



## **CHECKLIST AND TABLE OF CONTENTS**

APPLICANT: The Town of Easton

NAME OF SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY: Town of Easton Sustainable Community

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

☐ **Section A - Sustainable Community Renewal Applicant Information**

- [Applicant Information](#)

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

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

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

- [Action Plan](#)

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

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

- [Disclosure Authorization](#)

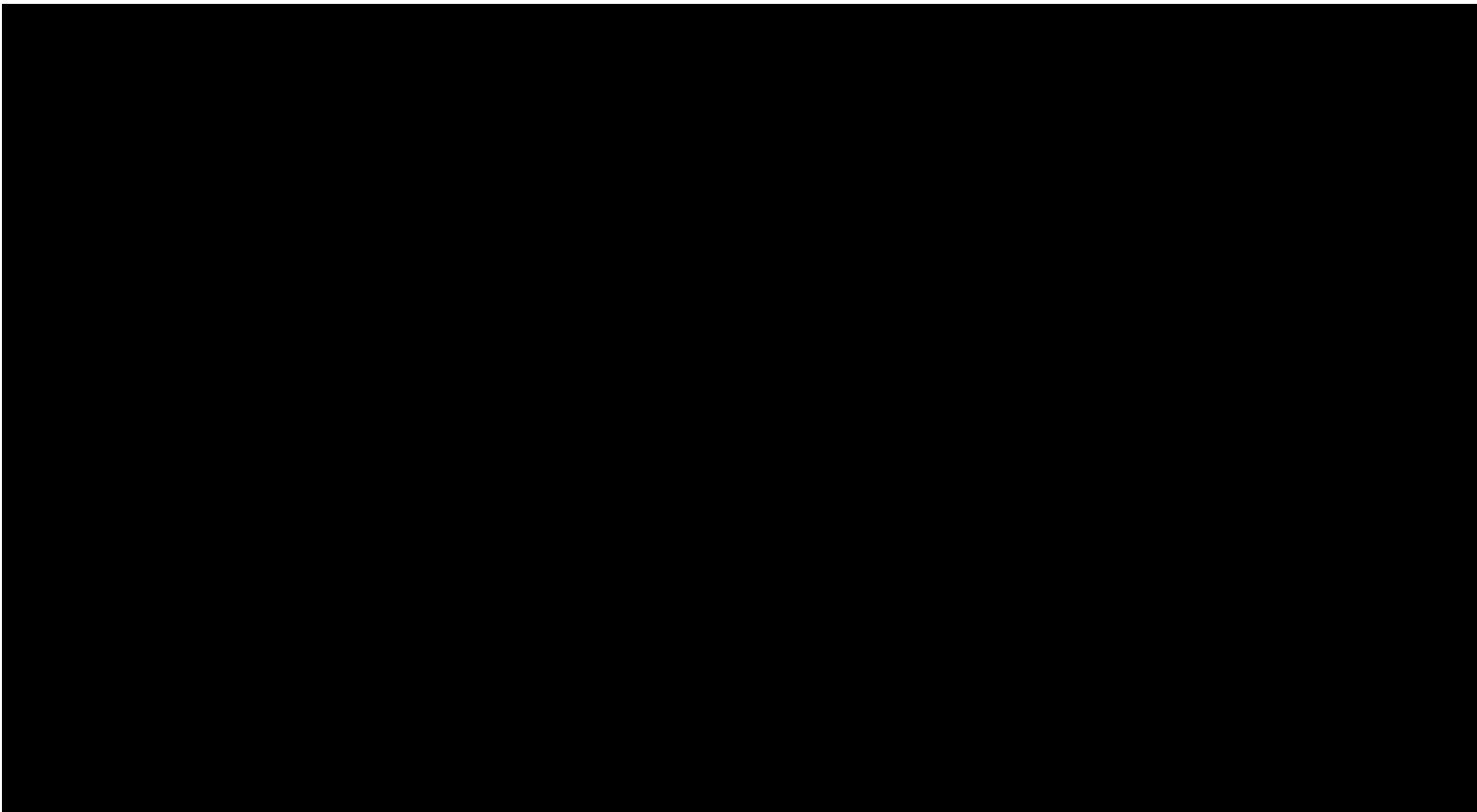
**SGSC Approved - 7.24**

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

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

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

<b>Name of Sustainable Community:</b>		<b>Town of Easton Sustainable Community</b>	
<b>Name of Applicant:</b>		<b>Town of Easton, Maryland</b>	
<b>Applicant's Federal Identification Number:</b>		<b>52-6000787</b>	
<b>Applicant's Street Address:</b>		<b>14 South Harrison Street</b>	
<b>City:Easton</b>	<b>County: Talbot</b>	<b>State: MD</b>	<b>Zip Code: 21601</b>
<b>Phone Number: (410) 822-2525</b>	<b>Fax Number: (410) 820-8016</b>	<b>Web Address:www.eastonmd.gov</b>	



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

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

Yes, we are proposing a few refinements of our boundary in a couple of locations. They are:

- At the northeast corner of our existing boundary, we are proposing to add property of the Talbot County Board of Education. This expansion will encompass their central office building as well as an adjacent, vacant parcel of relatively large size that has been used primarily for formal and informal recreational activities in recent years. The SC Workgroup believes the property could logically be targeted for either development as a formal park to be added to the Town's inventory or as a potential Affordable Housing development.
- Extending northerly from our northern boundary we are proposing what looks like a moderately long pipestem. This area corresponds to the right-of-way for North Washington Street and it is proposed to be added with an eye towards obtaining grant assistance to add sidewalks to this major corridor to Downtown.
- On the western edge of our existing boundary, we are proposing to move the current SC Boundary for a portion of the area, to the north so that it will follow the path of Marlboro Avenue, rather than running behind some of the properties fronting on this road. There is currently no project/plan in mind in association with this adjustment, but rather is proposed simply because it seems more logical.
- We are requesting to add a parcel on Easton Point that the Town acquired from the Southern States Cooperative and has converted into a Waterfront Park. It was annexed into the Town earlier this year.
- The final proposed revision to our SC Boundary is along the southern limits and proposes to revise the line by including all of the area of properties fronting on Port Street rather than dividing them by running the boundary a set distance parallel to the road.

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

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

(3) Approximate number of acres of entire SC Area: 745 acres

(4) Existing federal, state or local designations:

X Main Street

X National Register Historic District X Local Historic District

X Arts & Entertainment District X State Enterprise Zone Special Taxing District ☐ BRAC

☐ State Designated TOD ☐ Other(s): Other designations that are co-located throughout much of our SC Area include a local Planned Redevelopment Overlay Zoning District, STories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area, and a Federally-recognized Opportunity Zone.

## Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section A

- (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?

For a number of reasons (frequency of ACS/Census, geography) this question is difficult to answer. We can observe that between the 2010 and 2020 Decennial Censuses (except where noted), the following changes were observed for Easton as a whole:

Characteristic	2010	2020
Population % White Alone	73.1%	66.4%
Population % Black or African American	17.2%	14.7%
Population % Hispanic or Latino	9.8%	14.4%
Average Household Size	2.32	2.19
Median Household Income	\$46,378 (2007 ACS)	\$72,771 (2022 ACS)
% Bachelor's Degree or Higher	Unknown	39.4% (2022 ACS)
% Renter Occupied	40.6%	41.1% (2022 ACS)
Median Age	41.2	43.3 (2022 ACS)

While we have no statistical profile of just the SC Area, observation and anecdotal evidence suggests that the overall trend of the growth of the Hispanic/Latino population with the corresponding decrease in the African American population, is, if anything, present to an even greater degree in the smaller SC Area. We believe the same can be said regarding the decrease in home ownership rates, which was in large part the rationale behind the Town's Housing on the Hill Program mentioned in various places in this Application.

### (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?

As was the case with the Town's previous renewal application, the members of the SC Workgroup have changed somewhat, all due to elections or personnel changes. The current members of the group are:

**Megan Cook**, Mayor (Replaced Robert Willey but was also a Member in 2019 as a Town Council Representative)

**Don Richardson**, Town Manager (same as in 2019)

**Rev. Elmer Davis**, Town Council Member (Replaced Megan Cook)

**Lynn Thomas, Jr.**, AICP - Town Planner (same as in 2019)

## Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section A

**Rick VanEmburch, P.E.** - Town Engineer (Replaced Katie Reedy who is no longer with the Town)  
**Holly DeKarski** - Director of Easton Economic Development Corporation (Replaced Tracy Ward and Ross Benincasa following a restructuring of the Town's Management of Economic Development)  
**Jim Bent**, Chair, Eason Affordable Housing Board (Replaced Ed Lynch from same organization)  
**Sierra Clem**, Town Engineering Department (Replaced Trevor Newcomb who has a new position with the Town)  
**Miguel Salinas**, Director of Planning and Zoning (New Member)

This SC Renewal Application was perhaps more of a collaborative exercise than was the case with previous versions with the work being reviewed by the Full Committee and the individual components of the SC Action Plan being drafted by the member(s) most closely aligned with that subject area.

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

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

To the extent that there is a weakness, it is primarily with regards to our capacity to manage projects and plans given the host of other duties we all pursue. Easton is a progressive community that is increasingly proactive in addressing many of the issues associated with our Sustainable Community, and not solely in our SC Area. As one example, since our SC Program approval in 2014, we have annexed a partially developed Industrial Park and extended water and sewer to it to facilitate additional businesses and associated job growth, securing a CDBG to do so. Similarly, we applied for and received a US Dept. of Commerce-EDA grant to develop a Town-owned parcel of land to create a number of relatively large, industrially zoned parcels to facilitate retention of existing Easton businesses needing room to expand, and attract new businesses to the community. We are currently in the process of selling those properties to privately-held businesses bringing needed new jobs to the Community. Finally, we have very recently completed the purchase of almost 200 acres of mature forested land that will forever be preserved as open space, providing a significant increase in the variety and quantity of the Town's Parks inventory.

### (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?

Since a public hearing on the application for renewal is not required, there has been no public input directly on the SC Action Plan as detailed later in this application. However, it would be misleading to say there has been no community input. First, much of what is included is a continuation of our original SC Action Plan, and that document was subject to an Easton Town Council Public Hearing. Second, and most significantly, many of the component parts of our SC Action Plan have been subject to community review and input. Just as one example, the

## Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section A

Port Street Small Area Plan is referenced extensively throughout the SC Action Plan. That Plan was produced over the course of three years and is the direct result of the collective input of over 1,000 people, an unprecedented level of input for such a Plan.

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

Finally, while a Town Council Public Hearing is not required, the renewal application was shared with our Town Council on November 6, 2023. This was a public meeting, affording the public the opportunity for the public to review and comment on the proposed application.

- (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.

One area that was highlighted in our 2019 SCPlan, where we might benefit from technical assistance concerns business improvement in a specific block of our SC Area. As that Application noted, the 300 Block of Dover Street is within our SC Area, just beyond what is generally perceived to be Downtown Easton (and as such, is a gateway to Downtown) and part of the East End and Hill neighborhoods (practically identical in location). This block experiences problems with the physical quality of the structures, stability of the businesses located there, and at least the perception of code issues (Building, Property Maintenance). Our Main Street Boundaries were expanded to include this block. We are also in the early stages of developing a Small Area Plan for that encompasses the Block and a main focus will be identifying ways in which the physical appearance of this area might be improved, ways in which existing businesses can be supported and strengthened, and opportunities for new businesses to locate here<sup>4</sup>. Any resources that the State might be able to offer to stabilize and revitalize this block would be needed and appreciated.

## **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**



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

**Accomplishment 1**

*Outcome: Stormwater quantity and quality improvements*

Projects:

*Project 1: R K & K Study*

*Project 2: Watershed Plans and Associated Projects. The Town continues to contract with consulting engineers to conduct watershed plans and propose projects to improve both water quality and quantity. Several such measures have been implemented. This involves areas both within and outside of our SC Area.*

*Project 3: Reclamation and Improve Design*

Partners:

*Chesapeake Bay Trust – provided technical assistance*

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

*Impact: Collectively, the implementation of the projects has had a significant impact on the community by improving stormwater runoff.*

**Accomplishment 2:**

*Outcome: **Revitalization of Neighborhoods***

*Project 1: Housing on the Hill*

*Project 2: Affordable Housing Board's Renovation Program*

*This is a relatively new program of Easton's Affordable Housing Board and has proven effective and popular. Homeowners may apply for a grant, no interest deferred loan or low interest loan depending on their income, through the Town of Easton Affordable Housing Program for approved renovations to improve the energy efficiency, safety, and livability of their home.*

Partners:

*Impact: Regarding the AHB's Renovation Program, homeowners are enabled to make necessary maintenance improvements, which in some cases may mean the difference of remaining in their home or being forced to sell and try to find housing they can afford in a difficult market. Housing on the Hill is a project that saves historic housing, restores and preserves it, but helps to stabilize the neighborhood by adding homeownership opportunities.*

### **Accomplishment 3:**

*Outcome: Creation of Additional Park Space*

*Projects 1: Easton Waterfront Park*

*Project 2: Easton Woodland Park*

*Project 3: Rails-to-Trails Extension*

*Partners:*

*DNR - Land & Water Conservation Fund (Waterfront Park), DNR Project Open Space (Woodland Park), MD SHA (Rail-Trail)*

*Impact: This Outcome was advanced significantly during the past five years. The long-awaited expansion of the Rail-Trail was substantially completed and the addition of more land to Easton's only publicly accessible waterfront are major success stories. Furthermore, although located beyond our SC Boundary, the addition of the Easton Woodland Park in 2023 promised to be so significant that the impact will reverberate throughout our park system, including the portions within the SC Area.*

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

*Outcome:*

*Enhance the attractiveness of Easton to younger people.*

*Narrative:*

*A common theme of this section will be that to the extent identified outcome has not been achieved, it is largely because it is (a) a significant and long-term project and/or (b) it is currently a work in progress. In the case of enhancing the attractiveness of Easton to younger people, that will likely be a theme in the next Comprehensive Plan, which the Town Planning staff and Commission are currently drafting. This outcome is expected to show up in many ways in this Plan update, touching everything to adding amenities and targeting jobs that are likely to appeal to a younger population, as well as laying out a comprehensive approach to providing more attainable housing in Easton. We have done some things, such as the expansion of our Park and Rail-Trail system that we believe supports this outcome, but clearly more is needed. The global pandemic and the continued effects of the "Great Recession" also acted as impediments to accomplishing more towards this outcome.*

## Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section C

*Outcome:*

*Establish/upgrade amenities for boaters coming to Easton Point.*

*Narrative:*

*Again, this can be viewed as a Work in Progress. Improvements have been made at Easton Point and they are consistent with the Town's SC Action Plan and our Easton Point/Port Street Small Area Plan. We just have not focused much on the boating aspect of such improvements to this point. We have instead focused primarily on expanding access to the waterfront to this point. The first project with a boating perspective should be coming relatively soon with the addition of a new boat ramp that will be wider than the existing County facility on Easton Point and will offer much-needed parking to alleviate trailer parking along Port Street. A kayak/canoe launch is also planned.*

*Outcome:*

*Improvement in Quality of Design*

*Narrative:*

*Once again, this can be considered a Work in Progress. During the current SC Plan cycle, the Town did create and adopt new Design Guidelines for the Historic District. A similar document for the non-Historic District portions of Town is planned, but has not yet been allocated funds. They will continue to be requested until the document is produced.*

## **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):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Housing on the Hill</b></li> <li>● <b>BAAM Academic Center</b></li> <li>● </li> </ul>	DHCD	\$117,904.27  \$1,000,000		Amount deferred from original award.  BAAM was two awards of \$5000,000 each
<b>Strategic Demolition Fund (SDF):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● </li> <li>● </li> </ul>	DHCD			
<b>Community Safety &amp; Enhancement Program:</b>	MDOT			
<b>Maryland Bikeways Program:</b>	MDOT			
<b>Sidewalk Retrofit Program:</b>	MDOT			
<b>Water Quality Revolving Loan Fund:</b>	MDE			

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

<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>Federal Funding for Rails-to-Trails</b>	MD SHA and Federal US DOT	\$946,896.59		
<b>MD DNR - Land and Water Conservation Fund</b>	MD DNR	\$ 395,000.00		

## 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?

One area in which we might benefit is for assistance with Planning and studies. One example is the proposed Design Guidelines for Easton. Most grants tend to favor “shovel-ready” projects and offer little or no opportunity to fund planning studies, preliminary engineering, etc., which are often critical for eventual project success and in some cases, such as the example cited above, are all that is needed.

## **SECTION C - SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ACTION PLAN**

### TOWN OF EASTON



## Environment

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

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

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Easton has a separated Storm drain and Sewer system</li> <li>The Town of Easton has completed 5 years under an MS4 permit providing education, outreach, training, and enforcement of Stormwater Management maintenance throughout Town on both Public and Private facilities.</li> <li>Easton has completed 3 Stream restorations that significantly reduce nutrient loads to the Chesapeake Bay and protect existing floodplains.</li> <li>The Town purchased roughly 180 acres of wooded forest to preserve in conservation</li> <li>Easton is a recognized Tree City USA Town for the past 8 years</li> <li>The Town of Easton has an annual budget to plant at least 150 trees each year</li> <li>The Town of Easton Partners with as many Environmental Advocacy groups as possible including Shore Rivers, Envision the Choptank, Phillips Wharf and the Center for Watershed Protection Agency.</li> <li>The Town worked with a consultant (RK&amp;K) to model the Tanyard Branch Watershed to identify possible capital projects to increase storm drain capacity and reduce flooding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Easton has areas that experience flooding and require storm drain and stormwater management improvements</li> <li>A few of the Towns sanitary sewer pump stations are located within floodplains that need to be relocated.</li> <li>The Tanyard Branch Watershed in the Town of Easton has numerous areas which routinely flood, causing us to require more strict regulatory requirements related to stormwater management for new construction.</li> <li>Easton Point in the Town of Easton received a low water quality score in the 2018 <i>NOAA Coastal Ecological Assessment to Support NOAA's Choptank River Complex Habitat Focus Area: Tred Avon River</i></li> </ul>

<u>Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures</u>	<u>Strategies and Action Items</u>	<u>Implementation Partners</u>
<p>Outcome 1: Additional Stream Restorations</p> <p>Progress Measures: Number of Streams Restored</p>	<p>Create a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a Design/Build contract with a consultant to complete the project.</p> <p>Create a prioritized inventory of streams and stream segments, based on existing areas of flooding and anticipated areas for growth, infill, and redevelopment, that would benefit from restoration.</p> <p>Pursue grant funding opportunities for stream restoration projects.</p>	<p>Center for Watershed Protection Envision the Choptank Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) Chesapeake Bay Foundation NOAA Shore Rivers</p>



## Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

<p>Outcome 2: Reduce stormwater runoff and flooding within the Tanyard Branch Watershed.</p> <p>Progress Measures: Number of projects installed or implemented</p>	<p>Work with RK&amp;K to design improvements and complete construction drawings and documents to bid stream restoration projects to construction contractors.</p> <p>Implement capital projects identified in Tanyard Branch Model</p> <p>Continue to implement and update existing stormwater management regulations</p> <p>Monitor flooding within the watershed and implement mitigation strategies.</p>	<p>Engineering Design Firm RK&amp;K Center for Watershed Protection Envision the Choptank Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) Chesapeake Bay Foundation Shore Rivers</p>
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## Economy

This section is centered on economic growth and management.

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

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of Infrastructure (Town-owned Utility Company which supplies water, sewer, electricity, cable, high-speed internet, and natural gas)</li> <li>• Tax Rates</li> <li>• Political Leadership</li> <li>• Proximity of Easton Airport</li> <li>• General “Quality of Life”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With a fairly significant amount of retail space, we are particularly concerned about the rapidly evolving nature of retail and its future prospects, even more so in the post-COVID era.</li> <li>• Real or perceived lack of attractions/jobs for “young people”</li> <li>• Housing costs and inventory issues</li> <li>• (Lack of) Tracking of economic statistics/data/measures</li> </ul>

## Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>County Seat and Regional Hub for employment, entertainment, government, health care, etc</li> <li>Tourism, particularly heritage tourism</li> <li>Nationally/internationally recognized Festivals (i.e., Waterfowl Festival, PLein-Air, Chesapeake Film Festival)</li> <li>Designations: Main Street, Arts &amp; Entertainment, Enterprise Zone, Stories of the Chesapeake, National Register of Historic Districts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Location in a region that is the last to recover from the Great Recession</li> </ul>
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Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Establish Easton as a more fully Year-Round Tourist Destination</p> <p>Progress Measures: Increased Tourism activity throughout the year, especially in the Winter “off-season”</p>	<p>Strategy A: Continue to grow and expand the Chesapeake Fire &amp; Ice festival to support the Jan - April off season, growing hospitality participation (hotel and restaurant), sponsorship (ice sculptures, entertainment, and programs), and expand the entertainment offered.</p> <p>Strategy B: Expand merchant and hospitality participation and grow partnerships will local nonprofits participate in the event, adding programing and entertainment components to the event.</p> <p>*note we have grown and expanded the event, adding a beer tent, more ice sculptures, expanded participation from restaurants with special stops (ice bar, fire drinks, and addition of tent with alcoholic beverage partners and food)</p>	<p>Easton Economic Development Corporation, Talbot County Tourism, Maryland Office of Tourism</p>
<p>Outcome 2: Develop Tracking and Reporting of pertinent Economic Development Statistics</p> <p>Progress Measures: Consistent and reliable shred and readily available economic data</p>	<p>Strategy A: Easton EDC and TOE P&amp;Z have been tasked with data collection via surveys and consultants. Next steps are to develop greater partnership with Talbot County Econ Dev and Tourism to share data.</p> <p>Strategy B: Housing and retail/entertainment attraction and retention have been indicated as key measures to track. Consultant has been engaged, launched a Retail Assessment Survey and stakeholder interviews executed, to develop a plan for retail attraction for both downtown Easton and the great Easton</p>	<p>Various State and Federal Economic Development-related agencies. Easton Economic Development Corporation, Talbot County Office of Economic Development</p>

## Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

	<p>commercial districts. Housing data has been collected as part of this process to be shared with the Town created Housing Taskforce made up of Town and County elected officials, Easton EDC, community representatives from nonprofits, and general community members. Information and outcomes will be shared with entities at both Town and County.</p> <p>Easton EDC has developed a Strategic Plan for the execution of economic and community projects.</p>	
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# Transportation

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

Strengths, weaknesses and outcomes can focus on: access to transit corridors; pedestrian safety and accessibility; sidewalks; alternative modes of transportation, such as bikeways and trails; public transit, such as bus and rail; carpooling; proximity to transportation centers; parking; and road conditions.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adequate public parking Downtown within sustainable community boundary.</li> <li>Robust (but incomplete) Sidewalk system</li> <li>Multi-modal trail (but incomplete) system</li> <li>Delmarva Community public transportation pickup location</li> <li>Choptank Hub Group within Easton</li> <li>Maryland's second busiest airport is within Easton</li> <li>Easton Point Marina may see water transportation via tourist and boating</li> <li>Public support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Counter perceptions that there is too little parking Downtown.</li> <li>Staffing and Asset Management Tracking concerns given the scope/scale of likely future projects</li> <li>Bicycle lanes and paths could be more continuous and accessible throughout Town.</li> <li>Highway User Revenue Fund</li> <li>Speed Limits are a topic for discussion</li> <li>Pedestrian access to cross US-50 at Dover/Goldsborough should be improved</li> <li>Beach traffic - cross US-50</li> <li>Sidewalks and sidewalk repair has room for improvement</li> <li>The topic of electric vehicles on the transportation spectrum</li> </ul>

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Add sidewalk to streets that currently do not have sidewalk to increase/improve connectivity throughout Town and improve safety</p> <p>Progress Measures: Lineal Feet of Sidewalks Added</p>	<p>Identify and Prioritize locations to construct sidewalks.</p> <p>Create construction cost estimates for each location.</p> <p>Determine if funds can come from the Town Budget or if grant funding should be pursued.</p>	<p>Design Consultants</p> <p>SHA</p>

## Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

Outcome 2: Add multi-modal trails to increase/improve connectivity throughout Town and improve safety  Progress Measures: Lineal Feet of Trails Created	Identify and Prioritize locations to construct sidewalks. Create construction cost estimates for each location. Continue to work with SHA to secure grant funding for new trails	SHA Talbot Thrive Design Consultants
Outcome 3: Create bicycle maps that show streets with Share the Road, Dedicated bicycle lanes, and multi-modal trails  Progress Measures: New/Updated Maps	Update the Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan as part of the Comprehensive Plan Update. Publish printed and digital Easton bicycling maps and distribute to local businesses, Tourism Information Centers, etc.	SHA Talbot Thrive Design Consultants
Outcome 4: Review/Revise Speed Limits throughout Town  Progress Measures: Reviewed and Potentially Revised Speed Limits	Coordinate with Law Enforcement to identify areas potentially in need of speed limit revisions. Conduct all necessary studies to determine if adjustments are needed. Follow appropriate procedure to officially change any such limits. Sufficiently notify the public of changes and post new signs.	SHA FHA Talbot Thrive Design Consultants State and Local Law Enforcement

## 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>Town utilizing grant funding to create affordable housing opportunities</li> <li>The Town continues to work with Easton Housing Authority to Assist in its mission of providing low-and moderate-income rental housing</li> <li>The Town continues to work with Habitat for Humanity to provide homes for sale to low-and-moderate income families</li> <li>The Town has an Affordable Housing Renovation program which provides financial assistance for low to moderate income families to improve their homes for energy efficiency, safety, livability, and an opportunity to remain in their home.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuing low inventory of for sale homes priced to be available to low-and moderate-income families</li> <li>Insufficient inventory of rental homes and apartments available to low-and moderate-income families</li> <li>Easton Affordable Housing Program home renovation program project requires much effort and time to complete</li> <li>Total renovation projects of homes for resale require extensive time and expense to complete</li> </ul>

## Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Town has a down payment assistance program to assist Town employees, Town police, Easton Utilities employees and Easton Volunteer Fire Department volunteers in good standing to purchase a home in Easton</li> <li>• The Town has a strong Code Enforcement division whose goal is to stop degradation of properties</li> <li>• Completed a total renovation of four homes in the Hill neighborhood with successful sale to moderate income families</li> <li>• Two additional homes are proceeding through total renovation and will be sold to moderate income families</li> <li>• Completed a total of 32 home renovations since inception of the program, 17 since 2019</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited staff available for property maintenance enforcement of both homeowner and rental properties</li> <li>• Limited available land within the Town boundary for new development</li> <li>• Challenge with low to moderate income homeowners for renovation projects within the historic district for economical improvements</li> </ul>
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Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Develop Inclusionary/Density Bonus legislation related to Developers</p> <p>Progress Measures: Increased affordable/workforce housing for homeowners and renters</p>	<p>Strategy A: Develop Legislation acceptable to the Planning Commission and Town Council</p> <p>Strategy B: Utilize historic data from other municipal areas with similar programs.</p> <p>Strategy C: Utilize data from local focus groups involved in housing</p>	<p>Easton Affordable Housing Board Town Planning and Zoning Department</p>
<p>Outcome 2: Develop a Landlord Renovation Program</p> <p>Progress Measures: Improve weatherization, safety, and livability for single family rental homes that fit affordable/workforce housing for low-and moderate-income families</p>	<p>Strategy A: Develop a program for landlords with a financial need to improve their rental single-family homes</p> <p>Strategy B: Develop a program to assess financial need and a landlord agreement to maintain the individual single-family rental home as affordable</p>	<p>Easton Affordable Housing Board</p>

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	based on annual HUD Fair Market Rent Documentation and a=maintained for a set number of future years	
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Community Health and Quality of Life

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

This category includes projects focusing on (but not limited to): improvement of public health including improving community design to promote healthy behaviors such as walking and strengthening community support and connectedness through health and wellness programs and facilities that create inclusive communities. These projects may include built environment, indoor spaces, outdoor environments such as increasing community gardens and access to services including educational facilities and programs; health and wellness facilities and programs that serve multi-generations; senior facilities and programs; youth facilities and programs; facilities and programs for the disabled; civic amenities, access to quality food options; collaborations with faith-based organizations; arts and entertainment education; and homelessness prevention, services, 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>● Generally walkable community</li><li>● Recently expanded Rail-Trail</li><li>● More than a dozen public p[arks of various sizes and with a variety of amenities</li><li>● A well-used Senior Center</li><li>● Multiple Sports Fields and an expanding community center with indoor ice skating/hockey and curling</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Interruptions on je pedestrian (sidewalk) system</li><li>● Poor bicycling circulation in and near Downtown</li><li>● A lack of non-sports centric social activity centers and businesses for local youths</li><li>● Demand for recreational sports facilities exceeds supply</li><li>● Lack of space for informal, non-organized sports activity</li><li>● Lack of a Public Waterfront Area</li></ul>

## Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple private gyms and exercise businesses as well as two non-profit YMCA locations</li> <li>• An established Arts &amp; Entertainment District</li> <li>• Numerous organizations dedicated to various aspects of the Arts</li> <li>• Large and diverse collection of Houses of Worship</li> <li>• Presence of a Homeless Shelter and allied or related services in Downtown Easton</li> <li>• Access to Broadband</li> <li>• Multi-cultural Center</li> <li>• Quality of Life improvements resulting from recent Bonds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to groceries in/around Downtwon</li> <li>• Families in need of services (such as Free MEals for School-Aged Children)</li> </ul>
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Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Develop an understanding of the extent of need for parks of all types</p> <p>Progress Measures: Meet or exceed recommended per capita measures for all parks and recreation types</p>	<p>Strategy A: Coordinate between Town and County Parks and Recreation Departments as well as organized sports leagues to gain broader understanding of the demand for formal/organized sports facilities (by sport)</p> <p>Strategy B: Survey the public to ascertain the demand for non-organized sports and recreational facilities or amenities</p>	<p>Talbot County Recreation and Parks; County Sports Leagues Representatives</p>
<p>Outcome 2: Expand the impact of the Arts in Easton</p> <p>Progress Measures: An increase in arts and public art throughout Easton</p>	<p>Strategy A: Explore incentives to compliment existing benefits of the arts &amp; Entertainment District</p> <p>Strategy B: Produce a Public Arts Master Plan</p>	<p>State Arts Council</p>

## Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

<p>Outcome 3: Continue to develop/expand the Waterfront Park</p> <p>Progress Measure: Increased acreage and amenities in our Waterfront Park</p>	<p>Strategy A: Incentivize Annexation of properties on Easton Point so as to facilitate the provision of public amenities (particularly the waterfront promenade)</p> <p>Strategy B: Obtain additional grant funding for land acquisition and/or park improvements</p>	MD DNR
<p>Outcome 4: Affordable/Attainable Housing more widely available</p> <p>Progress Measure: Number of affordable/attainable housing units on the market</p>	<p>Strategy A: Adopt a form of Inclusionary Zoning</p> <p>Strategy B: Continue to promote the creation of Missing Middle Housing Types</p>	
<p>Outcome 5: Add attractions for young adults</p> <p>Progress Measure: Increased number of young adults living in and visiting Easton</p>	<p>Strategy A: Survey this demographic to determine what attractions they would like to see in Easton</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. The latest such endeavors include the Town’s Comprehensive Plan (currently in the Drafting stage, with an anticipated adoption late 2024/early 2025), A Small Area Plan for the East End Neighborhood and Dover Street Corridor, and the development of comprehensive housing policies/strategies to address the housing crisis in Easton.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strong land use policies firmly rooted in Smart Growth Principles as specified in the Town’s Comprehensive Plan and supported by an ongoing series of Small Area Plans</li><li>• Support from, and coordination with, Talbot County concerning many of these principles</li><li>• Elected and appointed officials who generally support forward-thinking, sustainable growth and economic development</li><li>• Willingness to try innovative land use approaches to achieve growth and development objectives</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Staff capacity to simultaneously manage multiple long-range planning processes as well as conduct development review and daily administrative activities</li><li>• A general lack of development activity over the last decade+ makes it difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of measures already adopted and intended to improve the quality of development in Easton.</li><li>• General support for improvement in the quality of project design not supported by outdated/ineffective Design Guidelines (outside of the Historic District)</li><li>• On occasion, there continues to remain an element of the greater community that generally opposes most growth and who is well-organized and twists Smart Growth to mean “no growth.”</li></ul>

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
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## Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

<p>Outcome 1: Continued improvement of the quality of design of projects in Easton</p> <p>Progress Measures: A built-environment that is judged to be of a higher standard or quality</p>	<p>Strategy A: Revise and adopt new and effective Design Guidelines for properties outside the Historic District</p> <p>Strategy B: Continue to add and refine standards that improve design to Town Codes and regulations, such as the Zoning Code and Subdivision Regulations</p> <p>Strategy C: Continue investment in improvements/enhancements to the public realm</p>	<p>MDP/DHCD for technical assistance and/or funding. Private Consultants</p>
<p>Outcome 2: Establish Dover Road as an inviting and vibrant corridor that supports innovative and resilient small businesses</p> <p>Progress Measure: Increased retail sales, new business openings</p>	<p>Strategy A: Complete and adopt a new Small Area Plan for the East End Neighborhood/Dover Street Corridor</p> <p>Strategy B: Assist Private sector business-owners in locating and obtaining State/Federal grant assistance for infill and redevelopment projects in the area</p> <p>Strategy C: Continue investment in improvements/enhancements to the public realm and in infrastructure that makes the Area more attractive to prospective investors/developers</p>	<p>MDP/DHCD for technical assistance and/or funding</p> <p>Any other State or Federal agency with grant funding available to assist with these strategies</p>
<p>Outcome 3: More widespread utilization of the Town's new Mixed Use Waterfront Zoning District (MXW)</p> <p>Progress Measure: Parcels developed/redeveloped on Easton Point and Port Street</p>	<p>Strategy 1: Continuously evaluate the effectiveness of the MXW Zoning in terms of (a) providing developers the incentive to use, and (b) creating the built environment that the Town desires</p> <p>Strategy 2: Promote the existence of this tool and the flexibility it provides</p>	

**Project Pictures:**







*Easton Point Park*



*Housing on the Hill*



Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section C



Housing on The Hill

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section C



Housing on the Hill - in Progress



