SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES PROGRAM

APPLICATION FOR DESIGNATION RENEWAL

Eligible Applicants:

Local Governments with a Sustainable Communities Designation
Local Government Consortiums with a Sustainable Communities Designation

Application must be submitted on or before the expiration date of Sustainable Communities designation.

Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development
Division of Neighborhood Revitalization
2 N Charles Street, Suite 450
Baltimore, MD 21201
410-209-5800
http://dhcd.maryland.gov/

SGSC Approved - 7.24

Overview of Sustainable Communities

The Sustainable Communities Act of 2010 established a framework for reinvestment and revitalization of Maryland's existing communities creating a single, locally designated geographic focus area. Since that time the "Sustainable Communities" designation has provided an efficient means of targeting scarce public and private resources for multiple State agency investments and prioritizations.

Purpose or Renewal and Streamlined Application

The Sustainable Communities (SC) designation must be renewed every five years. This renewal application provides an opportunity for local governments to update their existing SC action plan and report on the accomplishments made over the past five years. Through the renewal process, local governments can request additional technical assistance and highlight any areas from the original action plan for which progress must still be made.

Application Eligibility and Threshold Requirements

Local governments (municipal or county) are eligible to apply.

Eligible applicants are to reconvene their **Sustainable Communities Workgroup** to discuss the accomplishments and challenges of their Sustainable Community Action Plans in addition to any update they may like to make to the Action Plan. The applicant may choose to select new members to participate in the Workgroup. The purpose of this workgroup is to continue and reinforce working relationships and collaborations among local governmental departments and better align community development priorities and strategies. In addition, this is an opportunity to assess if the Workgroup would like technical assistance from State government agencies to implement certain action items or develop strategies to address local challenges.

Threshold Requirements

All Sustainable Community applications must meet the following threshold requirements:

1) Sustainable Community Area boundaries must be entirely within a Priority Funding Area (PFA) and should be an area in need of renewal and reinvestment that would benefit from a targeted long-term strategy. Applicants can verify Priority Funding Area boundaries by visiting the MDP website at: http://www.mdp.state.md.us/OurProducts/pfamap.shtml

2) The proposed Sustainable Community is within or near a town center or transportation center, or there is a need for financing assistance for small businesses, nonprofit organizations or microenterprises;

3) The updated Plan must be consistent with other existing community or comprehensive plans;

4) A Sustainable Communities Workgroup is re-convened and a roster of members should be provided with the application.

Applications that do not meet these threshold requirements will not be considered.

Application Submission and Evaluation

The Sustainable Community application will be evaluated based on thorough assessment of strengths and weaknesses and how well desired outcomes, strategies and action steps are connected to the local conditions.

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

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

Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

Deliver Sustainable Community Applications via email:

To: Carter Reitman
carter.reitman@maryland.gov
Copy: Olivia Ceccarelli-McGonigal
olivia.ceccarelli@maryland.gov

Site Visits, Follow-up, and Technical Assistance

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

If requested, the Department can provide technical assistance to local governments to prepare their Sustainable Communities applications. When needed, the Department may offer technical assistance, in collaboration with the Maryland Department of Planning, to local governments with limited capacity to prepare their Sustainable Communities applications.

During the application review process, the review team may make site visits and/or hold meetings with applicants. In addition, applicants may be contacted by the Department for follow-up discussions prior to awards.

Approval

Approval of applications will be made by the Governor's Smart Growth Coordinating Committee on the recommendation of an inter-agency review team. The review team is coordinated by the Department of Housing and Community Development. The Governor's Smart Growth Coordinating Committee can defer the approval of a Sustainable Communities renewal to the Governor's Smart Growth Subcabinet.

All questions related to the application, please contact Carter Reitman at 410-209-5849 or by email at carter.reitman@maryland.gov **or your regional project manager, found at this link: https://dhcd.maryland.gov/Communities/Documents/SRP/PM-Map-ContactInfo.pdf**

<u>RENEWAL APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS</u>

The Sustainable Communities application for renewal has **three** sections:

A. Contact information, General Information, Organizational Capacity:

In this section, applicants are asked to update their contact information, provide information about demographic shifts over the past five years, discuss the strengths and weaknesses of their Sustainable Communities workgroup, and share any technical assistance needs the workgroup may have.

B. **Report on accomplishments over past <u>five</u> years**:

The report is an opportunity to reflect on any accomplishments achieved in the Sustainable Community area. It is a tool used to evaluate if the SC applicant achieved its intended outcomes and identify what state resources were used, if any, to achieve those outcomes. Renewal applicants are encouraged to discuss how priorities, actions, and objectives were or were not achieved across the Sustainable Communities plan elements, including how any of the elements may have interrelated during the five initial years of SC designation.

C. Sustainable Communities Action Plan Update:

The Sustainable Communities Action Plan details revitalization outcomes and strategies to achieve those outcomes over the next five years. Renewal applicants are encouraged to use their previous Sustainable Communities applications as a basis for their updated Action Plan. You may identify which weaknesses have not yet been addressed or which strategies have not yet been implemented. Include your revitalization priorities for the next five years, basing them on your community's current strengths and weaknesses.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES PLAN ELEMENTS

The table below provides a description of each subject area/element of the Sustainable Communities Action Plan. Included are examples of common strengths and weaknesses within each subject area and the types of projects that might be implemented to address said strengths and weaknesses.

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

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

ECONOMY: Describes projects centered on economic growth and management.

This category includes projects focusing on (but not limited to): business attraction & retention; improving and maintaining the health of business districts, downtowns, and main streets; commercial vacancy reduction; workforce attraction and retention; employment/job training; marketing, branding, and tourism; improving or creating economic impact of cultural and historic assets; providing technical and financial assistance to businesses; commercial building acquisition, rehabilitation and/or adaptive re-use; and creating a sense of place and vibrancy through streetscaping and beautification.

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

This category includes projects focusing on (but not limited to): access to transit corridors; pedestrian safety and accessibility; sidewalks; alternative modes of transportation, such as bikeways and trails; public transit, such as bus and rail; carpooling; proximity to transportation centers; parking; and road conditions.

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

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

COMMUNITY HEALTH & QUALITY OF LIFE: Describes projects concerned with public health, community culture, and the day-to-day life of community residents.

This category includes projects focusing on (but not limited to): improvement of public safety and the reduction of crime; libraries; educational facilities and programs; health and wellness facilities and programs; senior facilities and programs; youth facilities and programs; facilities and programs for the disabled; civic amenities, access to quality food options; collaborations with faith-based organizations; arts and entertainment education; and homelessness prevention, services, and facilities.

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

This category includes projects focusing on (but not limited to): updating zoning ordinances or land use; updating municipal/local policies, taxes, fees, etc.; increasing local government staff capacity; and updating planning documents like sector plans or comprehensive plans.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN UPDATE

The Sustainable Community Action Plan (SC Plan or Plan) is meant to be a multi-year investment strategy – a strategic set of revitalization initiatives and projects that local partners believe will increase the economic vitality and livability of their community, increase prosperity for local households and improve the health of the surrounding environment. The Plan should be flexible enough to be updated regularly and renewed every five years as the community envisions new goals. The priority initiatives and projects identified in the action plan are your priorities for improving the livability of community places -- residential, commercial, or other public or private properties – and the sustainability of new work, retail, recreational and housing opportunities for residents. At the same time, the plan should only discuss the strategies that will impact the geographic area targeted for revitalization so that resources have the best opportunity to have the intended effect. These projects can also be designed to reduce the environmental impact of the community through water and energy resource conservation and management strategies. In this way, the Plan can be a road map for local stakeholders as well as State agencies to work together to create a more livable and sustainable community.

All communities submitted an SC Plan when the community earned its original designation. Some applicants may want to take advantage of the designation renewal process to outline new strategies, set new priorities, or reaffirm existing strategies for their Sustainable Community. Changes to SC Plans may reflect changes in external factors affecting the community or changes in the priorities of the applicant.

Action Plan Guidance

1) **For each element, identify the essential strengths and weaknesses of your community**.
   Example:
   Strength - Good sidewalk connectivity
   Weakness - Insufficient bicycle infrastructure

2) **Based on those strengths and weaknesses, formulate specific outcomes that address the most pressing issues or greatest opportunities. Identify a way to measure the success of that outcome.**
   Example:
   Outcome - Expand fiber optic broadband Internet connections in Town
   Progress Measure - Linear measurement of broadband fiber laid

3) **After defining the outcomes, list detailed strategies and discrete actions that will serve as the means to achieve those goals.**
   Example:
   Strategy A - Increase number of Town sponsored events
         Action A - Organize a workgroup tasked with planning weekend events
         Action B - Develop, with community input, a series of weekend events that the Town could host

4) **List potential partners that can support the successful implementation of these strategies through different types of resources.**
   Example:
   Partner 1 - DHCD (Community Legacy program)
   Partner 2 - Small Business Administration (Services and financial assistance)

CHECKLIST AND TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPLICANT: **Becky Axilbund**

NAME OF SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY: **Town of Middletown**

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:

X Section A - Sustainable Community Renewal Applicant Information
- Applicant Information

X Section B – Sustainable Community Renewal Report (Projects, Strategies and Partners)
- Part 1: Qualitative Assessment
- Part 2: Competitive Funding

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

- Action Plan

X Section D – Sustainable Communities Workgroup Roster

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

- Disclosure Authorization

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

- If requesting a boundary modification, map in pdf format and a GIS shapefile of the proposed Sustainable Community boundary

- Photos (jpeg format) of your aforementioned accomplished projects of the last five years

SECTION A - SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY RENEWAL APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name of Sustainable Community:	**Town of Middletown**
Name of Applicant:	**Burgess & Commissioners of Middletown, MD**
Applicant's Federal Identification Number:	**52-6003394**
Applicant's Street Address:	**31 West Main Street**

City: Middletown	**County: Frederick**	**State: MD** **Zip Code: 21769**
Phone Number: 301-371-6171	**Fax Number: 301-371-6474**	**Web Address:www.middletown.md.us**

(1) Sustainable Community Boundary and Description

(1) Are you requesting any changes to your Sustainable Community boundary? Describe why or why not? Yes, to better target revitalization in areas we want to concentrate on – historical districts and the connecting area between the two.

(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: 185 acres

(4) <u>Existing federal, state or local designations:</u>
   X Main Street X National Register Historic District X Local Historic District

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

   ☐ State Designated TOD X Other(s): MD Smart Energy Community, Sustainable Maryland Certified, Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area, The Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area, Scenic and Historic Byways, The National Road, and the Antietam Campaign

(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?

   Total population   5,239
Male		47.2%
Female		52.8%
Age:	Under 5 years	5%
	5 to 9 years	9.3%
	10 to 14 years	9%
	15 to 19 years	9.3%
	20 to 24 years	5.1%
	25 to 34 years	6.9%

35 to 44 years	12.3%
45 to 54 years	16.6%
55 to 59 years	4.4%
60 to 64 years	7.4%
65 to 74 years	8.1%
75 to 84 years	4%
85 years and over	2.5%

Race:		
	White	82.8%
	Black or African American	0.8%
	American Indian	0.0%
	Asian	9.8%
	Other	0.6%
	Two of more races	6.1%

Housing Units:	1,690
Average Household Size:	3.03
Household Income:	$141,793 (median)
Educational Attainment:	96.3% earned a high school diploma or higher level of education
Demographic changes:	Population has increased by 0.07% in the past five years
	Income has increased by 0.13% in the past five years

(2) Organizational Structure, Experience and Public Input:

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

The Town's SC Workgroup and staffing structure have changed since the last application was submitted and accepted by the DHCD as our former Town Administrator retired in 2023 after serving the Town for 30 years. Staff leaders, Cindy Unangst (Staff Planner) and Becky Axilbund (Main Street Manager) have remained in place, and Paul Mantello, the Town's new Town Administrator, has joined the group. Prior to Drew Bowen, former Town Administrator, leaving, the staff leaders worked to execute the plan implementation and meet progress goals under the guidance of the Town Board.

(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 prominent strength lies in the elected leadership who fully support the Town's commitment to a sustainable future. This can be witnessed foremost in the fact that the Town's Sustainability Committee now has its' own website with a wealth of information and resources for the town residents, and the committee also is listed as a line item in the Town's budget with an increase of funding over the past five years.

Implementation of the SC Plan has mostly fallen to the staff due to availability of staff to carry out the plan during working hours.

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

The Sustainable Communities Plan is based upon the goals and objectives of the Town of Middletown 2020 Comprehensive Plan which is in draft form and set to be approved by the Town Board in March of this year. The Town has engaged the community in this update which began with a community conversation to solicit goals, visions and wants and needs for the Town. All of the workshops and meetings that the Planning Commission has held over the past few years to update the Comp Plan have been open to the public and the Town has received numerous comments and suggestions about the draft. Input was also received from the Sustainability Committee, the Water and Sewer Committee, and the Main Street Middletown organization.

(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.

At this time, the Town is not requesting technical assistance from State agencies.

SECTION B - SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY RENEWAL REPORT
PART I: QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT

Purpose:
The purpose of this assessment is to capture significant projects/ improvements that have been completed since the approval of your local government's Sustainable Communities designation.

In relation to the goals stated in your local government's Sustainable Community Action Plan, **please highlight at least three major accomplishments from the last five years**, including how you achieved them. When writing your narrative, consider the questions below and refer to the six elements discussed in the General Information section of this document (page iv) – Environment, Economy, Transportation, Housing, Quality of Life, and Land Use/Local Planning.

1) **Outcome**: Which outcomes identified in your Sustainable Community plan were you able to achieve?
2) **Projects**: Which projects did you implement in order to achieve the outcome? Also indicate when you started and completed these projects.
3) **Partners**: With whom (i.e. state agencies, local stakeholders) did you partner to complete projects?
4) **Impact**: What kind of measurable impact did the achieved outcome have on your community? Are there other intangible benefits?
5) **Photos**: Please also include pictures that depict your accomplishments.

[EXAMPLE] Descriptive Narrative: Please list the most significant accomplishments that apply

> *Example* – **Accomplishment 1**
> *Outcome: Improved stormwater management*
>
> Projects:
> *Project 1: Stormwater Retrofit Plan – In October 2014, the Town Council approved the Town's stormwater retrofit plan which outlines various strategies and capital budget expenditures over the next five years. Strategies include reducing the amount of impervious surface in the community and improving stormwater management. One of the plan recommendations is to pass an ordinance that assesses an environmental protection fee on municipal permits.*
>
> *Project 2: Green Streets – The Town added green elements to approximately 600 linear feet of roadway that had been experiencing severe flooding. Specifically, bioswales were constructed and trees were planted.*
>
> *Partners:*
> *Chesapeake Bay Trust – provided technical assistance*
> *MD DHCD – provided financial assistance in form of a Community Legacy grant (totaling $50,000).*
>
> *Impact: The implementation of the projects had a significant impact on the community by improving stormwater runoff. The streets with the newly constructed bioswales no longer experience flooding.*

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

Accomplishment 1:
Outcome: Middletown has experienced significant private commercial investment in the Main Street district.

Projects:
1. The Zion Lutheran Church (117 West Main Street) – this historic building has stood the test of time, serving as a hospital during the Civil War. The congregation spent over 90K retrofitting the Greek Revival columns that support the soaring entry.
2. The Valley Register Building (123 West Main Street) – was formerly owned by the church and was in fair condition. It was sold to a private developer who renovated the entire building to form 5-small apartments, and updated the space on the ground floor so that it would be more attractive for businesses. Within a month upon opening the building was fully leased, and we added a new business to the downtown district.
3. 19-21 West Main Street – Main Street Middletown, MD Inc. has invested nearly $300,000 into rehabilitating 2 historic structures with a MHT Easement on the exteriors. The new use for the property is a Welcome Center and the Main Street office.
4. 4 East Main Street – Memorial Hall – built as a tribute building to World War I soldiers, the same developer who transformed the Valley Register building took on the more ambitious project to rehabilitate Memorial Hall. This building has been empty for nearly 50-years. The $4-million dollar investment has created 15-new luxury apartments, and created space for two new businesses. The investment was aided with $100,000 in grant money from Main Street Middletown's Façade Improvement funds. This project also spurred the Town to create the Middletown Revitalization Zone Incentive Package that enabled the project to move quickly through the planning process and provided lower fees to projects in the Main Street District that invest more than $250,000 into renovations to commercial structures downtown.
5. 10 Walnut Street – Gladhill Furniture invested $120,000 into retrofitting circa 1950 era windows to new energy efficient windows. The project was aided by a $40,000 Main Street Middletown Façade Improvement grant.
6. Because of the intensity of this investment in the years of 2020-2021, the Main Street Program was awarded with a Special Recognition Award from MEDA (Maryland Economic Development Association) and both the Town and Main Street were recognized by the Frederick County Office of Economic Development for the Memorial Hall project.

Partners: The Town of Middletown Staff, Burgess and Commissioners, Main Street Middletown, MD Inc., the MD Department of Housing and Community Development, and the Frederick County Office of Economic Development

Impact: The rehabilitation of Memorial Hall, 19 West Main Street, Zion, and the Valley Register building are all within sight of each other and the visual impact of these improvements is significant. The addition of new spaces for businesses has increased foot traffic in the downtown area. These improvements will create increased property values (which improves the local tax base) and encourage more downtown business growth.

Accomplishment 2:

Outcome: Middletown has completed infrastructure improvements on several local roads, improving pedestrian and vehicular safety, increased traffic flow and improved stormwater management.

Projects:

Traffic consistently flows on Alternate US 40/Main Street. There are two local streets that parallel Alternate US 40/Main Street, but not consistently throughout Town. To the North is East and West Green Street which was updated in 2016-2017. To the south lies Washington Street which stretches from MD 17/Church Street only a few blocks to Elm Street. While it is not as long as Green Street, it is a significant road for its access to some of Middletown's main downtown businesses and attractions. The project improved this road from a local lane with just curb and gutter to a complete street with curb, gutter, sidewalk and lighting. In addition, the project included updated waterline improvements. Similar improvements were done to Broad Street, another older road in town and east of the downtown.

Partners: Middletown Public Works department

Impact: The Town re-paved local streets, replaced 2,579 linear feet of waterline, and added 10 new stormwater management facilities called Filterra systems.

Accomplishment 3:

Outcome: Completion of the State Highway Administration and Town of Middletown Infrastructure Project in 2019.

Projects:

During our last Sustainable Community Designation Renewal, we discussed this project. The project was over 3-miles of paving, new curb, new gutter, new sidewalk, and for the town, the repair and replacement of new waterline throughout the town. In some locations, we were replacing pipes that were over 100+ years old. The improvements included all new, wider sidewalks, brick accents at multiple crossings, and replacement tree plantings.

Partners: State Highway Administration

Impact: The Town's Main Street was significantly improved visually. Pedestrian and vehicular safety was enhanced, and the infrastructure improvements will benefit the Town financially. The sidewalks are wider, more friendly to visitors, and greatly improved for ADA compliance.

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

Outcome: HEAL Cities Designation

Narrative: The Burgess and Commissioners met with representatives of the HEAL City organization at the Maryland Municipal League Conference and the Main Street Manager was tasked to implement this designation. Upon further investigation and presenting sample projects of what Main Street could do to tie in the business community through the HEAL City suggestions to reach designation, several of the elected officials felt the program was "too far reaching" in regard to the suggestion that Main Street partner with businesses to reprint menus that give more information about the contents of the meal (for example – Low Fat, Low Sodium Options).
It was unfortunate that the HEAL City Designation wasn't passed by the Town Board. It is further unfortunate because the Main Street program has marched ahead, and in our own long-term strategies that we work on, we not only see economic vitality through a Heritage Tourism strategy, but we are promoting Middletown as a concentrated hub of wellness businesses as a secondary economic development strategy and have our first Health and Wellness Expo planned for March 2024. The expo would have occurred sooner if not for the interruption of the COVID-19 Pandemic. In other words, the Main Street program is carrying forward the ideas of the designation, and it is unfortunate that the Town is losing out on this formal designation.

Outcome: Reiterate the importance of Middletown's Heritage as part of the quality of life, but also as an economic generator for Heritage Tourism
Strategy A: Continue to promote the Heritage Museum by adding new exhibits at least one per year.
Strategy B: Open the Heritage Gallery 1-3 times per year for a special evening event.
Strategy C: Work with Main Street Middletown to build up a continual warm-weather program of docent led walking tours.

Narrative: In 2019, Main Street Middletown purchased 19-21 West Main Street and we soon moved into the property. In 2020, we moved out of the property to begin our rehabilitation of the two buildings and the first step was to raise the foundation, so we had to move out. There was no other work-around. Therefore, the best, easiest space to relocate the Main Street program was back to Town Hall, and in the upstairs space that had been converted to the newly designed in 2017 Heritage Gallery.
In addition to the constraints that COVID-19 placed on the Town and society in general not wanting to meet in a closed interior room, the Town, in 2022 was gifted a very large collection of Middletown historic artifacts and they were all brought up to the Heritage Gallery for sorting. This life-long collection contains thousands of artifacts, including over 100+ years of local newspapers, historic photographs, postcards, business advertisements, signs, furniture, art, histories, letters, books, diaries, and more. We are just now at a place where these items have been sorted, placed into archivally stable folders and boxes, and loosely inventoried.
In 2023, we were a host location for the 86th Maryland House and Garden Pilgrimage which brought over 500 people to town one afternoon, from almost every county in the state, to visit Middletown and learn about our history and architecture.
In spirit, we did continue to emphasize the importance of our local history, but not in the way we had originally thought. We do intend to continue to promote Middletown and its history and have several distinct ideas to implement in correlation to the upcoming 2026 250th Anniversary of the Independence of the United States.

Outcome:

Narrative:

Part II: Competitive Funding

Use the rows below to list competed funds sought for sustainability or revitalization projects since receiving Sustainable Communities designation.	Source (federal, state, foundation, etc.)	Amount Received	If no funding was received, what technical or other assistance from the state would help with future applications?	Other Notes
Community Legacy (CL): ● **Rehabilitation of 19 West Main Street** ● **Rehabilitation of 19 West Main Street** ● **Main Street Façade Improvement Fund** ● **Memorial Hall** ● **Rehabilitation of 19 West Main Street** ● **Main Street Façade Improvement Fund**	DHCD	$50K (FY20) $50K(FY21) $50K(FY21) $50K FY 23 $50K(FY22) $170K (FY22) $50K(FY23)	,	
Strategic Demolition Fund (SDF): ● ●	DHCD			
Community Safety & Enhancement Program: **An ARPA funded grant for the year of 2022 where Main Street Middletown secured funds in Community Safety**	MDOT	$90,500 (FY22)		
Maryland Bikeways Program:	MDOT			
Sidewalk Retrofit Program:	MDOT			

Water Quality Revolving Loan Fund:	MDE			

Other Funding Programs: *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.*

*Please add more rows if necessary

Maryland SERI: a COVID Relief Grant for Main Street Communities to help direct relief to Main Street businesses and marketing costs to keep positive media attention on Main Street businesses	DHCD	$213,525('21)		
Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Grants: • **Rehabilitation of 19 West Main Street** • **Inside exhibits in the Welcome Center**	MHA	$44,464 ('21) $25,800 ('23)		
Operating Assistance Grants: • **Business relief, operational expenses, and downtown decorations including banners, Christmas lighting, and wreaths** • **Technical Assistance Grant for photography of business owners** • **Main Street Improvement Grant for public art and interpretative signage** • **Main Street Improvement Grant for landscaping at 19 West Main Street, bike racks, outdoor seating, banners** • **Main Street Improvement Grant for operational expense and Health & Wellness seed money for Expo** • **Technical Assistance Grant for social media marketing and training for downtown businesses**	DHCD	$23,423,78(20 $20,000('21) $25,000('22) $25,000('23) $25,000('24) $15,000('24)		

MEA Smart Energy Communities Grants: • **Solar panels installed on roof of town's food bank building** • **Solar Technical Assistance – Reservoir Solar Array Project**	MEA	$25,162 ('20) N/A ('24)		
Rural Maryland Council RMPIF Grants: • **Springline Water Main Replacement, Phase 1**	RMC	$150,000 ('24)		

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

Middletown has several high-cost, near- and mid-term capital infrastructure projects that need funding and resources. We are income-ineligible for most state and federal grant programs. Currently, we have $5.2 million in infrastructure loans ($1.6M GF, $3.6M W&S), indicating we've expended approximately 25% of our available debt limit. Middletown is mandated by MDE to complete a $40M (70% BRF, 30% Town) wastewater treatment renovation in 2026. Other significant capital projects are:

Significant Future Capital Projects ($500,000+):

PROJECT	TIMELINE	COST	TOTAL DEBT
5-Year Capital Improvement Plan Projects	5 Years	$4,000,000	$19,585,936
PFAS Filtration	5 Years	$1,000,000	$20,585,936
Springline Water Main Replacement	5-10 Years	$8,000,000	$28,585,936
Cone Branch Collection System	10-15 Years	$30,000,000	$58,585,396

SECTION C - SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ACTION PLAN

[Town of Middletown]

Example Section

Strengths	Weaknesses
● Insert bulleted list of strengths (provide some detail as to why and how this is a strength in your community)	● Insert bulleted list of weaknesses (provide some detail as to why and how this is a weakness in your community)

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures Outcomes should be considered end results of actions and strategies. Based on the strengths and weaknesses, identify the strengths on which you would like to build and the challenges you would like to address. Progress Measure: What will you use to measure success toward outcome? Is it quantifiable or qualifiable?	Strategies and Action Items Identify strategies that will help your community to achieve each identified outcome to the left. If applicable, break down each strategy into specific action items that outline different steps of the strategy. Specify how you are planning to achieve the desired outcomes.	Implementation Partners Which community stakeholders need to be involved to realize each action step and strategy? Name specific public and/or private sector partners.
Example Outcome 1: Code violations and complaints are reduced in the Sustainable Community residential areas. Example Progress Measures: Code violations reduced by 25% in Sustainable Community residential areas	Example Strategy A: Review and revise, as needed, code compliance program to reduce frequency and number of residential code violations. Example Action 1: Complete analysis of code violations over the past five years to determine areas, both geographically and topically, for which code violations are most frequent. Example Action 2: Conduct outreach program to determine barriers to code compliance. Example Action 3: Analyze code compliance program for potential inefficiencies and opportunities for proactive engagement. Example Action 4: Pursue façade improvement funding to assist low-income homeowners overcome barriers to code compliance.	Maryland Department of Planning, Maryland Department of Housing, County Planning Department, local homeowners association

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
- Sustainability Committee which meets monthly as a standing committee of the Town - Abundance of parkland and walking trails within the Town that are in constant use including Memorial Park and Wiles Branch Park - All residents live within ½ mile to programmed or passive green space - Electronics, metals, textiles, paint cans and battery recycling events are held twice a year - Sustainable MD Certified community with last re-certification in 2022 - Pet waste stations located in parks and along walking trails. - Solar panels that contribute to energy conservation - Farmer's market operated seasonally in the downtown district. - Promotion of composting with sales of compost bins, and community compost bin located in a centrally located park. - Minimum of 100 trees planted within the Town every year to provide increase in tree canopy	- Tree canopy percentage is low within the Town although we are trying to increase that - Town-owned hardscaping not permeable for rainwater in parking lots and on walking trails - Disconnected bike/walking paths for car-free access to retail centers - Not enough activities for seniors - Six miles of 130yo and 90yo cast iron water main, with lead components, providing 35% of the town's water supply 48yo open-air lagoon, located in a high-risk flood zone (FEMA Flood Zone AE), presenting significant flood damage risk to local environment and watershed

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
Outcome 1: Upgrade water and sewer infrastructure Progress Measures:	Strategy A: Identify/develop county, state, and federal funding and technical assistance resources to fund critical capital projects. Strategy B: Continue planning and designing, enabling the Town to seize opportunities and creating "shovel-ready" capital projects. Strategy C: Audit internal processes and revenue streams, to ensure sustainable operations and build funding reserves.	MDE EPA Elected County, State, & Federal Officials Town staff
Outcome 2: Develop and implement a functional green infrastructure plan to protect, connect and enhance the Town's natural assets Progress Measures: Annual investment in sustainable infrastructure and amenities	Strategy A: Create a Green Infrastructure Plan that considers the Town's internal operations and local planning and development activities Strategy B: Continue to support the Town's efforts of recycling, composting, tree planting, pollinator planting and community sustainability education Strategy C: Continue to support programs and activities recommended by the Sustainability Committee	Sustainability Committee MD DNR Town staff

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
• Centrally located along US 40 Alternate/MD National Pike and MD 17 • Centrally located within the larger metropolitan areas of Baltimore and Washington DC	• Lack of hotel or bed and breakfast within the Town's limits • Pressure for growth in the farm areas surrounding the town – we want to manage the small-town charm and not be surrounded by too much sprawl.

- Surrounding Middletown proper is the agricultural-rich Middletown Valley

- Easy access to many surburban centers, along with natural beauty of the mountains and valley

- High quality public education

- Mix of businesses, some of which have been in operation for ~100 years, creating a stable economic base

- Rich history and role it played in the Civil War Battle of South Mountain

- Tourist attractions both in Town and nearby along with special events drawing people from all over the County and beyond

- As a Designated Main Street Community, we have an advocate for our small businesses, and continual promotions of the entire Main Street district

- Aging business owners

- Despite having a solid, stable economic base, we are experiencing some changes in the mix of our businesses. While this is not really a weakness, we do want to make sure these new, retail businesses survive beyond the first critical few years.

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
Outcome 1: Progress Measures: Recognize that our business mix is changing and that we will in 2024 have at least 6 retail businesses, compared to the three we have now. The challenge is helping the new retail businesses thrive. 1.Increase foot traffic and awareness of these new and existing retail stores and use business retention strategies to assist with their longevity PM Increase the variability and number of media placements we make to advertise downtown.	Strategy A: To increase foot traffic and awareness, we can create a rack card to illustrate our retail businesses exclusively. To increase foot traffic – continue to expand the number of media placements we make and expand the reach to larger/broader audiences. Strategy B: To increase foot traffic, we can freshen up our downtown parking lots. They are functional, but not inviting. Signage and where appropriate, add more greenery will go a long way in creating a more inviting look to park and browse downtown. Our soon-to-be complete complement of retail stores stretch the entire length of our downtown districts. Patrons need to know that longer term parking is available (other than a 2-hour limit for on-street parking).	Main Street Middletown Town staff Elected officials Frederick County Economic Development Office

	Strategy C. Main Street's Economic Development Committee routinely hosts business mixers with guest speakers to provide continuing educational opportunities for our businesses. We can find a retail specialist to help with floor plans and layouts of the retail stores and employ technical assistance to also encourage people to go to second-story retail store spaces. Strategy D: Continue to host downtown events and encourage retailers in particular how to make the most of downtown event.	
Outcome 2: Continue to promote Middletown as a heritage tourism destination and implement a secondary area of growth – our health and wellness sector of businesses. Progress Measures: PM – Keep track of the number of visitors to our Welcome Center PM – Keep track of attendees and interest in the Health and Wellness activities we implement.	Strategy A: To promote Middletown as a Heritage Tourism destination, we have recently moved into our newly rehabilitated building on West Main Street which serves as a welcome center. We anticipate the grand opening in May or June of 2024. We have already created a Visitor Experience Plan that outlines steps we should take to continue to outfit the Welcome Center, so we will be implementing those recommendations. Strategy B: To promote Middletown as a Health and Wellness hub we will continue to host the Health and Wellness Expo (our first Health and Wellness Expo is scheduled for March 2, 2024). Organize Lunch and Learn sessions with local business owners and/or Lunch time Fitness Strolls.	Main Street Middletown Town staff Elected Officials Frederick Tourism Council Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area Local Businesses Non-profits

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
● New walking trails connecting parks and schools	● Limited public transit due to rural nature

● Proximity to highways	● Commuter traffic ● Perception that there is not enough downtown parking

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
Outcome 1: Maximize pedestrian and bicycle accessibility to schools, parks and residential areas of the community Progress Measures: Decrease in car accidents and improved perception of safety of students at school complex	Strategy A: Continue to appeal to FCPS and the County to fund roadway and pedestrian improvements at the school complex Strategy B: Optimize pedestrian and bicycle accessibility in the Middletown School Campus redevelopment	Frederick County government FCPS
Outcome 2: Consider transit, bicycle and pedestrian improvement requirements during the development review process Progress Measures: Linear feet of sidewalks and trails constructed and transit opportunities	Strategy A: Ensure commercial and residential development constructs shared-use paths and on-street bikeways Strategy B: Explore transit options with Frederick County, especially for the Town's growing senior population	Planning Commission Frederick County government

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

- High percentage of home ownership – roughly 82%

- High quality schools attract people to purchase homes in Middletown

- Emphasis on preservation

- Lack of affordable housing

- High cost of housing

- Percentage of homes in disrepair

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
Outcome 1: Regulate a variety of housing types to maintain the Town as an inter-generational community and provide a range of housing types for citizens of all incomes and ages 　Progress Measures: Number of affordable housing units constructed	Strategy A: Conduct an assessment of the community's needs/ideas relative to affordable housing options. Strategy B: Identify specific Town ordinances that act as an impediment to affordable housing development. Strategy C: Leverage the outcome of the needs assessment to examine changes to the Municipal Code with regards to the variety of housing types.	Housing task force Town Board
Outcome 2: Maintain quality and character of existing neighborhoods 　Progress Measures: Increased property maintenance investments within the town.	Strategy A: Educate the community about the blighted property ordinance and any assistance programs that homeowners can apply for. Strategy B: Promote renovation and rehabilitation of existing housing stock for both owner-occupied and renter-occupied units.	Town Board Main Street Middletown

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
- Tourism attractions including new heritage museum and welcome center - Much of Main Street maintains its historical features - Low to no crime - High quality schools, parks and walking trails - Rural character and mountain views - Small town essence, charm, welcoming nature - Activities for all ages – family-focused, long-standing community events	- Concern about future development or over-development - Balance the desire to grow as a tourism destination and keeping the community desirable for the residents - Balance the desire to grow as a tourism destination and keeping the historic resources intact - Balance the desire to grow as a tourism destination and keeping the traffic manageable so that downtown remains an enjoyable walk, not one full of loud trucks and motorists who drive too fast.

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners

Outcome 1: Obtain an Arts and Entertainment Designation. Progress Measures: complete the application, if there are needed actions to take to get the designation, prioritize those action items.	Strategy A: Art and entertainment is a conduit that encourages both tourists and residents to visit our downtown. In addition, Arts and Entertainment speak to both of our Economic Development sought-for-outcomes – being a tourist destination and known as a health and wellness hub. We have existing downtown assets, such as two pieces of public art, venues that host live musical entertainment, and we are the central to the Valley Craft Network. Partners to bring more arts and humanities type projects to Middletown.	New Branch of the Frederick County Public Library in Middletown, adjacent to the Main Street District. Frederick County Arts Council, Maryland State Arts Council, MD DHCD, MD DOT/SHA, MD Dept of Planning
Outcome 2: Continue to Promote Health and Wellness Initiatives	Strategy A: This overlaps with the Health and Wellness Expo. The idea is that the Expo can be an annual event, and showcasing what resources we have will help residents understand there are plenty of ways in town to help improve overall health and wellness.	Town-wide participation – schools, clubs, churches, local government, nonprofits, etc.

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
● Town has two historic districts and Main Street designation ● Priority Funding Area designation ● Annexation requests are processed when and where appropriate ● Low tax rate ● Comprehensive Plan update was just approved effective March 25, 2024	● Based on availability of parking spaces in unmetered lots in the downtown, it is the perception of parking availability, and the willingness to walk a few hundred feet that needs to be changed for those that perceive a lack of sufficient convenient parking.

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
Outcome 1: Update subdivision and zoning ordinances to ensure they are in line with updated Comprehensive Plan Progress Measure: compliance with Comprehensive Plan	Strategy A: Planning Commission to review subdivision ordinance and make recommended changes to the Town Board for approval Strategy B: Planning Commission and Zoning Code Update Task Force to review zoning ordinances (Code) and make recommendations to Town Board for approval	Town Board Planning Commission Zoning Code Update Task Force