

CHECKLIST AND TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPLICANT: Carroll County Commissioners

NAME OF SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY: Finksburg

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:

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- ☒ **Section F – Additional Files:** The following contents should be included.....Attached
 - 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

SGSC Approved - 6.24

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

Name of Sustainable Community: Finksburg		
Name of Applicant: Carroll County Commissioners		
Applicant's Federal Identification Number: 52-6000910		
Applicant's Street Address: 225 N. Center Street		
City: Westminster	County: Carroll	State: MD Zip Code: 21157
Phone Number: 410-386-5145	Fax Number: n/a	Web Address: https://www.carrollcountymd.gov/

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(1) Sustainable Community Boundary and Description

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

No. The existing Sustainable Community boundary remains the target for revitalization efforts in Finksburg.

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

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

- (3) Approximate number of acres of entire SC Area: 363 Acres

(4) Existing federal, state or local designations:

- ☐ Main Street ☐ Maple Street
☐ National Register Historic District ☐ Local Historic District ☐ Arts & Entertainment District
☐ State Enterprise Zone Special Taxing District ☐ BRAC ☐ State Designated TOD
☒ Other(s): Maryland Heritage Area – Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area, National Heritage Area – Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area, Priority Funding Area, Designated Growth Area, MHT’s Inventory of Historic Places

(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?

We have a limited amount of data for this area. The Finksburg Corridor/PFA is a smaller area and greatly differs from the area covered by ACS and the Census. We do have the following information:

Population: 316, down from 383 in 2018
Business vacancy rate: 5.4%, up from 4.8% in 2018
Rental Housing Rate: 29%, down from 34% in 2018
Average age of residential structures: 79 years, up from 72 years in 2018
Average age of commercial structures: 53 years, up from 43 years in 2018

(2) 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?

One big difference in the organizational structure has been a turnover in staff. The Comprehensive Planning staff members tasked with the existing Sustainable Community application are no longer employed with Carroll County, and the current Comprehensive Planning staff members tasked with leading renewing the application, Clare Stewart, Planner II, and Tiffany Fossett, Planner I, were not part of the previous application process. This makes it difficult for us to compare the workgroups and/or assess the changes.

The leaders of this SC workgroup have been Bureau of Comprehensive Planning staff and the Finksburg Planning and Citizens’ Council Inc (FPACC). FPACC is a well-established community organization made up of Finksburg residents and business owners. Staff and FPACC reviewed the existing action plan during monthly meetings typically held in person at the Finksburg Public Library at 6:30 PM on the second Wednesday of every month. This included meetings in May, June, August, and September.

After initial comments were received by FPACC, Comprehensive Planning staff sought input from staff of other Carroll County departments named as implementation partners in the existing action

plan. From October through November, Comprehensive Planning staff discussed the sections of the action plan relevant to them with Carroll County staff from the Sheriff's Department, GIS, Bureau of Resource Management, Economic Development, Department of Health, Bureau of Engineering, Department of Recreation and Parks, and Carroll County Public Libraries. Comments received were integrated into the draft of the proposed action plan.

The draft proposed SC action plan was reviewed and open for comment by FPACC January through February by a shared file and posted to the FPACC Facebook page for public comment and review.

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

The biggest challenge has been not having access to staff who previously worked on the application. Tiffany and Clare have gone through files and documents created by previous staff to interpret intentions and processes from five years ago. It has been resource intensive trying to piece together. However, this has also been a strength. Although piecing things together has been difficult and time consuming, having new insights and assessing the goals from new angles in comparison has led us to discover new paths forward we hope will benefit the community, partners, and staff going forward.

- (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 Finksburg Planning and Citizens' Council Inc (FPACC) has been crucial in reviewing and providing input on both the existing and the proposed Finksburg Sustainable Community action plans. FPACC members are a combination of Finksburg residents and business owners who meet monthly, help implement the action plan and with community engagement, and hold quarterly public meetings on topics of interest for the community. In addition to providing review and input to the action plan during the monthly meetings, FPACC has also posted the proposed plan to the FPACC Facebook page for a 30 day review and comment period.

Much of the proposed action plan is based on the existing action plan and has been updated with the lessons learned over the last five years of implementation. The Transportation Master Plan approved by the Carroll County Planning Commission is the only newly approved plan since the approval of the existing action plan. The proposed Finksburg Sustainable Communities Action Plan is consistent with all applicable plans, including the 2013 Finksburg Corridor Plan, the 2014 Carroll County Master Plan as Amended 2019, the 2023 Carroll County Water & Sewer Master Plan, and the 2019 Bicycle-Pedestrian Master Plan.

- (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.

We do not have an identified area of need for technical assistance at this time.

SECTION B - SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ACTION PLAN

[Finksburg Sustainable Community]

Environment

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

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

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Baltimore City-owned property surrounds the east side of the corridor and provides a buffer to the Liberty Reservoir. ● Proximity to the reservoir limits growth potential – there are 29.1 acres of potential new residential development and 65.7 acres of potential new commercial and industrial development. ● Development and redevelopment potential offers the opportunity for energy efficiency. ● Reservoir Watershed Management Agreement – signatory of a multi-jurisdictional agreement to implement action strategies to protect the reservoir. As a result of the Agreement, a Technical Group was formed and meets monthly to ensure growth and development are consistent with the Agreement. ● Access to a new, state-of-the-art, stormwater management facility just outside the Sustainable Community. ● A 2017 Finksburg Environmental Health Sanitary Survey gives insight into how public health and economic development are impacted by existing and future septic conditions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No public water and sewer; the corridor is dominated by older properties on small lots – many of which do not have room for a replacement septic system. There are development and redevelopment constraints for commercial and residential. ● No parks, trails, or recreational spaces.

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
Outcome 1: Educate residents, businesses, and property owners and incentivize solutions, when possible, about environmental concerns and topics of interest.	<p>Strategy A: Promote private septic system proper care and maintenance to extend the life of the system.</p> <p>Strategy B: Promote planting and care of native species for the purpose of environmental conservation and beautification.</p>	Carroll County Dept. of Planning & Land Management, Public Works, Finksburg Planning & Citizens' Council, Inc., Finksburg Public Library, Maryland Dept. of Housing & Community Development,

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Progress Measure: Track events, programs, and incentives in and near the sustainable community.	Strategy C: Promote energy efficiency and saving best practices among existing infrastructure, new development, and redevelopment to protect the community's natural resources.	Natural Resources, Health, Environment
<p>Outcome 2: Advance public and environmental health by understanding the need and opportunities for a public sewer system.</p> <p>Progress Measures: A sanitary sewer survey, and/or feasibility study.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Monitor private septic system existing conditions, permits, upgrades, etc.</p> <p>Strategy B: Complete a second sanitary sewer survey to reassess conditions of septic systems, and to determine the need for a public septic system based on public health and economic development/revitalization.</p> <p>Strategy C: Complete a feasibility study to determine opportunities for a public sewer system including demand, type, cost, timeframe, etc.</p>	<p>Carroll County Dept. of Planning & Land Management, Public Works, Economic Development, Finksburg Planning & Citizens' Council, Inc., Maryland Dept. of Health, Environment</p>

Economy

This section is centered on economic growth and management.

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

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redevelopment potential is high as Finksburg serves as the most traveled gateway into Carroll County. • The Gateway Renovation Tax Credit (GRTC) acts as a catalyst to encourage eligible property owners to visually enhance their properties. • Dual access to commercial properties from both MD 140 and Old Westminster Pike- allows for better circulation within the Corridor if patrons of businesses have multiple options for access. • High retention of businesses; there is a 5.4% commercial and industrial vacancy, up .6% from 2019. • Encouraging redevelopment as a way to promote new small-scale businesses, offices, and retail activity within the corridor is a goal of the Finksburg Corridor Plan (2013). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Properties need facade improvements or redevelopment. • Major highways vastly limit pedestrian and bicycle customers; building functionality is prioritized over aesthetics. • Minimal destinations for dining, shopping, services, or attractions within the Corridor. • No public water and sewer which hinders development and redevelopment. A result of this is vacancies and failing systems on commercial properties. • Proximity to the reservoir limits growth potential – there are 65.7 acres of potential new commercial and industrial development.

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Improve the appearance of businesses and the corridor.</p> <p>Progress Measures: An increase in the number of businesses utilizing the FIP and GRTC.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Promote the Finksburg Facade Improvement Program (FIP).</p> <p>Strategy B: Promote the Gateway Renovation Tax Credit (GRTC).</p>	<p>Carroll County Dept. of Planning & Land Management, Economic Development, Finksburg Planning & Citizens' Council, Inc., Chamber of Commerce, Maryland Dept. of Housing & Community Development</p>

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<p>Outcome 2: Attract and retain businesses.</p> <p>Progress Measures: A decrease in the vacancy rate.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Promote businesses by strengthening their online and community presence.</p> <p>Strategy B: Engage businesses in roundtable and networking forums.</p> <p>Strategy C: Increase vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle access to businesses.</p> <p>Strategy D: Connect businesses with qualified workers to fill their training and hiring needs.</p>	<p>Carroll County Dept. of Planning & Land Management, Public Works, Economic Development, Finksburg Planning & Citizens' Council, Inc., Career & Technology Center, Public Schools, Carroll Community College</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 the following: 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"> Planned Neighborhood Connection <i>Dede Road Extended</i> will improve traffic circulation within the Corridor and is identified as a High Priority project in the County's Transportation Master Plan (2023). Maryland State Highway Project <i>MD 140 from the Baltimore County line to west of MD 91</i> will maintain the functionality of the Corridor. The project is identified in the Highway Needs Inventory as a <u>divided highway reconstruct, including access controls and an interchange</u> at MD 91, and is identified in the FY24 MDOT CTP Priority Letter. Also identified in the priority letter is the "jughandle" type design for westbound traffic at the intersection of MD 140 and MD 91. A 2009 MDOT SHA Access Management (AM) Plan of MD 140 from Leidy Road to I-795 in Baltimore County recommends the public purchase of access control rights and lays out a detailed implementation plan. Dual access to commercial properties from both MD 140 and Old Westminster Pike- allows for better circulation within the Corridor if patrons of businesses have multiple options for access. Recent curb and sidewalk enhancement by SHA improved drainage and sidewalk along a one-mile stretch of the Corridor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most roads within the Corridor are state-owned; local government has little control over projects along these roads. MD 140 is a barrier to multi-modal connectivity; its speeds and volume do not allow for a safe bicycle or pedestrian network within most of the Corridor. Housing is spread throughout the Corridor; pedestrian circulation between neighborhoods would be difficult without having to cross MD 140. The MD 140/91 intersection has safety and congestion-related issues. Old Westminster Pike is underutilized and provides the opportunity for economic and social revitalization as a commercial and community activity center servicing the area's residential population and the future commercial needs of the neighborhood. Limited inter-parcel connectivity encourages vehicles to use MD 140 to travel between businesses.

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Improve non-motorized access, circulation, and safety within the Corridor.</p> <p>Progress Measures: Any study, design, right-of-way acquisition, and infrastructure improvement for non-motorized travel.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Complete a bicycle and pedestrian feasibility study to determine opportunities to create linkages where the need supports such connectivity.</p> <p>Strategy B: Advance the design, right-of-way acquisition, and construction of non-motorized infrastructure through the use of the</p>	<p>Carroll County Dept. of Planning & Land Management, Public Works, Recreation & Parks, Maryland Dept. of Transportation, Baltimore Metropolitan Council</p>

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	County's CIP, state funding, grants, and other financing tools, the development review process, and partnerships with the state, BMC, landowners, land developers, and other public-private partnerships.	
<p>Outcome 2: Improve vehicle access, circulation, and safety within the Corridor.</p> <p>Progress Measures: Any study, design, right-of-way acquisition, and infrastructure improvement for vehicular travel.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Continue to prioritize and advance the Maryland State Highway Project <i>MD 140 from the Baltimore County line to west of MD 91</i>, including intersection improvements, through the submission of the County's annual CTP Priority Letter.</p> <p>Strategy B: Advance the design, right-of-way acquisition, and construction of <i>Dede Road Extended</i> through the use of the County's CIP, state funding, and other financing tools, the development review process, and partnerships with the state, BMC, landowners, land developers, and other public-private partnerships.</p> <p>Strategy C: Coordinate with MDOT SHA to promote AM best practices along MD 140 by determining whether the 2009 AM Plan needs updating. If no update is needed, adhere to implementation strategies in the 2009 AM Plan. Inter-parcel connectivity should be promoted when AM is not achievable by service roads.</p>	<p>Carroll County Dept. of Planning & Land Management, Public Works, Maryland Dept. of Transportation, Baltimore Metropolitan Council</p>

Housing

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

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

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversity of housing opportunities are provided within the Corridor. Small close lots provide opportunities for pedestrian connectivity amongst neighbors creating a neighborhood feel. Some homeowners have made recent improvements to home exteriors. A goal of the Finksburg Corridor Plan (2013) is to provide opportunities for residential uses along secondary roadways that are compatible in design and density with the historic structures and the existing community character. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With a mean lot size of 16,922± square feet, many homes are on small lots which is a challenge with a septic system. Some of the housing stock is of poor quality and in poor condition. Limited to no pedestrian connectivity between houses or houses and businesses. Older housing stock, many over 50 years old, would benefit from facade improvement grants.

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Encourage improvements to the aesthetics of homes.</p> <p>Progress Measures: The number of identified needs has been reduced.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Take an inventory of existing homes and conditions to determine specific needs.</p> <p>Strategy B: Encourage homeowners to utilize incentives and resources available for financial assistance.</p>	<p>Carroll County Dept. of Planning & Land Management, Public Works, Citizen Services, Finksburg Planning & Citizens' Council, Inc., Maryland Dept. of Housing & Community Development</p>
<p>Outcome 2: Provide and connect homeowners and tenants with programs, incentives, etc. based on the identified needs.</p> <p>Progress Measures: A survey and responses, number of homeowners and tenants taking advantage of newly created and existing programs, and other resources.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Survey existing homeowners and tenants to determine specific needs.</p> <p>Strategy B: Create and implement programs based on the identified needs.</p> <p>Strategy C: Encourage homeowners to utilize incentives and resources available for financial assistance.</p>	<p>Carroll County Dept. of Planning & Land Management, Public Works, Citizen Services, Finksburg Planning & Citizens' Council, Inc., Maryland Dept. of Housing & Community Development, Planning, Health, Environment</p>

Community Health and Quality of Life

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

This category includes projects focusing on (but not limited to): the 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 environments, indoor spaces, and 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"> • Four shopping centers are located within the SC. • A United States Post Office branch location within the SC. • A new, state-of-the-art library is less than two miles from the SC. • Three faith-based organizations are within or just outside the SC. • A handful of privately owned recreational opportunities, including the Roaring Run Lions Club Community Park just outside the SC. • Proximity to the Liberty Reservoir; natural landscapes promote physical and mental well-being. • High-speed internet access. • Twenty-six sites within the corridor have been listed on the Maryland Inventory of Historic Places providing an opportunity for tourism. • Low property and violent crime rate compared to the state (as of 2021, the crime rate is 7 per 1,000 residents in the greater Finksburg area compared to 20 per 1,000 residents in Maryland, according to FBI data from neighborhoodscout.com). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The transportation network could provide safer measures for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists. • No community center and a lack of civic amenities, lack of public spaces, and gathering spots. • Community design does not promote the improvement of public health. • Community offers very limited medical, retail, dining, service, arts and entertainment, cultural and education options and/or amenities.

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
Outcome 1: Foster a stronger sense of community.	Strategy A: Identify and create usable, inclusive, and friendly public spaces and gathering spots, and a center for the community.	Carroll County Dept. of Planning & Land Management, Public Works, Economic Development, Finksburg

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<p>Progress Measures: An increase in public spaces, gathering spots, a community center, and community events and a community sign.</p>	<p>Strategy B: Collaborate with local businesses and organizations to sponsor or support community events, circulate information, etc.</p> <p>Strategy C: Identify a location for and construct a community sign to create a sense of place.</p>	<p>Planning & Citizens' Council, Inc., Finksburg Public Library, Maryland Dept. of Housing & Community Development,</p>
<p>Outcome 2: Attract, retain, and preserve community assets. A community asset can include, but is not limited to a park, library, historic property, business, natural landscape, etc.</p> <p>Progress Measures: The number of new, retained, and preserved community assets.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Promote community assets by strengthening their online and community presence.</p> <p>Strategy B: Involve residents, businesses, and property owners in decision-making processes related to community assets. Seek their input, ideas, and feedback to ensure that their needs and preferences are considered.</p> <p>Strategy C: Foster partnerships with local businesses, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies to share the responsibility and resources needed for asset retention.</p> <p>Stagey D: Offer incentives for businesses or individuals to invest in the community and attract developers and entrepreneurs interested in contributing to the community's growth.</p>	<p>Carroll County Dept. of Planning & Land Management, Economic Development, Finksburg Planning & Citizens' Council, Inc. Finksburg Public Library, Maryland Dept. of Planning</p>

Local Planning and Staffing Capacity

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

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

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No municipal government: Finksburg is governed under Carroll County. Finksburg Planning & Citizens' Council Inc. (FPACC) meets monthly and is very active in the community. Two County Comprehensive Planning staff are responsible for the SC and liaison to FPACC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No municipal government: Finksburg is governed under Carroll County. 2013 Finksburg Corridor Plan is due for an update. 2013 Finksburg Design Guidelines are not codified. Not enough properties with historical integrity to constitute a historic district. Lack of public spaces and gathering spots. Too many billboards cause visual pollution.

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Form an inter-agency County team devoted to the implementation of this action plan.</p> <p>Progress Measures: The formation of and participation in an action plan team.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Develop a team of implementation partners and identify roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>Strategy B: Keep implementation partners updated and engaged.</p>	<p>Carroll County Dept. of Planning & Land Management, Public Works, Economic Development, Citizen Services, Recreation & Parks</p>
<p>Outcome 2: Update, and in the meantime continue to implement the 2013 Finksburg Corridor Plan.</p> <p>Progress Measures: The number of Corridor Plan items that are implemented.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Transform the Corridor Plan into a piece that is more digestible and easier to envision by elected officials, the community, and ...</p> <p>Strategy B: Develop County code changes that will facilitate the goals and recommendations of the Corridor Plan.</p> <p>Strategy C: Update the Finksburg Corridor Plan as part of, or following, the County Master Plan update.</p> <p>Strategy D: Create a more attractive corridor.</p>	<p>Carroll County Dept. of Planning & Land Management, Economic Development, Finksburg Planning & Citizens' Council, Inc., Maryland Dept. of Planning</p>

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	<p>Strategy E: Create a sense of place in the community.</p> <p>Strategy F: Incentivize streetscaping and landscaping.</p> <p>Strategy G: Inventory and explore ways to enhance the protection of historic resources and determine eligibility for individual property listings on the National Register of Historic Places.</p> <p>Strategy H: Maintain viewsheds and the visual connection to forests and open space.</p>	
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A full list of Implementation Partners includes:

Carroll Community College

Carroll County Career & Technology Center

Carroll County Chamber of Commerce

Carroll County Department of

- Citizen Services
- Economic Development
- Planning & Land Management
- Public Works
- Recreation & Parks

Carroll County Public Schools

Finksburg Planning & Citizens' Council, Inc.

Finksburg Public Library

Maryland Department of

- Housing & Community Development
- Natural Resources
- Planning
- Health
- Environment
- Transportation

SECTION C - SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY RENEWAL

REPORT

PART I: QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT

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

Accomplishment 1

Outcome 1 under Quality of Life: Create a stronger sense of community within the Corridor.

Project A: Finksburg Sustainable Community Logo – the creation of a logo to assist with placemaking and creating an identify for the Finksburg Corridor. The logo was intended for use in future marketing efforts. July-September 2019.

Project B: Finksburg Sustainable Community Webpage – the creation of a webpage that highlights the Sustainable Communities Designation, the Finksburg Sustainable Community Designation, County and State Financing Incentives, and programs specific to Finksburg residence, property, and business owners. The webpage acts as a one-stop site for all things related to the Finksburg Sustainable Community. July-August 2019, and updating as needed.

Project C: Finksburg Planning & Citizens' Council (FPACC) Website – FPACC Board Members are updating their website to make it more attractive and user friendly. The update will include a page specific to the Finksburg Corridor with a focus on promoting businesses and community assets. October 2023-Ongoing.

Project D: Finksburg Community Sign – the design and construction of a “Welcome to Finksburg” sign to provide community members and thru travelers with a sense of place. Concept level designs were prepared by a local designer/marketing agency. County staff and FPACC Board Members worked, and continue to work with MDOT SHA, private property owners, and other county agencies to find a location to construct the sign. November 2019-Ongoing.

Partners: Carroll County Planning & Land Management, Economic Development, Permits & Inspections, Finksburg Planning & Citizens' Council, Maryland State Highway Administration, Kohn Creative | Full-Service Design & Marketing Agency, private property owners.

Impact: The implementation of projects has a significant impact on creating a sense of place for residents, property, and business owners in Finksburg and for those who travel the Corridor. Measurable impacts include marketing/branding material (logo, webpage, updates website) and community sign designs.

Accomplishment 2:

Outcome 1 under Housing: Encourage home improvement upgrades among homeowners.

Project A: Housing Inventory Survey – the creation of a survey to inventory existing housing to identify programs that may benefit residents and assist with funding home improvements and/or home ownership within the Finksburg Sustainable Community. The survey was sent to all residential property owner and premise addresses

within the Sustainable Community. Respondents are asked to provide information about the household and the house and provide their thoughts on the house. August 2023-December 2023.

Project B: Finksburg Sustainable Community Financing Incentives Webpage – the creation of a webpage that educates homeowners on County and State incentives and resources available for financial assistance, such as Maryland Mortgage, Home Repair and Improvements, and Energy Efficiency. July-August 2019, and updating as needed.

Partners: Carroll County Planning & Land Management, Finksburg Planning & Citizens' Council, Maryland Housing & Community Development

Impact: The implementation of projects has an impact on encouraging home improvement upgrades among homeowners to create a higher quality housing stock in the Sustainable Community. Measurable impacts include survey responses and a webpage.

Accomplishment 3:

Outcome 2 under Local Planning and Land Use: Continue to implement the Finksburg Corridor Plan.

Project A: Finksburg Facade Improvement Program (FIP) – the creation of a FIP to incentives commercial and industrial property owners to improve the appearance of building facades and sign. Landscaping is along the Corridor is also incentive through the program. August 2020-Ongoing.

Project B: Promotion of the Gateway Renovation Tax Credit (GRTC) Program – the county GRTC Program is promoted on the Finksburg Sustainable Community webpage and at all community events. The program is also incentivized though the creation of the FIP as most FIP eligible applicants are also eligible for the GRTC. July 2019-Ongoing.

Partners: Carroll County Planning & Land Management, Economic Development, Permits & Inspections, Finksburg Planning & Citizens' Council, Maryland Housing & Community Development, Dean Robert Camlin & Associates | Architect, private property owners.

Impact: The implementation of projects has a significant impact on enhancing the attractiveness of the Corridor. Measurable impacts include the dollars invested in enhancing the appearance of businesses along the Corridor.

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.

Non-Accomplishment 1:

Outcome 1 under Transportation: Improve pedestrian access, circulation, and safety with the Corridor.

Narrative: Staff realizes there is an important strategy that was omitted from the current Action Plan – a bicycle and pedestrian feasibility study. The current landscape of Finksburg, an almost completely built out corridor with a posted 50 mph speed limit, is not pedestrian or bicycle friendly. It's been determined in the 2013 Finksburg Corridor Plan that pedestrian and bicycle travel should be directed away from MD 140 to the neighborhood roads. However, that cannot be accomplished without determining the best locations for this infrastructure that will promote safety and circulation to businesses and residences. The updated Action Plan that was submitted with the designation renewal includes the strategy to complete a bicycle and pedestrian feasibility study to determine opportunities to create linkages where the need supports such connectivity.

In March 2024 Carroll County was awarded \$80,000 through the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board's (BRTB) Transportation & Land Use Connection Grant Program to fully fund the Finksburg Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Feasibility Study.

The study aims to assess the feasibility of implementing bicycle and pedestrian network in Finksburg, focusing on identifying optimal locations for such infrastructure. It encompasses the entire Finksburg Sustainable Community (SC), leveraging its mix of residential and commercial uses. As Finksburg is an area slated for redevelopment, this project strategically positions the County to advocate for infrastructure design and construction during the development review process, as well as to secure grant funding through initiatives like the Sustainable Communities Program.

Aligned with the recommendations outlined in the Finksburg Corridor Plan, the study prioritizes enhancing bicycle and pedestrian circulation between land uses and neighborhoods. Currently, Finksburg lacks substantial bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, aside from a short segment of sidewalk along MD 140. The Corridor Plan and study underscores the necessity of pinpointing suitable locations for infrastructure, especially considering the presence of two high-speed, heavily trafficked state highways intersecting the area.

Success of this project hinges on prioritizing safety throughout the planning phase and devising routes that offer a comfortable experience for both drivers and non-motorized travelers. Seeing as the area has little to no existing infrastructure, the study will utilize a clean slate which enhances the opportunity for creativity. Given the limited existing infrastructure, the study presents an opportunity for innovative solutions tailored to the community's needs.

Smaller efforts have also been made on this front; a 2019 letter from the County to MDOT SHA opposes a bike lane with the proposed jug handle design at the intersection of MD 91 and MD 140. The letter acknowledges that "Pedestrian and bicycle travel should be directed away from MD 140 and MD 91 to promote safety and preserve their function as arterials."

Non-Accomplishment 2:

Outcome 2 under Environment: Determine the feasibility of a public sewer system.

Narrative: A 2017 Finksburg Environment Health Sanitary Survey found that an immediate argument for a public sewer system cannot be based on a risk to public health. However, a significant number of residential and commercial properties may have difficulty replacing their septic system when it fails due to very small average lot sizes and some areas being unusable due to soil types and topography. The study recommends a follow-up survey be completed in ten years (2027).

A strategy under this outcome in the current Action Plan is to complete another sanitary survey – this would've been premature to complete within the last five years as the previous survey is only six years old. The updated Action Plan that was submitted with the designation renewal includes the strategy to complete a second sanitary sewer survey to reassess conditions of septic systems, and to determine the need for a public septic system based on public health and economic development/revitalization. The upcoming five years is the appropriate timeframe in which the follow-up survey should be completed.

PART II: COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT

ENVIRONMENT	YES	NO	N/A	<p>If YES, specify in quantifiable units and compare values from the last five years</p> <p>If NO, why not? What kept you from achieving your plan's desired outcomes?</p>
1. Has there been an improvement in water quality? Have you completed any projects intended to improve water quality? Ex. impervious surface reduction, stormwater improvements etc.	Yes			<p>The quality of water was not an area marked for improvement in the 2019 Action Plan.</p> <p>Two stormwater improvement projects were completed in the area in 2017 however. The Miller/Watts SWM project is within the FSC, and the Finksburg Industrial Park SWM upgrade is adjacent to the FSC. SHA also completed a curb improvement project along MD 140 to help with stormwater runoff.</p>
2. Have you improved wildlife habitat in your community? Ex. native plantings, pollinator gardens, rain gardens			X - Unkno wn	We have not tracked these improvements, but the Finksburg library does have well-attended programs on the topic, as well as a pollinator garden on the property. The library is located under 2 miles outside the SC.
3. Have you increased access to green space, parks or outdoor recreational opportunities?		No		Extremely limited new development in the FSC has made it difficult to implement Outcome 3 from the 2019 Action Plan to <i>Encourage passive community open space in development for public gathering places.</i>
4. Have you implemented operational sustainability practices (example: town hall enhancements) and/or community-based practices? (ex. Rain barrels or rain gardens at residences, recycling, composting etc)	Yes			<p>Although no new programs planned or that were introduced in the last 5 years, Carroll County requires waste haulers to offer recycling, so residents and businesses in the Finksburg Sustainable Community may contract with a hauler of their choosing for recycling or they may self-haul their recycling to the county facility located approximately 5 miles from the Finksburg Sustainable Community.</p> <p>Carroll County also incentivizes use of rain barrels and composting by offering rain barrels and compost bins yearly at discounted prices.</p>

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				Carroll Scrap Metal is also conveniently located in the FSC and offers a cash for metal and other recycling option.
Other:				

ECONOMY	YES	NO	N/A	If YES, specify in quantifiable units and compare values from the last five years If NO, why not? What kept you from achieving your plan's desired outcomes?
1. Has there been an increase in the number of new businesses in your Main Street/ Commercial District?	Yes			<p>Dill Dinkers pickleball has opened in the SC. The Finksburg location is one of 5 Dill Dinkers Pickleball locations in the DMV.</p> <p>Tres Sabores is a semi-permanent food truck in the SC.</p>
2. Did the Municipality/ Sustainable Community area receive any designations that support local economic development?	Yes			<p>Has twice received the Façade Improvement Grant.</p> <p>In March 2024 Carroll County was awarded \$80,000 through the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board's (BRTB) Transportation & Land Use Connection Grant Program to fully fund the Finksburg Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Feasibility Study.</p>
3. Has there been an increase in foot traffic in the Main Street/commercial district?			N/A	The Finksburg SC does not have a Main Street.
4. Have the number of commercial vacancies decreased?			N/A	There is a consistent limited number of commercial vacancies in the SC and not considered problematic.
5. Has there been an increase in local jobs within the Sustainable Community for its residents?	Yes			The addition of Dill Dinkers Pickleball has brought approximately a dozen new jobs to the SC.

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6. Has there been an increase in workforce development training or other opportunities for connecting potential employees to well-paying jobs?	Yes			<p>The 89,690 square foot Carroll County Career & Technology Center was constructed and opened in 2022.</p> <p>Revolution Motor Works is volunteering with the Carroll County Public Schools Career and Tech Center to provide training for auto mechanics and considers the students potential future employees.</p> <p>Carroll County Workforce Development has begun offering virtual hiring events and job fairs.</p>
Other:				

TRANSPORTATION	YES	NO	N/A	<p>If YES, specify in quantifiable units and compare values from the last five years</p> <p>If NO, why not? What kept you from achieving your plan's desired outcomes?</p>
1. Has the amount of bike trails/paths increased? How many linear feet do the trails cover?		No		There has been an extremely limited amount of planned bike trails/paths in the SC. However, in March 2024 Carroll County was awarded \$80,000 through the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board's (BRTB) Transportation & Land Use Connection Grant Program to fully fund the Finksburg Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Feasibility Study.
2. Have there been improvements to the public transit infrastructure?		No		Carroll Transit System, operated by Ride With Us, already offers a countywide door-to-door service, called Demand Response Service.
3. Has there been an increase in sidewalks? (Amount in linear feet). Were accessibility elements added, such as more ADA-accessible ramps and signage/signals? Has there been a		No		There is currently an extremely limited number of sidewalks in the SC. However, in March 2024 Carroll County was awarded \$80,000 through the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board's (BRTB) Transportation & Land Use Connection Grant Program to fully fund the Finksburg Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Feasibility Study.

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noticeable increased use of these walking places?				
4. Have there been any roadway improvements that support “Complete” or “Green” streets?			N/A	Complete streets are not an immediate goal for the SC.
5. Has traffic congestion along major roads decreased? (Amount in percent)		No		The Planning & Zoning Commission Approved the Carroll County Transportation Master Plan (TMP) on November 14, 2023. The TMP includes planned improvements in the SC to improve traffic, including Dede Road extension as a high priority.
Other:				

HOUSING	YES	NO	N/A	If YES, specify in quantifiable units and compare values from the last five years If NO, why not? What kept you from achieving your plan’s desired outcomes?
1. Have any residential facades or interiors been improved? Has the energy efficiency of any housing units been increased?	Yes			We have not been tracking this information; however we have seen façade and interior improvements in progress while driving through the SC.
2. Has the homeownership rate increased?			N/A	We have not been tracking homeownership rates.
3. Has there been an increase in the number of housing units in the Sustainable Community area? What number and/or percent are affordable? How many are within .5 miles of a transit stop?		No		Housing development is limited in the SC with the current water/sewer access. As part of the Action Plan, we are performing an analysis of sewer options in the SC.

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4. Has there been demolition of blighted properties?		No		One identified blighted property is under current renovation, but no other blighted residential properties have been identified.
5. Has the residential vacancy rate decreased?			N/A	The vacancy rate remains low.
6. Has the jurisdiction partnered with any community development corporations to improve its housing stock, increase the availability of affordable housing, or support those experiencing homelessness or being threatened with eviction? Has the jurisdiction initiated any of its own programs to do the same?	Yes			In an effort to assess needs, we have begun a housing needs assessment to understand which programs should be sought out, developed, and/or initiated.
7. Has there been an increase in homeownership counseling services or individuals accessing such services?		No		We have asked if homeownership counseling is a need in the SC as part of the housing needs assessment and will work to meet expressed need.
Other:				

COMMUNITY HEALTH & QUALITY OF LIFE	YES	NO	N/A	If YES, specify in quantifiable units and compare values from the last five years If NO, why not? What kept you from achieving your plan's desired outcomes?
1. How many historic properties were renovated/improved? To your knowledge, did the renovations mitigate certain environmental hazards such as lead and asbestos?			unkno wn	We have not been tracking this information.
2. Have there been improvements and/or additions to your public or community available spaces? Examples include museums, community centers, public plazas, murals and public art.		No		
3. Are there opportunities for residents to gather, communicate and celebrate? Do they serve multi-generations and all populations in the community? Examples are wide-ranging and may include fairs, community history days, neighborhood meetings, etc.	Yes			There are limited opportunities for residents to gather within the SC, including Mt Zion United Methodist Church activities and celebrations, Roaring Run Lions Club Community Park athletic events, and the nearby Finksburg Public Library programs.
4. Have there been any changes in access to health and wellness services? Examples include	Yes			The Carroll County Health Department is providing services in different locations in Carroll County using our new mobile unit Health on Wheels.

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mobile clinics, hospitals, telehealth opportunities.				
5. Are there any residential health and wellness opportunities in place (i.e. athletic facilities, recreational indoor/outdoor courses or groups)?	Yes			<p>Opportunities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dill Dinkers Pickleball, a large membership or pay-per-play pickleball facility, • Access to Roaring Run Lions Club Community Park, • Basin Swim Academy, • Rising Tide Academy, and <p>Access to open space abutting the SC around Liberty Reservoir.</p>
6. Do all residents have access to healthy food options such as fresh food grocery stores, farmers markets, community gardens, etc., within the Sustainable Community?	Yes			There is a Food Lion grocery store located within the SC.
7. Has there been a decrease in crime rate?		No		<p>However, according to https://www.neighborhoodscout.com/md/finksburg/crime#description, “crime is lower than nearly 95% of the state’s cities and towns.”</p>
8. Do all residents have access to the Internet and other basic utilities and services?	Yes			
Other:				

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LOCAL PLANNING & STAFFING CAPACITY	YES	NO	N/A	If YES, specify in quantifiable units and compare values from the last five years If NO, why not? What kept you from achieving your plan's desired outcomes?
1. Have there been any infill developments?	Yes			Dede World, a development project proposing a two-story office building and a restaurant accessible from Dede Road was approved in 2022.
2. Has there been an increase in the amount of preserved/protected land?			N/A	The SC is within a growth area.
3. Have there been any developments hindered by growth constraints? If so, please describe. Example constraints could be inadequate infrastructure, insufficient zoning density/intensity, or lack of buildable land.	Yes			Public water and sewer is not currently available in the SC, so zoning and density are limited by septic laws. As part of the Action Plan, we are performing an analysis of sewer options in the SC.
4. Have there been any zoning or policy changes that have fostered growth or redevelopment in your Sustainable Community?	Yes			<p>Text amendment – indoor storage - Ordinance No. 2021-07: Adopted amendments of the Zoning Code to allow mini- or self-storage in the I-1 District of Sustainable Community Boundaries.</p> <p>As part of the implementation of the 2014 Carroll County Comprehensive Plan – amended 2019, the county evaluated and revised the Commercial, Industrial, EC zoning code, including eliminated the need for some uses to go before the Board of Zoning Appeals for approval, changes to parking requirements, allowance for solar, and modification of bulk requirements.</p>

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5. Have there been any significant improvements to the municipal infrastructure within the Sustainable Community (i.e. street lighting, water/sewer lines)?	Yes			Comp Planning is currently engaged in a septic/sewer study, aimed at gaining a deeper understanding of the necessary wastewater infrastructure and exploring potential options.
6. Have you hired any new staff members, reassigned duties, or procured the services of a contractor to increase or better align local capacity? Have you implemented any professional development programs?	Yes			Carroll County Land and Resource Management has combined with the Department of Planning forming the Department of Planning and Land Management. The newly formed department offers opportunities for collaboration.
7. Has your community initiated or completed any planning efforts that will support the Sustainable Community area, including comprehensive planning, small area planning, or planning studies?	Yes			Comp Planning is proactively conducting various studies and plans, including the Transportation Master Plan, a housing study, and the completed 2023 Economic Development and Land Use study from last year. These initiatives serve as preliminary groundwork for the forthcoming update to the Carroll County Master Plan.
Other:				

Part III: Competitive Funding

Use the rows below to list competed funds sought for sustainability or revitalization projects since receiving Sustainable Communities designation.	Source (federal, state, foundation, etc.)	Amount Received	If no funding was received, what technical or other assistance from the state would help with future applications?	Other Notes
Community Legacy (CL) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finksburg Facade Improvement Program 	DHCD	\$50,000		
Strategic Demolition Fund (SDF)	DHCD			
Community Safety & Enhancement Program	MDOT			
Maryland Bikeways Program	MDOT			
Sidewalk Retrofit Program	MDOT			
Water Quality Revolving Loan Fund	MDE			
Other Funding Programs:				
Maryland Facade Improvement Program (MFIP) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finksburg Facade Improvement Program 	State - DHCD	\$45,000		
Transportation & Land Use Connections Grant (TLC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finksburg Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Feasibility Study 	Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC)	\$80,000		Project Kickoff April 2024

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

Section D – Sustainable Community Workgroup Roster

Skip Boyles	Citizen, FPACC board member
Mike Davis	Citizen, FPACC board member
Christopher Gayo	Citizen, FPACC board member
Jorge Gilligan	Citizen, FPACC board member, Finksburg Business Owner
Heather Owings	FPACC board member, CCPL Finksburg Branch Manager
Scott Ewart	Citizen, FPACC board member
Clare Stewart	Carroll County Bureau of Comprehensive Planning
Tiffany Fossett	Carroll County Bureau of Comprehensive Planning
Mary Lane	Carroll County Bureau of Comprehensive Planning
Janet O’Meara	Carroll County Bureau of Resource Management
Christine Garvin	Carroll County Sheriff’s Office
Clifford Engle	Carroll County Bureau of Solid Waste
Jonathan Bowman	Carroll County Bureau of Resource Management
Paige Sunderland	Carroll County Economic Development
Chris Letnaunchyn	Carroll County Bureau of Engineering
Richard Brace	MD Dept. of Health
David Robinson	MD Dept. of Health