Mayor and Council, Committees, and local civic and arts organizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Infrastructure for outdoor events is lacking</li> <li>Funding for arts organizations is stretched</li> <li>Participation in events by African Americans is low</li> </ul>

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures →	Strategies and Action Items →	Implementation Partners
Outcome 1: Improve outdoor event infrastructure Progress Measures: Purchase an outdoor stage for public performances	Strategy A: Apply for grant funds Strategy B: Purchase the stage	Schumann Foundation, Hedgelawn Foundation, Town of Chestertown, Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area
Outcome 2: Increase funding for arts organization Progress Measures: A minimum \$25,000 for the arts annually	Strategy A: Create a fund for the arts	Kent County Arts Council, RiverArts
Outcome 2: Improve African American attendance Progress Measures: Verifiable increase	Strategy A: Coordinate with local groups to improve participation rates	Social Action Committee for Racial Justice

## Local Planning and Land Use

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

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chestertown’s Zoning Ordinance has been updated to allow more flexibility for mixed-use development</li> <li>• Setback requirements in the Historic District were decreased to reflect historic development patterns on smaller lots</li> <li>• The Planning Commission adheres to strict stormwater, native landscaping, public space, outdoor lighting, architectural design, walkability, and other design standards that improve economic and environmental sustainability</li> <li>• Floodplain and Critical Areas are strictly enforced</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several large and small parcels in Chestertown are still undeveloped.</li> </ul>

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures →	Strategies and Action Items →	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Encourage development on vacant parcels in Chestertown Progress Measures: Infill development</p>	<p>Strategy A: Continue to enforce development within the municipal boundaries, and when that is not possible, refuse to annex land outside of the Chestertown Priority Funding Area Strategy B: Strategy C:</p>	<p>Planning Commission</p>

## SIGNATURE LETTER

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

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

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Authorized Signature

Chris Cerino, Mayor  
Type Name and Title

February 28, 2019  
Date

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February 28, 2019  
Date