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/

LARRY HOGAN, *Governor*   **KENNETH C. HOLT,** *Secretary*

BOYD K. RUTHERFORD, *Lt. Governor*

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 OF 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 ASSISTANCE

If a local government has limited capacity, staff from the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and Department of Planning (MDP) will be available to assist local government officials through the application process.

Please contact your Regional Project Manager at DHCD if you would like to request or learn more about this assistance (see page iv for contact information).

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES BENEFITS

The benefits of a Sustainable Community designation are substantial. The SC designation is a threshold requirement for application to several Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development revitalization programs (such as the Community Legacy Program and Strategic Demolition Fund listed below). Other programs from both the Department and other State agencies offer additional points or preference in the application process. The Sustainable Communities designation provides access to a suite of resources that can support housing and community development, local transportation enhancements, tax credit programs and programs to support a healthier environment. Taken together, these resources can promote safer, healthier and more attractive communities for families to live and put down roots.

Community Legacy Program is administered by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development and provides local governments and community development organizations with financial assistance to strengthen communities through such activities as business retention and attraction, encouraging homeownership and commercial revitalization. Community Legacy funds are restricted to Sustainable Community Areas.

Strategic Demolition Fund is administered by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development and provides grants and loans to local governments and community development organizations for predevelopment activities including demolition and land assembly for housing and revitalization projects.

The Strategic Demolition Fund catalyzes public and private investment in the reuse of vacant and underutilized sites. These funds are restricted to Sustainable Communities.

Application Eligibility and Threshold Requirements

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

Eligible applicants are to convene 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;

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 Evaluation

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

Priority Funding Areas

All Sustainable Communities must be located entirely within a Priority Funding Area. Applicants can verify Priority Funding Area boundaries by visiting the MDP website at: http://www.mdp.state.md.us/OurProducts/pfamap.shtml

Application Training

The Department will be hosting various webinars for communities planning to submit a renewal application. Attendance at a minimum of one application training session is strongly encouraged for all applicants. Contact your Regional Project Manager (contact information page iv) to schedule an application training or verify when the webinars will be scheduled.

Application Submission

Applications will be submitted both electronically/digitally and via postal mail. Each applicant must submit **one** hard copy of their application with all required attachments. DHCD reserves the right to not consider incomplete applications.

The first printed page of the electronic application is a Table of Contents (see page vii). This should also serve as a checklist and be used to provide corresponding tabs. In addition to the digital copy of the application, all pictures and maps are to be submitted on a CD-ROM or flash drive. Pictures should be burned to the CD in a JPEG format and maps should be burned to the CD in a pdf format. Please ALSO include GIS shapefiles of Sustainable Community boundaries and other GIS related data if a boundary change is requested. Be sure to label your files on the CD-ROM appropriately, i.e., "Proposed Sustainable Community Boundary," "Current Sustainable Community Boundary," etc.

No incomplete applications will be accepted.

Deliver Sustainable Community Applications to:
Sustainable Community Application
ATTN: Olivia Ceccarelli-McGonigal
Division of Neighborhood Revitalization
Department of Housing and Community Development
2 N Charles Street, Suite 450
Baltimore, MD 21201

Site Visits, Follow-up Discussion

During the application review process, the review team may make site visits, hold meetings or have for follow-up discussions with applicants prior to designation approval.

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.

Contact Information

All questions related to application content, please contact your regional project manager. Regional contacts listed in the table on the next page.

DIVISION OF NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION, STATE REVITALIZATION PROGRAMS **REGIONAL PROJECT MANAGERS**		
REGION 1: • Northwest Baltimore City • Northwest Baltimore County Larry Brown Assistant Director Phone: 410-209-5819 Email: larry.brownjr@maryland.gov	REGION 2: • Northeast Baltimore City • Northeast Baltimore County Garland Thomas Project Manager Phone: 410-209-5803 Email: garland.thomas@maryland.gov	REGION 3: • Southeast Baltimore City • Southeast Baltimore County Olivia Ceccarelli-McGonigal Program Officer Phone: 410-209-5826 Email: olivia.ceccarelli@maryland.gov
REGION 4: • Southwest Baltimore City • Southwest Baltimore County • Anne Arundel Nick Mayr Project Manager Phone: 410-209-5842 Email: nicholas.mayr@maryland.gov	REGION 5: Western Maryland • Allegany • Frederick • Garrett • Washington • Carroll Sara Jackson Project Coordinator Phone: 410-209-5812 Email: Sara.jackson@maryland.gov	REGION 6: Washington DC Metropolitan • Prince George's • Montgomery • Howard Ashlee Green Project Manager Phone: 410-209-5815 Email: Ashlee.Green@maryland.gov
REGION 7: Upper Eastern Shore • Harford County • Caroline • Cecil • Kent • Queen Anne's • Talbot Jaffa Weiss Phone: 410-209-5848 Email: Jeremy.Weiss@maryland.gov	REGION 8: Lower Eastern Shore, Southern Maryland Lower Eastern Shore • Dorchester • Somerset • Wicomico • Worcester Southern Maryland • Calvert • Charles • St. Mary's Garland Thomas Project Manager Phone: 410-209-5803 Email: garland.thomas@maryland.gov	

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES PLAN ELEMENTS

Ongoing designation as a Sustainable Community is contingent upon the continuation, expansion, and/or modification of a multi-year investment strategy that addresses the topic areas of Environment, Economy, Transportation, Housing, Quality of Life, and Land Use/Local Planning. The table below provides a non-exhaustive list of ideas that can be incorporated into each element as they are addressed in the sections that follow in this application.

ENVIRONMENT: Environmental accomplishments and objectives may include improvement of quality of land, water, air or watersheds, increased tree canopy, mitigation or adaptation to issues related to sea level rise, reduction of carbon footprint, improved energy conservation, access to local foods, green infrastructure, stormwater infrastructure/management, construction of parks, trails and other recreation facilities, recycling, improved water and sewer capacity, etc.

ECONOMY: Economic accomplishments and objectives may include increased regional accessibility, business attraction/retention, improved health of the business district and decreased commercial vacancies, improved accessibility to employment opportunities and economic drivers, adopted local policies/regulations that encourage economic growth, enhanced marketing and tourism, improvements to cultural and historic assets, etc.

TRANSPORTATION: Transportation accomplishments and objectives may include increased access to transit corridors, improved pedestrian safety and increased accessibility/sidewalks, alternative modes of transportation, such as bikeways and trails, public transit, such as bus and rail, carpooling, improved parking and road conditions, etc.

HOUSING: Housing accomplishments and objectives may include an increase in affordable, workforce or market rate housing, either for homeownership or rental, improved housing conditions and values, increase in housing programs, reduction in foreclosures and residential vacancies, increase in property values and home sale values, etc.

QUALITY OF LIFE: Quality of life accomplishments and objectives may include crime, socio-economic demographics, educational opportunities, museums, libraries, historic and cultural assets, civic amenities, faith-based organizations, economic health of households, sense of place, etc.

LAND USE/LOCAL PLANNING: Land use accomplishments and objectives may include changes to zoning, improved land use policies, increase/decrease in taxes and fees, etc.

RENEWAL APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

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. **Qualitative and Comprehensive 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, implemented the strategies initially envisioned and identify what resources were used. Renewal applicants are encouraged to discuss how priorities, actions, and objectives were or were not achieved across the six elements listed on the previous page (v), 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 has been revised so that it is less time consuming and focused on developing a strategic implementation plan. 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.

CHECKLIST AND TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPLICANT: North East

NAME OF SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY: The Town of North East

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

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

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

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

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

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

❑ **Section F – CD-ROM:** The CD-ROM should include the following contents:

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

- **GIS shapefiles of the modified Sustainable Community boundary (if requesting a modification) and other GIS related data**

- Pictures (jpeg format) of your accomplished projects of the last five years **(as indicated in Section B)**

- Digital copy of completed Sustainable Communities Renewal Application

I. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY RENEWAL APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name of Sustainable Community: The Town of North East

Name of Renewal Applicant: Betsy Vennell, Director of Planning

Applicant's Federal Identification Number:

Applicant's Street Address: 106 South Main Street

City: North East   **County:** Cecil   **State:** MD   **Zip Code:** 21901

Phone Number: 410-287-5801x101 **Fax Number:** 410-287-8267 **Web Address:** northeastmd.org

Sustainable Community Renewal Application Local Contact:

Name: Betsy Vennell   **Title:** Director of Planning

Address: 106 South Main Street   **City:** North East   **State:** MD   **Zip Code:** 21901

Phone Number: 410-287-5801x101   **Fax Number:** 410-287-8267 **E-mail Address:** bvennell@northeastmd.org

Other Sustainable Community Contacts:

Name: Melissa Mackenzie   **Title:** Town Administrator

Address: 106 South Main Street   **City:** North East   **State:** MD   **Zip Code:** 21901

Phone Number: 410-287-5801x101   **Fax Number:** 410-287-8267 **E-mail Address:** mmackenzie@northeastmd.org

I. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY – General Information

A. **Sustainable Community Boundary and Description**

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

Yes, the town has annexed two commercial parcels into the Corporate Limit within the past five years. Adding these commercial properties into the Sustainable Community boundary may benefit and strengthen the community because of the resources available with the Sustainable Community Designation.

(2) Include the following in as an attachment (if requesting a modification to your current boundary):

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

(3) Approximate number of acres of entire SC Area: 463

(4) <u>Existing federal, state or local designations:</u>
☐Main Street ☐Maple Street
☐National Register Historic District ☐Local Historic District ☐ Arts & Entertainment District
X State Enterprise Zone Special Taxing District ☐BRAC ☐ State Designated TOD
☐ Other(s):

(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?

There is insufficient empirical data available for the SC Area. In general, staff has not noticed any significant change in the town's demographics. The town has recently approved 100 new residential permits in the Ridgely Forest subdivision. There is a mix of single-family, duplex, and townhomes. This is a significant amount of new residential development for the town. Population is expected to increase the town's population by approximately 250 new residents. This development is anticipated to have a positive impact for the town.

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

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

The Planning Commission members have changed over the past five years. Since the original application submittal, there is one planning member still serving. The ex-officio member has

changed, one planning member moved to the Town Board, two planning members moved out of Town.   The Town is going to be hiring a grant writer/manager which should dramatically help with the implementation of the Sustainable Community Area Plan.

(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 members of the work group have maintained a consistent commitment to being a sustainable community and have continued to work to implement the plan. There have, however, been challenges to implement projects due to lack of staff to apply for grants and manage the projects.

(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 town worked with the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development to lead stakeholders through a brainstorming process to identify strengths, weaknesses, and strategies to include in the updated action plan. The action plan builds on the town's comprehensive plan and economic development 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.

With the Town Board approving a position for a grant writer/grant manager in FY20/21, the Town requests assistance for the person in this new position, to assist in implementing attainable goals outlined in this application.

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) **Pictures**: 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: Sidewalk Installations

Outcome: Improved pedestrian connections between community services.

Projects: The town has completed sidewalks between residential areas and shopping centers located in North East, as well as the new town library

Partners: MDOT, SHA

Impact: Residents are able to safely walk to community services.

Accomplishment 2: Rain Garden Installation and Education

Outcome: Improved Stormwater management and increased awareness of stormwater flooding

Projects: The town has completed three (3) rain gardens in the Sustainable Community area. Two were installed in the town park, with one being constructed by students and teachers from North East High School. Another rain garden was rehabilitated at the town parking lot.

Partners: Cecil County Department of Public Works, Cecil County Watershed Stewards Academy, Elk and North East Rivers Watershed Association, Cecil County Master Gardeners (Maryland Extension office), Chesapeake Bay Trust, North East High School, North East Maintenance Department, Ecologically Sound Landscapes

Impact: The town has improved stormwater management in key areas and residents are aware of issues around flooding and how green infrastructure can play a role in mitigating it.

Accomplishment 3:

Outcome:

Projects:

Partners:

Impact:

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: Improvement of Turner Park

Narrative: The town has been planning on upgrading the facilities at Turner Park. The Boys and Girls Club has expressed interest with building a recreation complex on part of the park. As no final decision has been made, the town is working with the Boys and Girls Club to understand what their plans are before moving forward with the project.

Outcome: Improvements to Herring Snatchers Park and North East Community Park

Narrative: The town has plans to upgrade the parks but currently lacks a grants manager to pursue funding and to manage and complete the projects.

Outcome:

Narrative:

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY RENEWAL REPORT
PART II: COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT

Purpose:

The purpose of the comprehensive assessment is to capture indicators of accomplishments in each Sustainable Community. Indicators should reflect the five year time period since the adoption of the Sustainable Communities Action Plan. Thus, the following questions focus on the common outcomes that were identified in the various Sustainable Community Action Plans approved by the State. The assessment will be grouped in the sections of Environment, Economy, Transportation, Housing, Quality of Life, and Land Use.

Please answer the following questions to the best of your knowledge.

Check "**YES**" if applicable to your community. If you answer "**YES**" please quantify the accomplishment (i.e. Q: Has there been an increase in the number of businesses in your Main Street/commercial district? A: YES 4 new businesses have opened in the past five years). If necessary, please also provide a short description of the accomplishment.

Please check "**NO**" if the question item did not have any impact on your community. If you answer **"NO"** please briefly summarize what kept you from achieving your plan's desired outcomes.

Check "**N/A**", if the question item does not apply to your Sustainable Community.

ENVIRONMENT	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 improvement in water quality?			X	Nothing quantifiable.
2. Has the amount of impervious surface in your Community been reduced? (Amount in SF)			X	
3. Have there been improvements and/ or additions to your park and/ or recreational green space?	X			59 acres were donated to the town. All of the acreage will not be usable due to the environmental constraints, however, the after an environmental assessment is completed and a concept plan has been completed and adopted, the Town will be able to identify areas which will be set aside for recreational green space, or passive and/or active recreation.
4. Did the Sustainable Community implement any recycling or waste reduction programs?		X		The Town performs pick up of recyclables for Town residents.
5. Do all residents have access to healthy food options (i.e. fresh food grocery stores, farmers markets etc.) within the Sustainable Community?	X			The town has a number of specialty stores and general grocery stores within the sustainable community that residents are able to access via foot traffic, bicycle, vehicles or transit bus service.
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?		X		There has been no change in the number of businesses on Main Street, downtown North East. Some business have closed, however, new tenants move in soon after one tenant leaves.
2. Did the Municipality/ Sustainable Community area receive any designations that support local economic development?		X		The town has not gained any new designations. There is, however, a new Economic Development Committee in North East. The members are business owners in Town.
3. Has there been an increase in foot traffic in the Main Street/commercial district?	X			Town Staff have noticed an increase in the foot traffic, the number of people shopping and eating on Main Street compared to previous years.
4. Have the number of commercial vacancies decreased?			X	
5. Has there been an increase in local jobs within the Sustainable Community for its residents?		X		No data available.
OTHER:				

TRANSPORTATION	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 the amount of bike trails/paths increased? How many linear feet do the trails cover?		X		There has not been an increase in bike trails/paths.
2. Have there been improvements to the public transit infrastructure?	X			Due to ridership demand, the Cecil County Transit has increased the number of bus stops within the North East sustainable community area.
3. Has there been an increase in sidewalks? (Amount in linear feet)	X			The town partnered with the State Highway Administration and MDOT to add sidewalk connecting shopping centers and the new library.
4. Have there been any roadway improvements that support "Complete" or "Green" streets?	X			There have been green streets added in the Ridgely Forest development.
5. Has traffic congestion along major roads decreased? (Amount in percent)			X	
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 been improved?		X		We did not pursue the façade grants over the past five years of having the Sustainable Community status. Our hope is to be able to pursue the façade grants in the future.
2. Has the home ownership rate increased?	X			A number of vacant properties have been sold and rehabilitated within the Sustainable Community Area.
3. Has there been an increase in the number of housing units in the Sustainable Community area? What number and/or percent are affordable?	X			The Ridgely Forest development has added 100 new homes of different typologies (Single Family detached, duplexes, townhomes).
4. Has there been demolition of blighted properties?	X			Three blighted properties have been demolished in the past five years
5. Has the residential vacancy rate decreased?	X			Yes, homes appear to be rented out more consistently or lived in by owners as rehabilitation on homes has taken place.
OTHER:				

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. Has there been a decrease in crime rate?			X	There is no notable increase in crime in the Sustainable Community boundary.
2. Have there been improvements and/ or additions to your public spaces (i.e. museums, community centers, public plazas)?	X			A new library is currently under construction. The North East elementary school has upgraded its parking lot with a permeable paver material to assist the flow of traffic for parents picking up their children.
3. Has there been an increase in public art/ arts & entertainment programs/venues (i.e. murals, movie theatre, music events)?	X			Yes, Main Street shop owners have conducted large screen movie events and entertainment venues in Town. The Cecil County tourism office is expected to move to the town park within the year.
4. How many historic properties were renovated/improved?			X	
5. Are there any residential health and wellness opportunities in place (i.e. athletic facilities, recreational indoor/ outdoor courses or groups)?	X			The town park has a walking path and a kayak ramp. The Town Park's Gilbert Lighthouse Pavilion conducts a weekly "Waterfront Worship" service which is open to the public.. One of our Communities has just received approval for installation of a swimming pool and clubhouse to serve their residents.
OTHER:				

LAND USE/ LOCAL PLANNING	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?	X			3-4 properties have either been rehabilitated or demolished to built a new home
2. Has there been an increase in the amount of preserved/protected land?	X			The 59 acres donated to the town have been preserved as park/open space
3. Have there been any developments hindered by growth constraints?		X		We are not aware of any developments hindered by growth constraints.
4. Have there been any zoning or any policy changes that have fostered growth in your Sustainable Community?		X		There have not been any changes in zoning or policy that have fostered growth in the Sustainable Community.
5. Have there been any significant improvements to the municipal infrastructure within the Sustainable Community (i.e. street lighting, water/sewer lines)?	X			The Ridgely Forest development added new water mains, sewer systems, street lights, sidewalks and roads. The Town accepted a deed of conveyance for many of the improvements in 2019.
OTHER:				

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

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): • • •	DHCD			
Strategic Demolition Fund (SDF): • •	DHCD			
Community Safety & Enhancement Program:	MDOT			
Maryland Bikeways Program:	MDOT			
Sidewalk Retrofit Program:	MDOT			
Water Quality Revolving Loan Fund:	MDE			

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

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
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				
Bay Restoration Fund - Wastewater Program	MDE	Unknown		Funding to develop a concept plan for MS4 requirements.
Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Commission Annual Grant		$3,500		Annual Grant to the Town
Green Streets, Green Towns Grant Program	Chesapeake Bay Trust	$13,400		
Community Parks and Playgrounds (CP&P) Program	DNR	$8,122		For playground equipment for children with disabilities
Census 2020 Funding	MDP	$5,000		

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

The town is not sure at the present moment and hopes to have an answer once it hires a grants manager.

III. 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 a 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 be due to changes in external factors affecting the community or changes in the priorities of the applicant.

Guidance for completing the Action Plan can be found on the next page.

<u>Action Plan Guidance</u>

The document has been broken down into the same six categories as the Comprehensive Assessment section of this document. These parts address key components of your Sustainable Community Action Plan. Follow the guidelines below to fill out the matrix.

1) **For each of the different sections, pinpoint essential strengths and weaknesses of your community**. Example Transportation: Strength - Good sidewalk connectivity. Weakness - Insufficient amount of downtown parking.

2) **Based on those strengths and weaknesses, formulate specific outcomes that address the most pressing issues or greatest potentials. Include a means of measuring the success of said outcome.** Example Economy: Outcome – Expand broadband fiber optics in Town. Progress Measure - Linear measurement of fiber laid and number of residential and business connections.

3) **After defining the outcomes, list detailed strategies (break down to several action steps if needed) that will serve as the means to achieve those goals.** Example Economy: Strategy - Increase number of Town sponsored events → 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 Economy: DHCD (Community Legacy program), Small Business Administration (Services and financial assistance) etc.

Sustainable Community Action Plan

North East, MD

Submitted by The Town of North East

4/27/2020

Environment

This section focuses on the natural environment, our use of natural resources, and our relationships to the natural environment.

Strengths and weaknesses might focus on the following: 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.

Strengths	Weaknesses
- The town is close to Elk Neck State Park - The parks in the community; recreation as well as health and fitness options for all ages - The Boys and Girls Club has expressed interest in adding a recreation facility at Turner Park - North East Community Park has a Kayak Launch area as well as waterfront spots for residents to enjoy	- North East Community Park has a lack of handicap accessible playground equipment which limits who can enjoy the park - North East Community Park could use additional lighting to increase resident safety - Herring Snatchers Park has only one picnic table and could benefit from new steps traveling from North Main Street to the Park, and updated amenities for this stream-side park.

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
Based on the strengths and weaknesses identify the strengths on which you would like to build and the challenges you would like to address. What outcomes are you trying to achieve? Where/ in what area do you want those changes to happen?	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.	Which community stakeholders need to be involved to realize each action step and strategy? Name specific public and/or private sector partners.

Progress Measure: Identify how you will know that you have achieved your outcome.		
Outcome 1: Complete upgrades on North East Community Park and Herring Snatchers Park Progress Measures: Upgrades installed	Strategy A: Add handicap recreational equipment in North East Community Park - Action Step: Identify the desired equipment and location the equipment will be placed in North East Community Park - Action Step: Gather funding for the project: The state has a Community Parks & Playgrounds Program which funds playground equipment. Strategy B: Improve the lighting in North East Community Park - Action Step: Conduct a lighting study to identify where additional lighting is needed (There may be funding through Program Open Space to conduct the study: Carrie Lhotsky: carrie.lhotsky@maryland.gov is the DNR contact) - Action Step: Select the lighting fixtures to be installed - Action Step: Gather Funding for the project: The Governor's Grants Office has a list of foundations and funding programs that could be helpful. Strategy C: Add park benches and picnic tables and new steps and railing in Herring Snatchers Park for visitors to enjoy this stream—side park. - Action Step: Select the benches and picnic tables to be installed in the park - Action Step: Work to fund the purchase, either through the town itself, through Program Open Space, or by sharing costs with the County	Department of Natural Resources Cecil County Governor's Grants Office
Outcome 2: Complete the transformation of Turner Park Progress Measures:	Strategy A: Work with the Boys and Girls Club to understand their plans for the park and how that lines up with the town's plans: - Action Step: Sit down with the leadership of the club to layout the town's plan and compare with the plans the Boys and Girls Club has - Action Step: Work to collaborate with the club, David Dahlstrom from the Maryland Department of Planning could be a partner in facilitating discussion (david.dahlstrom@maryland.gov)	North East Boys and Girls Club Maryland Department of Planning Maryland Department of Natural Resources

- Action Step: Include Cecil County Parks and Recreation in the discussion, since there are some facilities that the county may want to use and may also contribute funding towards construction
- Action Step: Identify possible park users who may be interested

Strategy B: Complete a site plan for the park

- Action Step: Identify an architecture and engineering firm to work with
- Action Step: explore funding options, possibly partnering with the Boys and Girls Club to pay for the site plan. Other funding sources are DNR's Community Parks & Playgrounds Program and DHCD's Strategic Demolition Fund.

Strategy C: Acquire Funding and Construct the Improvements to the park

- Action Step: Explore funding options, utilizing the Governor's Grants Office and applying to Program Open Space and the Community Parks & Playgrounds Program
- Action Step: Work to share costs with the County, Boys and Girls Club, and other

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
• The Cecil County Tourism Office will soon be locating to North East Community Park • Good access to metropolitan regions (Baltimore/Washington, Wilmington/ Philadelphia) with Route 40 and Route I-95 bordering the Corporate Limit. • Main Street has a variety of retail stores and restaurants, a bank, and great walkability throughout the downtown Main Street district.	• Some businesses in the downtown area could use financial assistance with the renovation of their properties.

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
Outcome 1: Support local businesses along the main street Progress Measures: Number of facades improved, number of jobs located along the main street	Strategy A: Explore developing a Façade Improvement Program where the municipality helps cover the cost of improvements businesses along the main street to draw foot traffic. • Action Step: Review examples of Façade improvement Programs such as Hyattsville and Hagerstown. • Action Step: Develop a program with guidelines and requirements • Action Step: Apply for funding through the Community Legacy Program run by DHCD	Property Owners DHCD Business Owners North East Chamber of Commerce

	Strategy B: Collaborate with the North East Chamber of Commerce to continue to understand how the town can support employers and employees	

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
• Relatively close access to commuter rail stations in Perryville, and Newark Delaware. • Implementation of the Town's adopted concept Transit Oriented Development Plan would potentially bring commuter rail station to North East. • MTA recently completed a sidewalk upgrade along MD Route 272 (Mauldin Ave.) which connects residents to downtown	• There still remain some gaps in existing sidewalk network

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
Outcome 1: Improve Access to Public Transit for Residents Progress Measures: Implementation Project added, progress on a Commuter Rail Station	Strategy A: Implement the Transit Oriented Development Plan • Action Step: Continue to carry out the policies and projects laid out in the TOD Plan developed in 2014 Strategy B: Explore bringing a commuter rail station to North East • Action Step: Collaborate with Cecil County, MDOT, and other partners to study the possibility of a station	MDOT Cecil County MARC

Outcome 2: Improve pedestrian accessibility in the town. Progress Measures: Linear feet of sidewalk improved/added	Strategy A: Continue to fill in sidewalk gaps in the community, with an emphasis on paths to/from schools and connection to the downtown area • Action Step: Consider conducting a Sidewalk Inventory to identify gaps and prioritize projects. Funding might be possible through Safe Routes to School • Action Step: Create a list of projects to complete and identify funding sources	Public Works MDOT SHA Cecil County

Housing

This section focuses on the homes in which people in your community live or making 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 condition (interior or exterior); housing programs; aging in place; preventing foreclosures; and reducing residential vacancies.

Strengths	Weaknesses
• The Town has a good amount of existing affordable workforce housing including Elk River Manor Apartments, Stoney Run Apartments, Beacon Apartments, Riverwoods Apartments • There is Senior housing (Victoria Park Apartments) within walking distance of the downtown and North East Community Park.	• 55% of all single-family homes were built over 65 years ago and could benefit from upkeep and rehabilitation

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
Outcome 1: Help preserve existing housing in the town Progress Measures: Number of homes renovated	Strategy A: Continue to offer low interest loans to property owners to assist in revitalizing their residential and commercial properties. Strategy B: The Town would like to utilize the Façade Grant Program to assist property owners improve their homes and businesses.	

Community Health and Quality of Life

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

Strengths, weaknesses and outcomes might focus on the following: 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.

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Cecil College contains a number of cultural venues • A new library is under construction in the North East Station Shopping Center. • There are a variety of religious institutions in the town. • Successful Main Street Commercial District • Main Street businesses have started movie and entertainment events. • Tourism Office is moving into town park.	• Drug use in the County • A community Center in North East would be beneficial for arts, entertainment, organized activities and classes for adults and seniors. • Youth areas need to be updated/created to provide activities and programs for youth of all ages.

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners

Outcome 1: Add community space for residents.
 	
Progress Measures: Initiate community center strategies.
	Strategy A: Explore funding opportunities for a community center.
	
	Strategy B: Explore interest in the community for a community center and what programs residents would like.
	  • Action Step: Conduct a survey of residents
	  • Action Step: Coordinate with North East departments to create a stakeholder group/steering committee
		Parks and Recreation Department
		DHCD
		Cecil County

Outcome 2: Explore what additional youth programs could be added.	Strategy A: Find partners in the county to partner with to offer youth programs to residents.	Cecil County

Progress Measures: Initiate coordination with county parks and recreation.	• Action Step: Reach out to the county to understand the resources available • Action Step: Promote youth activities at new library.	

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
• A 59 acre piece of property was donated to the Town in March 2020. All of the acreage will not be usable due to the environmental constraints, however, the after an environmental assessment is completed and a concept plan has been completed and adopted, the Town will be able to identify areas which will be set aside for recreational green space, or passive and/or active recreation. •	• The town requires additional staff in order to apply for grants, grant funding and management of grant projects.

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
Outcome 1: Work to develop a strategy for the donated property Progress Measures: A plan for the property	Strategy A: Explore rezoning the property from its current zoning of R-3 (Multifamily Residential District) • Action Step: Look into creating a new Open Space zoning classification • Action Step: Evaluate if any current zones would fit the proposed use of the property	DNR Cecil County

	Strategy B: Look for funding opportunities to help restore and develop the property for open space use. • Action Step: Collaborate with the MD Dept. of Natural Resources to identify funding sources and examine if the property can be added to the town's Sustainable Community designation. The DNR Stewardship Team could be a valuable resource.	
Outcome 2: Expand capacity to apply for grants and funding programs Progress Measures: Grants Manager/Coordinator hired	Strategy A: Hire a grants manager or coordinator to apply for and manage grants and funding programs.	North East