



# 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 - 2.24



## **CHECKLIST AND TABLE OF CONTENTS**

APPLICANT: Town of Ocean City, MD

NAME OF SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY: Town of Ocean City

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

- ✓ **Section A - Sustainable Community Renewal Applicant Information**
  - [Applicant Information](#)
- ✓ **Section B – Sustainable Community Renewal Report (Projects, Strategies and Partners)**
  - [Part 1: Qualitative Assessment](#)
  - [Part 2: Competitive Funding](#)
- ✓ **Section C – Sustainable Community Renewal Action Plan Update (Matrix)**
  - [Action Plan](#)
- ✓ **Section D – Sustainable Communities Workgroup Roster**
- ✓ **Section E – Signature Letter (acknowledging Disclosure Authorization and Certification)**
  - [Disclosure Authorization](#)
- ✓ **Section F – Additional Files:** The following contents should be included:
  - If requesting a boundary modification, map in pdf format and a GIS shapefile of the proposed Sustainable Community boundary
  - Photos (jpeg format) of your aforementioned accomplished projects of the last five years

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

<b>Name of Sustainable Community:</b>		Town of Ocean City	
<b>Name of Applicant:</b>		Town of Ocean City, MD	
<b>Applicant's Federal Identification Number:</b>		52-6000802	
<b>Applicant's Street Address:</b>		301 N. Baltimore Avenue	
<b>City:</b> Ocean City	<b>County:</b> Worcester	<b>State:</b> MD	<b>Zip Code:</b> 21842
<b>Phone Number:</b> (410) 289-8221	<b>Fax Number:</b>	<b>Web Address:</b> www.oceancitymd.gov	

### **Sustainable Community Application Local Contact:**

<b>Name:</b> Bill Neville	<b>Title:</b> Director of Planning & Community Development
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

### **Sustainable Community Contact for Application Status:**

<b>Name:</b> Terry McGean	<b>Title:</b> City Manager
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

### **Other Sustainable Community Contacts:**

<b>Name:</b> Zachary Bankert	<b>Title:</b> OCDC Executive Director
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

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

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

**Answer:**

At this time, we are not requesting any changes to our Sustainable Community boundary. There remains a considerable amount of revitalization projects that require attention within the current boundaries. Focusing our efforts upon the present Sustainable Community footprint will ensure that the Town of Ocean City's downtown area receives programs and funding vital to the area's renewal. Additionally, we have implemented design standards that capture the character and charm of Downtown Ocean City during the early twentieth century. Expanding further north of our boundary will require a new set of design standards that address a streetscape and architectural environment different from our current designated area. Before expanding our boundaries, we will need to create design standards relevant to that section of town.

## Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section A

- (2) If yes, Include the following in as an attachment:
- PDF or JPEG of modified Sustainable Communities boundary map,
  - GIS shapefiles of modified Sustainable Community boundary (mapped to the parcel boundary),
- (3) Approximate number of acres of entire SC Area: 255 acres
- (4) Existing federal, state or local designations:
- ☒Main Street ☐National Register Historic District ☐Local Historic District
- ☐Arts & Entertainment District ☐State Enterprise Zone Special Taxing District ☐BRAC
- ☐State Designated TOD ☒Other(s): Federal Opportunity Zone, Maryland Heritage Area – Beach to Bay Heritage Area, Maryland Scenic Byway – Cape to Cape, Reinvest Maryland 2.0 Priority Funding Area, Sustainable Maryland Certified Community
- (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?

### Answer:

- Unfortunately, we do not have demographic statistics specific to the Sustainable Communities designated area, so we analyzed the data for the entire municipality. The total population for the Town of Ocean City has not changed significantly in the past five years, as the 2020 U.S. Census counted it at 6,849 and the 2023 estimate places it at 6,957 (1.5% increase over three years). Estimates from 2019 showed a population of 6,927, but this exceeded the actual number in 2020 by 78. In both comparisons, the shift is negligible.
- The age and sex of residents did not change substantially, either, but a couple trends should be considered. The estimated percent of persons 65 years old and older rose by 2.4% over the past five years, indicating that the Town of Ocean City hosts a robust senior population (36.2%) that is well above the State of Maryland (16.9%). Also, U.S. Census estimates show that females increased their share of the town’s population by 6.3% from 2019 to 2022. Other categories of age only showed percentile changes of less than 1%.
- The racial makeup of the Town of Ocean City indicated little to no adjustments. According to U.S. Census data and estimates from 2019 to 2022, African Americans dropped from 1.5% to .8% of the population, Asians rose from .3% to .8%, and Hispanics remained the same at 5.8%. White residents continue to make up over 95% of the town’s population. The trend shows a strong Caucasian presence in the town with a small Hispanic community and an even smaller representation of African Americans, Asians and others.
- Regarding households, the number increased from 3,585 in 2019 to 3,723 in 2022, but the persons per household showed nominal change, dropping by .11 to rest at 1.82 in 2022. Annual median household income increased from \$54,667 to \$58,563 while annual per capita income rose from \$41,871 to \$59,460. Although overall income improved, the rate of poverty worsened, as it increased from 7.4% to 8.8% during this period.
- The education of local residents expanded from 2019 to 2022. The percent of those residents who were 25 years old and older and have a high school diploma or higher increased by 5.1% to land at 94.2%. The percent of that same age group holding a bachelor’s degree or higher grew by 4% to land at 35.8% in 2022. Technology improvements correlated with educational

gains with households with a computer rising by 5.1% and households with broadband internet by 9.4%. The trend supports current research detailing ways that technology augments and supports educational attainment.

- **Seasonal Population:** During four months of the year (June to September), a substantial number of seasonal workers become temporary residents in the Sustainable Communities Area. This includes both American workers and J-1 Visa student workers from numerous countries. More than 2,500 J-1 workers and many thousands more Americans comprise the 12,000 plus summer workforce at Ocean City. These workers temporarily outnumber the entire permanent population of the town. Unfortunately, the SC Area lacks sufficient housing to accommodate even a small fraction of this population. The Federal Opportunity Zone designation for this area allows for investors to receive tax benefits if they purchase property in the area; expanding employee housing will accommodate a growing workforce because of these investments.

## **(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?

### **Answer:**

The Town of Ocean City has not made any organizational structural changes in the past five years. It continues to follow the 2017 Comprehensive Plan Update and the 2018 Strategic Plan for the Town of Ocean City. However, the Sustainable Communities (SC) Workgroup has altered its membership due to several personnel and representative changes in the community. Former SC Workgroup members who have vacated their involvement include the following along with a short explanation:

- Brooks Trimper of Trimper Amusements and President of the Downtown Association. Mr. Trimper moved out of the state and no longer is invested in the SC designated area.
- Jesse Houston, Ocean City resident and former Director of Planning and Community Development. Mr. Houston has moved to Sarasota, Florida.
- Earl Conley, Vice President Bank of Ocean City. Mr. Conley is no longer active in implementing the SC Area Plan.
- Stephanie Meehan, Manager of Funcade Arcade and Chairperson of the OC Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Meehan is no longer Chairperson of the OC Chamber, and she has refrained from remaining as a member of the workgroup.
- Vicki Barrett, Owner of Inn on the Ocean Bed & Breakfast, Chairperson of OCDC Boardwalk Committee. Unfortunately, Vicki Barret passed away in 2022.
- Blaine Smith, Former President of the OCDC Board of Directors. Mr. Smith is no longer President of the OCDC and has since retired.

The new SC Workgroup includes two returning members and six new members:

- Zach Bankert, Executive Director of the OCDC.
- Jenelle Gerthoffer, Town of Ocean City Environmental Engineer, Member of the Critical Area Commission for the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coast Bays.
- Glenn Irwin, Consultant, Local Tour Guide, Member of the Henry Hotel Foundation Inc. Board of Directors, Member of the Lower Shore Land Trust Board of Directors, and Former

## Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section A

Executive Director of the OCDC. Mr. Irwin returns to provide his expertise, as he was the key person implementing the SC Area Plan during the past five years and was a development lead for the 2019 Sustainable Communities Renewal Application.

- Bill Neville, Town of Ocean City Director of Planning and Community Development. Mr. Neville returns as the point of contact for the Town of Ocean City and development lead for the Sustainable Communities Renewal Application.
- Michael Nolen, Coldwell Banker Realty, Owner of Nolen Invest LLC and Nolen Vacation Rentals, and Member of the OCDC Board of Directors.
- David Noonan, Program Manager at the OCDC and secondary development lead for the Sustainable Communities Renewal Application.
- Scott Savage, President of Trimper's Rides of Ocean City Inc., Trimper's Playland Inc., Trimper's Tidal Wave Inc., and Windsor Resort Inc., Chairman of the Board of Directors for Trimper Rides, President of Goody Hill Groundwork Inc., Member of the OCDC Board of Directors, Past President of the Ocean City Lions Club, and Past Board member of the Worcester County Development Committee, Atlantic General Hospital Foundation, Maryland Bankers Association, and Ocean City Downtown Improvement Association.
- Joe Wilson, Coastal Life Realty Group, President of the OCDC Board of Directors, Chairperson of the Town of Ocean City Planning and Zoning Commission, Member of the Greater Ocean City Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, and Past President of the Coastal Association of Realtors.

The implementation of the SC Area Plan will continue under the effective leadership of the Ocean City Development Corporation in partnership with the Town of Ocean City, and the SC Workgroup will function as a committee of the OCDC. The OCDC staff will ensure the successful administration of all its projects under the leadership of its Executive Director, Zach Bankert, and governance by the OCDC Board of Directors. OCDC work committees will support the activities underpinning each goal detailed in the Sustainable Community Action Plan. An OCDC Board member will serve as a member of the Ocean City's "Green Team," which functions as the Coastal Resources Legislative Committee for the municipality. Also, the OCDC Executive Director will continue to participate as a member of the Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee.

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

**Answer:**

The Town of Ocean City has experienced steady redevelopment growth in the past five years under the leadership of the OCDC and its Executive Director of that period, Glenn Irwin and support from the Sustainable Communities Workgroup. The capacity for the workgroup to assist in the implementation of the SC Plan has been more than ample in making significant progress during the past five years. Partially, this has been due to the OCDC's effective administration of the revitalization programs that support the SC Plan.

The OCDC's capacity for implementing portions of the SC Plan increased with the absorption of the Downtown Association (DTA) into its organization, adding more connections to the Boardwalk and bringing the Information Cottage under its administration. The merging of these two organizations allowed the SC Workgroup to maximize implementation efforts for the SC Plan by providing a greater pool of volunteers to support special events and the Information Cottage's seasonal operations and an Events Coordinator to organize volunteers and promote the goals of the plan. The



employment of all the revitalization strategies detailed in the previous SC Plan called for the hiring of a Program Manager to ensure the successful continuation of these activities through effective management practices and the pursuit of grant funding. As SC Plan activities have been increasing in number and scale, the OCDC expanded its capacity with new staff to address them. Though the growth of the OCDC played a significant part in the SC Plan's past successes, the largest part derived from the cooperation and effort of our network of businesses, local governments, nonprofit organizations, and town residents.

The strength of our SC Workgroup lies in the diversity of business, leaders, residents, and officials participating, and it functions in a balanced way, drawing two members from the town government, two staff from the OCDC, three from local businesses, and one independent resident. Each of these workgroup members participate in a wider network that stretches throughout the entire town and Worcester County. All of them are also connected to many non-profit organizations that add value to the downtown community and the SC Plan's implementation.

The wider networks are the basis for implementing revitalization program, as they refer property and business owners looking to redevelop the downtown area to the programs and organizations that can assist them in making their endeavors successful. When public dollars inspire private investment in downtown redevelopment, major projects that fulfill the SC Plan come to life. The evidence can be seen in the private to public funding leverages; the OCDC Façade Improvement Program alone boasts a 7:1 ratio since its inception and has increased to an 11:1 funding leverage for the past five years.

While the SC Workgroup benefits from engaging its business and community participants, it also faces some challenges in implementing the SC Plan. At times, diverse team members may produce diverging views about how to execute the plan, since the town, the OCDC, businesses, and residents have different, and sometimes competing, priorities. Though working out solutions may cause delays in implementing various components of the SC Plan, the overall goals have been and will be reached. This is in part due to the extraordinary partnership between the OCDC and the Mayor and City Council. The two parties have been able to take a balanced approach to projects in the SC Area to ensure their successful completion. An example of this balancing act can be seen in the current project to build a public safety mixed-use facility on Somerset Street. Both the OCDC and the Town of Ocean City committed to constructing the facility, each sharing half of the costs. Delays occurred while the Mayor and City Council juggled numerous competing funding priorities and the OCDC secured grants to support predevelopment and construction costs, however both the town and the OCDC worked tirelessly to set the project in motion, resulting in groundbreaking taking place in the Spring of 2024. This kind of collaboration utilized SC Workgroup members in both the municipality and community-based nonprofits to bring a vital project to life.

Another perceived challenge may regard the seasonal aspect of the Ocean City downtown community. Most businesses in the SC Area close after the "shoulder season" ends and many business leaders may not be available or easily reached. This might have posed a problem when moving forward with the strategies that address the weaknesses noted in the SC Plan, however the workgroup members and the core community and business leaders remain dedicated to it during the off-season and show diligence in making progress. This has been the SC Workgroup's record over the past five years, and we expect it will continue through the next five years.

- (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?

**Answer:**

Representative input was provided by the members participating in the SC Workgroup. Also, activities through the Town of Ocean City and allied organizations like the Greater Ocean City Chamber of Commerce, the Ocean City Hotel-Motel-Restaurant Association, the Art League of Ocean City, and others provided opportunities for the workgroup to receive public feedback regarding the SC Plan. A public work session of the Mayor and City Council disseminated information to the public about the plan and allowed for public participation and feedback.

The Sustainable Communities Action Plan bases its goals, outcomes, strategies, and action items on the 2017 Comprehensive Plan Update and the 2018 Strategic Plan for the Town of Ocean City, Maryland. This document can be downloaded at <https://oceancitymd.gov/oc/departments/planning-community-development/comprehensive-plan/>.

- (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.

**Answer:**

Yes. While we do not require any immediate technical assistance from State agencies, we recognize that the future of SC Plan implementation will rely on continued State funding for successful grant programs. Technical assistance will be sought from the following departments for the indicated

**Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development:**

OCDC's Façade Improvement, Roof Improvement, and Streetside Fence Programs will enhance the overall attractiveness, livability, and walkability of the SC Area, and its Green Building Initiatives Program will continue to help conserve energy and save residents and businesses money. Strategic Demolition grants will assist residents and businesses in removing aging structures that are in disrepair to make room for redevelopment.

Further technical assistance will be sought to tackle the seasonal workforce housing challenges in the SC Area. Thousands of workers arrive every summer to fill the more than 12,000 positions required to operate this seaside resort. The insufficient workforce housing stock creates systematic problems for our downtown area. Many J-1 Visa student workers opt to accept employment in other seasonal job markets because they cannot find suitable housing in Ocean City, resulting in workforce shrinkages in the SC Area. Others must find housing in extended communities outside of the SC Area, which causes commuting challenges as most of J-1 Visa workers do not have reliable transportation. While the public transit system in Ocean City is effective and reliable, it does not meet the needs of all J-1 workers, as many live quite a distance from their worksite and peak travel times often impedes the commute. As many current affordable housing programs do not address these kinds of seasonal issues, we will be seeking additional technical assistance to access information and funding to solve this problem.



**Maryland Department of Commerce:**

The workgroup will benefit from technical assistance in identifying non-competitive downtown attractions and facilities to be developed on the Model Block with a preference for mixed-use structures. Some primary tenants could be the local post office, a discovery/educational center, business incubator, workforce housing, and an aquarium and/or marine rescue facility.

**Maryland Historical Trust and the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority:**

These agencies could provide assistance in renovating the new location for the Ocean City Life Saving Museum and designated historic structures such as the Henry Hotel.

**Maryland State Arts Council:**

The SC Workgroup endeavors to make the area more walkable and livable. Public art enriches the lives of those who live, work, and play in downtown Ocean City, and this contributes to the community's livability and walkability. The group has and will be seeking funding and technical assistance to expand our public art projects in the SC Area.

**Maryland Department of Transportation:**

One of the anticipated outcomes in the next five years regards streetscape improvements. One of the largest projects scheduled for the future are streetscape improvements of Baltimore Avenue from North Division Street to 15<sup>th</sup> Street. This will include burying utility lines, widening sidewalks for safety, and creating other aesthetic improvements. We expect to seek MDOT for technical assistance in obtaining funding from Federal, State, and other sources to complete the project.

## **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: Continuing Downtown Revitalization**

*Outcomes:*

- *Visually improved business and residential buildings.*
- *Increased property values in the downtown area.*
- *Reduced energy expenses.*

*Projects:*

1. *OCDC Façade Improvement Program: Started in 2002, this program provides financial assistance to business and residential property owners to improve the exterior of their buildings, creating an attractive streetside view and increasing property values. In the past five years, there have been 70 buildings with completed façade projects supported by this program in the SC Area, resulting in a total of \$2.9 million of improvements with \$292,816 in public funding. The private to public funding leverage for this period stands at 10:1, which demonstrates the community's dedication to revitalizing downtown Ocean City.*
2. *OCDC Green Building Initiatives Program: This program improves the quality of the building stock in the SC Area by making revitalized buildings more energy efficient; it enhances the attractiveness of renovated structures, reduces power bills, and supports local and state environmental initiatives. In the past five years, the program assisted 57 buildings in completing green building projects that totaled \$864,482 and received \$200,402 in public funding. The private to public funding leverage during this period came to a 4:1 ratio, which surpasses the minimum 2:1 ratio required by the program.*
3. *Other revitalization programs over the past five years:*
  - *OCDC Business Assistance Program: 16 projects; \$874,293 total investment; \$82,629 public funding; 11:1 private to public funding leverage.*
  - *OCDC Roof Improvement Program: This program has grown substantially with 55% of all projects being completed in the past five years. There were 32 projects; \$676,474 total investment; \$80,529 OCDC funding; 8:1 private to OCDC funding leverage.*
  - *OCDC Streetside Fence Program: 18 projects; \$104,322 total investment; \$33,595 OCDC funding; 3:1 private to OCDC funding leverage.*

*Partners:*

*Ocean City Development Corporation, Business Owners, Residential Owners, Town of Ocean City, Worcester County, and Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development*

*Impact:*

- *Increased taxable property values.*
- *Incentivized property and business owners to maintain and improve adjacent properties.*
- *Created a more appealing streetscape for tourists and residents, making the SC Area community more livable and walkable.*

## Accomplishment 2: Growing Special Events

### Outcome:

- *Attracted additional people to downtown Ocean City*
- *The Main Street Program and Town of Ocean City Strategic Tourism Plan was implemented with free family events and concert performances to encourage visitation of downtown businesses, recreation, and venues.*
- *Many businesses in the Sustainable Communities Area experienced an economic boost during new and expanded events.*

### Projects:

1. *Sunset Park Party Nights: This free series of live musical concerts has steadily increased in attendance by 10% to 15% each year for the past five years. The Town of Ocean City and the OCDC work together to promote, sponsor, and manage this popular concert series.*
2. *Free Family Fun: Every week during the summer, residents and visitors could experience family-friendly movies on the beach, beach dance parties, kite shows, programs at the OC Lifesaving Station Museum, Sunset Park music, OC Cruzers car displays and music at Somerset Plaza, and beach fireworks.*
3. *OCTober Shore Craft Beer Fest: Now in its 9<sup>th</sup> year, this festival has grown to 1,500 participants which is the venue's maximum capacity. With the exception of 2020 (COVID-19 pandemic), this festival has sold the maximum number of tickets allowed. As it has outgrown its current venue, the festival will move to the Downtown Recreation Complex at 4<sup>th</sup> Street to increase ticket sales and attract more off-season tourism.*
4. *Annual Ocean City Events: For many years, large events have been held in the inlet parking lot in downtown Ocean City during the "shoulder" months of May and September. These events include Springfest, Spring Cruisin, Bikefest, Endless Summer Cruisin, Sunfest, etc. This also includes fitness events like the Storm Warriors 5k Run/Walk and the Ocean City Running Festival. Over the past five years, the crowds have grown for these events and the number of events has expanded the town's busy season well into October.*
5. *Ocean's Calling Music Festival: The Town of Ocean City hosted this music festival that was produced and promoted by C3 Presents. C3 sold 50,000 tickets per day for three days, drawing visitors from all over the country and some international attendees. Boardwalk businesses from the inlet to North Division Street were permitted to operate inside the festival's footprint. Feedback from most of the businesses was positive, as sales increased dramatically from the same September to October weekend in previous years. The festival is scheduled to return for the next three years (2024-2026).*

### Partners:

*Ocean City Development Corporation, Town of Ocean City, Shore Craft Beer, C3 Presents, Ocean City Tourism Commission, Downtown Businesses, Promoters for Various Events, and the Ocean City Recreation Boosters*

### Impact:

- *Added visitation during the shoulder season to expand Ocean City's economic growth.*
- *Boosted sales revenues for downtown businesses.*
- *Provided cultural enrichment for the Ocean City experience.*
- *Hotel taxes help to fund the municipal government and its valuable projects.*

### **Accomplishment 3: Relocated Downtown Public Works Transit Facilities**

*Outcome:*

- *Constructed new Downtown Public Works Public Works and Transit Facility at 200 St. Louis Avenue.*
- *Demolished Whiteside Lot Public Works Facility and converted the property to municipal parking.*

*Projects:*

1. *Downtown Public Works and Transit Facility: Located at 200 St. Louis Avenue, this building was constructed to replace the Whiteside Lot Public Works Facility. The 19,318 square foot building houses the boardwalk trams and other vehicles from the Town of Ocean City Department of Public Works. These vehicles provide boardwalk transit, beach maintenance, and other public works services. In addition, the facility was elevated to protect it from flood damage and provide stormwater management practices, as flooding from Sinepuxent Bay often affects many areas along St. Louis Avenue. Building plans underwent design review by the OCDC to ensure that they met the Downtown Design Standards.*
2. *Whiteside Lot Public Works Facility: Located at South 1<sup>st</sup> Street, this aging facility fell into a state of disrepair. The facility had been with the resort for nearly six decades, and the pre-engineered metal structure for nearly five decades. The location proved to be problematic for a public works facility, as it stood at the gateway for summer tourists to the popular inlet and downtown Boardwalk area. The unsightly structure and the vehicles parked on the lot did not provide an attractive streetside view for locals or visitors making their way to the inlet parking lot to attend a festival or to park while enjoying the beach, Boardwalk, and amusements at the pier. To solve the issue, the Town of Ocean City demolished the structure once the new Downtown Public Works and Transit Facility had been constructed. Afterwards, the town developed the property into a municipal parking lot with 63 spaces.*

*Partners:*

*Ocean City Tourism Commission, Ocean City Development Corporation*

*Impact:*

- *Removed an eyesore public works facility at the Whiteside Lot to support the revitalization of the SC Area.*
- *Provided a visually appealing Public Works & Transit Facility at St. Louis Avenue that conforms to the Downtown Design Standards and makes the SC Area more livable and walkable.*
- *Added parking spaces to the SC Area to increase capacity for growing numbers of visitors during peak summer travel periods and provided parking when the Inlet Parking Lot closes or reduces parking to accommodate Special Events.*

## **Accomplishment 4: Seasonal Workforce Housing**

### *Outcome:*

- *Creation of new OCDC workforce housing program.*
- *Added seasonal workforce housing created through renovations to convert current structures to workforce housing.*
- *Upgraded workforce housing structures to improve living conditions for seasonal workers.*
- *Modified Town of Ocean City's zoning code to allow for non-accessory workforce housing.*

### *Projects:*

1. *OCDC Development and Assistance Program: The OCDC created a program that financially supports a portion of the costs for business and property owners to construct new workforce housing or renovate current structures to upgrade employee housing or convert buildings with other types of uses into employee housing. Business and property owners taking advantage of this program must sign an agreement to keep the new or renovated property as workforce housing for no less than five years.*
2. *New Workforce Housing Projects: The OCDC partially funded a Smart Growth Impact Fund (SGIF) project to convert a current structure on Dorchester Street into seasonal, J-1 Visa student workforce housing; it produced 55 new beds for these workers.*
3. *Support for J-1 Visa Student Workers: To support the seasonal international workers operating under a J-1 Visa, local government and nonprofit organizations stepped in to give direct assistance. The OC Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) provided bicycles for employees living in workforce housing to commute, and churches and ministries in the SC Area offered free meals for international student workers to meet their nutritional needs. These supports helped J-1 Visa workers to succeed in their seasonal experience at Ocean City, which created valuable word-of-mouth advertisement to their family and friends overseas.*
4. *Workforce Housing Upgrades: Over the past five years, the OCDC used a variety of funding sources to upgrade the exteriors of workforce housing structures throughout the SC Area, while private property owners remodeled the interiors. The partnership between OCDC and private investors saw the renovation of at least six structures offering workforce housing.*
5. *Town of Ocean City Zoning Codes: Recognizing that businesses and community organizations advocated for more employee housing in Ocean City to accommodate the seasonal workforce, the Town of Ocean City began looking for solutions. During the COVID-19 pandemic, much of the workforce housing stock was converted to Airbnb-style rentals, because J-1 Visas were not being issued for seasonal student workers and the overall workforce in Ocean City shrunk during this period. Though some of the employee housing stock has returned since then, a shortage of suitable housing continues to afflict the SC Area. In response, the Town of Ocean City Council passed an ordinance to change the current zoning code to allow for non-accessory workforce housing construction. The code previously required employers to only build workforce housing for their employees as an accessory to their current properties; this meant to prevent businesses from buying up property in residential neighborhoods and setting up dormitory style housing. The new ordinance allows for non-accessory employee housing within the municipality, include the SC Area; however, an approval process is still required. The result will incentivize businesses to develop more workforce housing in other areas of downtown Ocean City.*

### *Partners:*

*Town of Ocean City, Ocean City Development Corporation, Property Owners, and Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development*

### *Impact:*

- *Grant funding provided by the OCDC Development and Assistance Program has enabled more workforce housing projects to come to fruition. Developers receive assistance in the design and up-front costs, making a difference in improving the viability of their projects and acquiring private financing.*
- *More workforce housing construction and/or renovation throughout the SC Area and beyond is being pursued, as the issue is being highlighted through the aforementioned program, media outlets, and the Town of Ocean City.*
- *More seasonal workers have been returning to Ocean City as the workforce housing stock increases.*



## **Accomplishment 5: Beach to Bay Access**

### *Outcome:*

- *Improvements to streets connecting the Boardwalk to the Sinepuxent Bay*
- *Extension of the bayside boardwalk to Cambria Hotel north of the Harry W. Kelley Memorial Bridge (Rt. 50 Bridge).*
- *Art Outside the Box painted utility boxes draw more pedestrian traffic throughout the downtown area.*

### *Projects:*

1. *Somerset Streetscape: In May 2022, the street and sidewalks were improved between S. Baltimore and S. Philadelphia Avenues to make them safer, more attractive, and more walkable. This new street segment was changed to a one-way street (east bound) with 10-foot-wide sidewalks on both sides, a decorative stamped concrete pattern, street lights and new landscaping. The project also included placing utility lines underground and adding new utilities such as water and storm drains. The intent was to make this an extension of Somerset Plaza, a pedestrian street that connects the Boardwalk and beach to South Baltimore Avenue; the connection now extends to South Philadelphia Avenue, just a single block from St. Louis Avenue and the bayside bars, restaurants and watersports.*
2. *Cambria Hotel Boardwalk Extension: Upon its completion in 2020, the Cambria Hotel featured an extension of the bayside boardwalk open to the public. This marks the first extension of the boardwalk north of the Rt. 50 Bridge.*
3. *Art Outside the Box: The OCDC published a walking tour brochure in 2021 to guide art lovers in viewing more than 38 painted utility boxes in the SC Area.*
4. *Downtown Recreation Complex: Between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> street from Philadelphia Avenue to the Bay, the Town of Ocean City has begun redevelopment of the public park at this location. The new recreation facilities are currently being updated to create a more livable, walkable space for residents and visitors along the St. Louis Avenue corridor. The new facilities include open green spaces and a playground for public enjoyment, a renovated Ocean Bowl Skate Park featuring a mural, a bayside boardwalk available for pedestrian traffic and recreational fishing and crabbing, and new basketball and pickleball/tennis courts. Also, the park's open green space and boardwalk appear ideal for small to medium-sized special events. These features will draw more pedestrians to the area, thereby increasing connectivity between the beach and the bay. Construction is scheduled for completion before the 2024 summer tourism season.*
5. *Within the last five years, the following projects have been successfully continued:*
  - *Special event programs scheduled at the Somerset Street pedestrian plaza to draw interest to the walkable areas of Downtown Ocean City between the Boardwalk and the Bay.*
  - *Shuttle busses provided access to use Somerset Street bus stop.*
  - *Concerts and festivals featured at Sunset Park.*
  - *Wayfinding signage installed to help pedestrians find locations throughout Downtown Ocean City.*
  - *Crosswalk improvements and curb cuts installed for easy walkability and mobility for disabled pedestrians.*
  - *Marketing inserts included in the local newspaper to promote Downtown Ocean City.*

### *Partners:*

*Town of Ocean City, Ocean City Development Corporation, Property Owners, and Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development*

### *Impact:*

- *Enhanced the downtown destination of the bayside boardwalk and amusements.*
- *Created more pedestrian traffic in the middle blocks of the SC Area.*

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

*Outcome:*

***Limited Restoration and Maintenance of Older Buildings***

*Narrative:*

*It is important to continue existing grant programs that provide assistance with restoration of older buildings in the SC Area (Façade, Green Building, Streetside Fencing, Roofing etc.). These programs incentivize business and property owners to improve their structures and partner together in the revitalization of the SC Area.*

*In trying to achieve a balance between demolition/redevelopment and restoration of existing older buildings that provide important historic context and community character, it has been necessary to continue providing incentive programs for existing property investment.*

*Where demolition of aging structures has taken place, a delay in redevelopment investment has resulted in interim use of vacant land for income producing public parking lots. By continuing with these grant programs, we can slowly move towards redeveloping these interim parking lots into other uses that benefit the SC Area. Some of these older structures are currently being targeted for seasonal workforce housing or partial mixed-use seasonal workforce housing.*

*Outcome:*

***Delayed Model Block Redevelopment***

*Narrative:*

*Streetscape capital improvements have made the bordering Somerset Street much more livable and walkable. These have been noted in Accomplishment 5. However, the OCDC has not yet secured an “anchor tenant” for the Model Block parcels. OCDC is evaluating new possible tenants, such as the U.S. Postal Office, which will be vacating its Philadelphia Avenue location in the SC Area. Possibly, this opportunity could present the Model Block with a mixed-use project that incorporates workforce housing, which has become a serious challenge for the downtown business community. The OCDC remains open to redeveloping the Model Block with several smaller mixed-use projects over time rather than one large anchor tenant. Therefore, the OCDC will develop a more fluid Model Block Redevelopment Plan and work towards its implementation during the next five years.*

*The interim use of the Model Block parcels for public parking has provided another revenue stream for the OCDC to fund additional projects that benefit or revitalize the SC Area. These funds may include funding smaller mixed-use with seasonal housing and/or attraction/educational projects on the Model Block. Redevelopment activities will continue under the direction of the OCDC Board of Directors and the management and execution by OCDC staff.*

## Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

### *Outcome:*

#### *Expansion of the Sustainable Communities Area from 15<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> Street to 33<sup>rd</sup> Street*

### *Narrative:*

*Ocean City Mayor and City Council have identified a Town Strategic Plan priority to consider expansion of the OCDC program area north to 33rd Street based on successful outcomes to date in the Downtown area.*

*This goal has been deferred due to several challenges that such an expansion would produce at this time:*

- A significant change in architectural character occurs around 21<sup>st</sup> Street, which would require the development of a new set of architectural guidelines prior to expanding the design overlay zone.*
- Existing program funding would potentially be diverted from the downtown revitalization area before the preferred outcomes are met in that area.*
- Existing staff would be required to stretch time and resources across an additional 287 acres. This could place some current downtown revitalization projects in jeopardy.*

*The goals to expand the Sustainable Communities Area from 15<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> Street to 33<sup>rd</sup> Street will be reexamined before the next SC renewal application (2028). In the meantime, we will address revitalization and redevelopment in the current SC Area to maintain the efficiency of our staff's efforts and ensure the optimal disbursement of funding and resources. Once long-term revitalization goals have been achieved and infill development has increased to ideal levels, the expansion of the SC Area may again be included as a primary goal of the SC Plan.*

## **Part II: Competitive Funding**

Use the rows below to list competed funds sought for sustainability or revitalization projects since receiving Sustainable Communities designation.	Source (federal, state, foundation, etc.)	Amount Received		If no funding was received, what technical or other assistance from the state would help with future applications?	Other Notes
<b>Community Legacy (CL):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Façade Improvement Program</li> <li>Green Building Initiatives Program</li> <li>Business Assistance Program</li> <li>Public Safety Mixed-Use Facility Predevelopment</li> </ul>	DHCD	<u>2014-2018</u> \$221,646 \$79,785 <u>\$82,085</u> \$383,516	<u>2019-2023</u> \$305,960 \$169,430 \$67,915 <u>\$68,323</u> \$611,628		Grand total of \$995,144 received since 2014.  Current CL active grants that have not yet been spent or reimbursed total to \$330,310.
<b>Strategic Demolition Fund (SDF):</b> <u>2014-2018</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1101 Atlantic Avenue project</li> <li>16 Baltimore Avenue project</li> <li>Model Block demolition</li> <li>216 S. Baltimore Avenue project</li> </ul> <u>2019-2023</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>104 Dorchester Street project</li> <li>217 S. Baltimore Avenue Project</li> </ul>	DHCD	<u>2014-2018</u> \$200,000 \$32,500 \$200,000 <u>\$90,000</u> \$522,500	<u>2019-2023</u> \$100,000 <u>\$150,000</u> \$250,000		Grand total of \$772,500 received since 2014.
<b>Community Safety &amp; Enhancement Program:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highway Safety Grants</li> </ul>	MDOT	2014 - \$6,682 2015 - \$7,942 2016 – \$7,642 2017 - \$7,061 2018 - <u>\$7,958</u> \$29,643			Grants issued for the entire Town of Ocean City. These numbers represent the SC Area, based on 11.2% of land area.
<b>Maryland Bikeways Program:</b>	MDOT	\$0		No funding was received from this program within the SC Area. Bikeway concerns within the SC Area are addressed by the Ocean City Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee, which receives technical assistance from the State Highway Administration Safety Committee.	

## Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

Sidewalk Retrofit Program:	MDOT	N/A		Sidewalk retrofitting has been completed as an SHA project.														
Water Quality Revolving Loan Fund:	MDE	Undetermined																
<b>Other Funding Programs:</b> <i>examples are U.S. HUD Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), or grants from USDA, EPA, Appalachian Regional Commission, Chesapeake Bay Trust, Maryland Heritage Areas Association, Preservation Maryland, Safe Routes to School, Maryland Rural Development Corporation, Maryland Energy Administration, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, etc.</i>																		
*Please add more rows if necessary																		
Heritage Areas Program: <u>2019-2023</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>217 S. Baltimore Avenue Project</li></ul>	MHT	\$50,000		Bay to Beach Heritage Area Grant.														
African American Heritage Preservation Program: <u>2019-2023</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Henry Hotel preservation project at 101 S. Division Street</li></ul>	MHT	\$250,000		OCDC assisted the Henry Hotel Foundation, Inc. in receiving an AAHPP grant to preserve the historic landmark, Henry Hotel.														
Land and Water Conservation Fund Grants: <u>2019-2023</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Downtown Recreation Complex redevelopment project at the 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Street.</li></ul>	DNR	\$1,000,000																
Hazard Mitigation Grant Program	FEMA/MEMA	<table><tr><td><u>2014-2018</u></td><td><u>2019-2023</u></td></tr><tr><td>\$4,620</td><td>Phase 1 - \$52,575</td></tr><tr><td>\$3,584</td><td>Phase 2 - \$44,371</td></tr><tr><td>\$3,526</td><td>Signs - <u>\$36,938</u></td></tr><tr><td>\$5,889</td><td>\$133,884</td></tr><tr><td><u>\$9,940</u></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>\$27,559</td><td></td></tr></table>	<u>2014-2018</u>	<u>2019-2023</u>	\$4,620	Phase 1 - \$52,575	\$3,584	Phase 2 - \$44,371	\$3,526	Signs - <u>\$36,938</u>	\$5,889	\$133,884	<u>\$9,940</u>		\$27,559			2014-2018 numbers are 11.2% of grants for the entire town. 2019-2023 numbers are for valve projects and variable message signs to warn about street flooding.
<u>2014-2018</u>	<u>2019-2023</u>																	
\$4,620	Phase 1 - \$52,575																	
\$3,584	Phase 2 - \$44,371																	
\$3,526	Signs - <u>\$36,938</u>																	
\$5,889	\$133,884																	
<u>\$9,940</u>																		
\$27,559																		

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

1. Currently, the OCDC does not have a funding source to restore its Business Assistance Program. The program proved successful in the past, however a slowdown in business development occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the program was temporarily discontinued. The OCDC is ready to move forward with the program, so an application was filed DHCD for FY2024.
2. The Town of Ocean City and the OCDC have placed great emphasis on providing financial incentives for new seasonal workforce housing in Ocean City. Since the town has revised the zoning code to allow for non-accessory workforce housing, business and property investors have more options for securing housing for their employees.
3. Minor flooding of the streets and low-lying buildings continues to pose a short-term and long-term issue that affects downtown Ocean City. Correcting these issues will require funding from State and possibly Federal programs.
4. Located in the heart of downtown Ocean City, the Model Block project will require investments from public funding to bring it to fruition. The Town of Ocean City and the OCDC have already spent time and money to assemble the properties, which now provide public parking that partially funds revitalization efforts in the SC Area. Additional public funds will be necessary for the redevelopment of these properties to bring quality projects to the inner blocks of downtown Ocean City.
5. The streetscape along Baltimore Avenue from North Division to 15<sup>th</sup> Street requires attention, as the utility lines and narrow sidewalks are both unsightly and unsafe. The utilities along the rest of Baltimore Avenue have already been buried underground to provide a pleasant view and safer conditions whenever heavy storms batter the coast. Additionally, the narrow sidewalks along this stretch of the street are not particularly safe for baby carriages, wheelchairs, or micromobility vehicles. Currently, there are no identified funding sources, but public funds will certainly help to complete this rather expensive project.
6. Waterfront access for public recreation remains a priority to add value along mid-block redevelopment areas. Bayside Boardwalk construction opportunities will remain a priority along with support of US Coast Guard operations near the Ocean City Inlet, and potential for a public pier at Sunset Park.



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

Town of Ocean City

Submitted on 12/14/2023

## Environment

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

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

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnerships with Federal, State, County, and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) allow for combined investment in maintaining a high quality, sustainable environment surrounding Maryland’s ocean resort community.</li> <li>The strong tourism economy supports an abundance of recreational opportunities for both visitors and residents.</li> <li>The SC Area makes use of the Town of Ocean City’s 10 mile long Atlantic Ocean beach.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SC Area is at risk for severe weather events that affect the seasonal tourism economy.</li> <li>Potential winds and floods impact the existing infrastructure, property, and resident population. Stormwater and tidal flooding can overwhelm existing drainage systems along the bayside.</li> <li>Mid-blocks between the beach and the bay are separated from natural and recreational features that add property value; this excludes the east block of the Downtown Recreation Complex between 3rd and 4th Street.</li> </ul>

<u>Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures</u>	<u>Strategies and Action Items</u>	<u>Implementation Partners</u>
<p>Outcome 1: Enhance Boardwalk to Bayside connections for added value in the mid-block locations.</p> <p>Progress Measures:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase new mixed-use development in mid-blocks by 10%.</li> <li>Increase property tax base by 10%.</li> <li>Improved access to waterfront recreation.</li> </ol>	<p>Strategy A: Expand special events and free family activities/entertainment at bayside venues, including the new Downtown Recreation Complex.</p> <p>Strategy B: Identify destination attraction and mixed-use projects for Model Block that emphasize natural environmental strengths of the location and strengthens community resilience.</p> <p>Strategy C: Participate with Worcester County, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, National Park Service, U.S. Coast Guard and Army Corps of Engineers to maintain and improve Ocean City Inlet navigation channel.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Town of Ocean City</li> <li>Worcester County</li> <li>Maryland Department of Natural Resources</li> <li>Maryland Coastal Bays Program</li> <li>Maryland Department of the Environment</li> <li>National Park Service</li> <li>U.S. Coast Guard</li> <li>U.S. Army Corps of Engineers</li> </ul>

## Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section C

<p>Outcome 2: Mitigate impacts of shallow/nuisance flooding in Sustainable Communities Area.</p> <p>Progress Measures:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Monitor high tide and storm flooding events for depth and frequency over time.</li><li>2. Elevate new development when feasible.</li><li>3. Raise street elevation and improve stormwater management infrastructure when feasible.</li></ol>	<p>Strategy A: Monitor progress of stormwater outfall gate valve mitigation project and stormwater utility cleanout project.</p> <p>Strategy B: Compile five-year record of storm and high tide events, indicating their durations and impacts; compare data to the new FEMA Risk MAP information, adjusting for change in vertical datum.</p> <p>Strategy C: Utilize application technology to report flooding in the SC Area (MyCoast Maryland).</p> <p>Strategy D: Implement an Adopt-Your-Drain program to engage volunteers in keeping storm drains clear of debris to ensure effective drainage for the mitigation of flooding in the SC Area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Town of Ocean City</li><li>• Worcester County</li><li>• Maryland Department of Natural Resources</li><li>• MyCoast Maryland App</li><li>• Maryland Department of Planning</li><li>• Residents of Ocean City</li></ul>
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## Economy

This section is centered on economic growth and management.

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

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our iconic beach and boardwalk with amusements and fishing piers draw visitors.</li> <li>• The vibrant business community</li> <li>• Diverse and active NGOs promoting tourism (OCDC, Chamber of Commerce, Hotel-Motel-Restaurant Association)</li> <li>• Eight million annual visitors, access from major urban centers within a four-hour drive</li> <li>• Investor confidence in the local market</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weather dependent tourism industry.</li> <li>• Competition with other regional beach communities</li> <li>• Redevelopment investment is influenced by national trends that may destabilize funding and resources (interest rates, building materials, labor costs).</li> <li>• Lack of affordable seasonal workforce housing.</li> </ul>

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Adaptive Marketing</p> <p>Progress Measures:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Expand shoulder season visitation</li> <li>2. Compete with West Ocean City and other markets</li> <li>3. Promote family activities and traditions</li> </ol>	<p>Strategy A: Monitor tourism metrics.</p> <p>Strategy B: Coordinate and schedule additional sponsored events/activities during the shoulder season.</p> <p>Strategy C: Implement marketing campaigns to expand year-round workforce to support expanded shoulder season.</p> <p>Strategy D: Continuously reinvent tourism marketing to find innovative strategies for competitive advantage and benefits for seasonal visitors and property owners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maryland Department of Commerce</li> <li>• Worcester County Tourism &amp; Economic Development</li> <li>• Town of Ocean City Department of Tourism</li> <li>• Tourism Commission</li> </ul>

## Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section C

<p>Outcome 2: Redevelopment/Reinvestment</p> <p>Progress Measures:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increase property tax base by at least 10%.</li> <li>2. Administer design guidelines consistently.</li> <li>3. Implement a Fee-in-Lieu-of Parking (FILOP) program at a minimum of two locations in the SC Area.</li> <li>4. Plan for future changes, such as... Route 50 bridge reconstruction, additional mixed-use structures, Model Block development, Baltimore Avenue Improvements, etc.</li> </ol>	<p>Strategy A: Balance public property acquisition with calculated redevelopment potential to maintain and improve the property tax base.</p> <p>Strategy B: Continue to review new construction plans in the SC Area to provide technical assistance to ensure that design standards are applied.</p> <p>Strategy C: Designate surface parking spaces to pilot a FILOP program to support future parking solutions.</p> <p>Strategy D: Continue investment in streetscape infrastructure to improve livability and walkability of the SC Area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town of Ocean City</li> <li>• OCDC</li> <li>• OCDC Downtown Design Committee</li> <li>• Maryland Department of Transportation</li> <li>• State Highway Administration</li> <li>• Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development</li> <li>• U.S. Department of Transportation</li> </ul>
<p>Outcome 3: New and Expanding Small Business</p> <p>Progress Measures:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Attract new small businesses or incentivize current small businesses to open new locations with Business Assistance Programs.</li> <li>2. Increase number of new and expanded small business locations by at least 10%.</li> <li>3. Infill development to include commercial/residential mixed-use buildings for small business development.</li> </ol>	<p>Strategy A: Fund the Business Assistance Program with additional grants and fundraising campaigns and offer program to incentivize new and/or expanding small businesses.</p> <p>Strategy B: Identify industry vacant spaces and promote them for new business development.</p> <p>Strategy C: Identify gaps in industry development in the SC Area and invite new or expanding businesses from underrepresented industries to set up shop in downtown Ocean City.</p> <p>Strategy D: Connect new and/or expanding small businesses with organizations and programs to support their business and workforce development.</p> <p>Strategy E: Offer FILOP services to meet parking requirements and encourage infill development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town of Ocean City</li> <li>• OCDC</li> <li>• Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development</li> <li>• Workforce Development Organizations</li> <li>• Small Business Administration</li> <li>• SCORE (Coastal Delmarva)</li> </ul>

## Transportation

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

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

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to major population centers through the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Route 50 via the Bay Bridge</li> <li>Route 13 and Route 113 via the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel</li> <li>U.S. Route 95 via Route 1 and Route 113</li> </ul> </li> <li>Well-developed urban transit system sized for peak seasonal population</li> <li>Interconnected transit with regional access via the Park and Ride Lot.</li> <li>Water-based recreation, private water taxis, and boat rentals and tours.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited event venue area requires shared use of public right-of-way at all times, especially during special events (cars, trucks, buses, bikes, rental vehicles, pedestrians, emergency vehicles).</li> <li>Portions of critical infrastructure and roads are below the FEMA base flood elevation (BFE) requirements and are subject to periodic flooding.</li> </ul>

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Baltimore Avenue Streetscape</p> <p>Progress Measures:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Install underground utilities between N. Division Street and 15th Street.</li> <li>Widen sidewalks to accommodate pedestrian traffic.</li> <li>Approve reconstruction plan and fund CIP project.</li> </ol>	<p>Strategy A: Coordinate utility relocations.</p> <p>Strategy B: Employ consultant for new design and conduct community outreaches</p> <p>Strategy C: Secure funding for capital project.</p> <p>Strategy D: Approve CIP project and construct improvements along the Baltimore Avenue corridor.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Town of Ocean City</li> <li>Maryland Department of Transportation</li> <li>State Highway Administration</li> <li>Utility Companies</li> <li>Property Owners</li> </ul>
<p>Outcome 2: Route 50 Bridge Reconstruction</p> <p>Progress Measures:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve visual appeal of Route 50 bridge.</li> <li>Complete structural repairs to maintain the functionality of the drawbridge.</li> <li>Improve safety for pedestrians on the bridge in the SC Area.</li> </ol>	<p>Strategy A: Coordinate with the State Highway Administration to make recommendations regarding bridge reconstruction.</p> <p>Strategy B: Create a deterrence to pedestrian crossing over Philadelphia Avenue where southbound traffic enters the westbound lanes of the Route 50 bridge by connecting upright bollards or installing a dividing fence.</p> <p>Strategy C: Improve pedestrian stairway connecting bridge to N. Division Street.</p> <p>Strategy D: Elevate entrance to Route 50 bridge to provide emergency access during natural disasters.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State Highway Administration</li> <li>Town of Ocean City</li> <li>OCDC</li> </ul>



## Housing

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

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

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The SC Area contains a variety in types of housing and affordability.</li> <li>The housing stock is attractive to investors due to the strong seasonal rental market for both tourists and workers.</li> <li>The SC Area features established neighborhoods for year-round residents.</li> <li>Property owners continue to invest in the renovation and replacement of traditional lodging in the downtown area with assistance from Sustainable Communities funding programs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workforce housing is dispersed across multiple properties.</li> <li>Existing workforce housing in the SC Area does not meet demand.</li> <li>There are not enough year-round residents in the downtown area to support local businesses.</li> <li>The demolition of aging structures often results in the temporary use of property as a fee parking lot.</li> </ul>

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Workforce Housing</p> <p>Progress Measures:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in the number of available housing units for seasonal workforce.</li> <li>Increase in quality improvements of workforce housing units.</li> </ol>	<p>Strategy A: Utilize strategic demolition grant program and zoning incentives to encourage mixed-use projects with a workforce housing component.</p> <p>Strategy B: Continue to encourage market-based private sector approach to meeting housing demand.</p> <p>Strategy C: Require resident management for workforce housing properties.</p> <p>Strategy D: Amend zoning ordinances to expand workforce housing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OCDC</li> <li>Private Sector</li> <li>Town of Ocean City</li> <li>Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development</li> </ul>
<p>Outcome 2: Increase Infill Development Housing</p> <p>Progress Measures:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in housing available for year-round residents.</li> <li>Increase in permanent, year-round population.</li> </ol>	<p>Strategy A: Promote the Primary Residence Incentive Program to attract year-round residents and encourage infill housing development or substantial improvements to existing housing structures.</p> <p>Strategy B: Offer FILOP services to meet parking requirements and encourage infill development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OCDC</li> <li>Town of Ocean City</li> <li>FILOP Blue Ribbon Committee</li> <li>Property Owners</li> </ul>

## Community Health and Quality of Life

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

This category includes projects focusing on (but not limited to): improvement of public health including improving community design to promote healthy behaviors such as walking and strengthening community support and connectedness through health and wellness programs and facilities that create inclusive communities. These projects may include built environment, indoor spaces, outdoor environments such as increasing community gardens and access to services including educational facilities and programs; health and wellness facilities and programs that serve multi-generations; senior facilities and programs; youth facilities and programs; facilities and programs for the disabled; civic amenities, access to quality food options; collaborations with faith-based organizations; arts and entertainment education; and homelessness prevention, services, and facilities. Projects should include community engagement that includes participation in the selection of strategies and outcomes, progress reports, and evaluation.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ocean City is a safe, clean, and green family resort with an active community of residents and guests that features a world-class beach and boardwalk.</li> <li>• The town and community invest in civic amenities and cultural assets.</li> <li>• The tourism economy keeps taxes low for residents while providing high quality public safety, services, infrastructure, entertainment, restaurants, recreation, etc.</li> <li>• Ocean City attracts natural and nature-based tourism due to its water resources.</li> <li>• The new Downtown Recreation Complex will feature a bayside boardwalk for fishing and crabbing, a skate park, basketball courts, tennis/pickleball courts, playgrounds, and plenty of open space for recreation and special events.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SC Area supports a heavy concentrated of activity and crowds in peak periods.</li> <li>• The transition to a year-round community of events and activities reduces the off season “rest period” for full-time residents.</li> <li>• There is limited full-time employment available in the SC Area.</li> <li>• Day trip and weekend visitations increase at a faster rate than week-long vacations.</li> </ul>

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Model Block Redevelopment</p> <p>Progress Measures:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increased land acquisition and downtown parking solutions.</li> <li>2. Identify two or more mixed-use projects with public services, attractions, businesses, educational or other opportunities that add value to the seasonal and year-round community.</li> </ol>	<p>Strategy A: Complete a master plan for the Model Block</p> <p>Strategy B: Encourage Opportunity Zone investments and partnerships in the development of the Model Block and supporting parking facility.</p> <p>Strategy C: Support small project development that gradually infills the Model Block while retaining parking that funds additional SC Area projects.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OCDC</li> <li>• Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development</li> <li>• Maryland Department of Commerce</li> </ul>

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<p>Outcome 2: Job Growth</p> <p>Progress Measures:</p> <p>Increase full-time employment to support neighborhood stability and safe family environment.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Coordinate with State and Worcester County Economic Development to locate corporate office or business incubator work center in the SC Area.</p> <p>Strategy B: Coordinate with workforce development agencies and organizations to upskill local workers to meet industry standards.</p> <p>Strategy C: Increase affordable housing stock to accommodate permanent, year-round residents who are filling full-time job openings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OCDC</li> <li>• Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development</li> <li>• Maryland Department of Commerce</li> <li>• Worcester County</li> <li>• Workforce Development Organizations</li> <li>• Local Workers</li> </ul>
<p>Outcome 3: Downtown Vitality</p> <p>Progress Measures:</p> <p>Promote and manage programs for a diversity of year-round activities that encourage an extended season and/or generate year-round business activity in the SC Area.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Encourage mixed-use redevelopment that includes both seasonal workforce housing as well as year-round residences.</p> <p>Strategy B: Promote Holiday Lights and other downtown “Main Street” activities to expand off season destination opportunities.</p> <p>Strategy C: Utilize the redeveloped Downtown Recreation Complex as an attraction and event space during the off season to draw visitors to the SC Area and promote livability for year-round residents.</p> <p>Strategy D: Restore historical structures in disrepair and convert them into education and learning centers to attract heritage tourists and promote a sense of place and history for local residents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OCDC</li> <li>• Town of Ocean City</li> <li>• Worcester County Economic Development</li> <li>• Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development</li> <li>• Maryland Historical Trust</li> </ul>

## Local Planning and Staffing Capacity

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

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

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mix of land uses and pyramidal zoning provides market adaptability and visitor attractions.</li> <li>SC Area is a traditional destination for entertainment in the evening after a day on the beach.</li> <li>Boardwalk's "Main Street" is prime real estate and creates a safe, walkable commercial district</li> <li>Non-conformity uses and structures encourage continued investment in maintenance, renovation, and reconstruction.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demolition of aging structures often results in interim or offsite surface parking facilities.</li> <li>Traffic congestion in the SC Area is concentrated at the Route 50 gateway.</li> </ul>

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Model Block Redevelopment</p> <p>Progress Measures:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify two or more destination uses with preference for small mixed-use projects.</li> <li>Maintain or increase taxable property values.</li> <li>Evaluate interim use of vacant parcels to meet parking demand.</li> </ol>	<p>Strategy A: Prepare a comprehensive Downtown Revitalization land use plan to evaluate potential redevelopment areas.</p> <p>Strategy B: Pilot a FILOP program at a minimum of two surface parking lot locations to determine the feasibility of expanding the program with a future option to build a parking structure containing FILOP spaces.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OCDC</li> <li>Town of Ocean City</li> <li>Worcester County Economic Development</li> <li>Maryland Department of Planning</li> <li>Maryland Department of Commerce</li> <li>Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development</li> </ul>

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<p>Outcome 2: Update Design Standards for the SC Area</p> <p>Progress Measures:</p> <p>Updated design standards for buildings located from the Inlet to 15<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> Street.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Discuss modifications to the Downtown Design Standards and receive recommendations from the Downtown Design Committee for consideration by the OCDC Board of Directors.</p> <p>Strategy B: Explore Planned Overlay Districts (POD) and their relationship to the Downtown Design Standards and form recommendations when appropriate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• OCDC</li><li>• OCDC Downtown Design Committee</li><li>• Town of Ocean City</li></ul>
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## **Sustainable Communities Workgroup Roster**

**Zach Bankert** Executive Director of the OCDC.

**Jenelle Gerthoffer** Town of Ocean City Environmental Engineer, Member of the Critical Area Commission for the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coast Bays.

**Glenn Irwin** Consultant, Local Tour Guide, Member of the Henry Hotel Foundation Inc. Board of Directors, Member of the Lower Shore Land Trust Board of Directors, and Former Executive Director of the OCDC.

**Bill Neville** Town of Ocean City Director of Planning and Community Development.

**Michael Nolen** Coldwell Banker Realty, Owner of Nolen Invest LLC and Nolen Vacation Rentals, and Member of the OCDC Board of Directors.

**David Noonan** Program Manager at the OCDC.

**Scott Savage** President of Trimper's Rides of Ocean City Inc., Trimper's Playland Inc., Trimper's Tidal Wave Inc., and Windsor Resort Inc., Chairman of the Board of Directors for Trimper Rides, President of Goody Hill Groundwork Inc., Member of the OCDC Board of Directors, Past President of the Ocean City Lions Club, and Past Board member of the Worcester County Development Committee, Atlantic General Hospital Foundation, Maryland Bankers Association, and Ocean City Downtown Improvement Association.

**Joe Wilson** Coastal Life Realty Group, President of the OCDC Board of Directors, Chairperson of the Town of Ocean City Planning and Zoning Commission, Member of the Greater Ocean City Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, and Past President of the Coastal Association of Realtors.



## **Additional Files: Photos/Records of Accomplishments**

### **Accomplishment 1: Continuing Downtown Revitalization**

#### **Facade, Roof, and Green Building Improvements**

- 3 St. Louis Avenue
- 6 6th Street
- 6 11th Street
- 6 Caroline Street
- 105 Wilmington Lane
- 108 S. Atlantic Avenue
- 302 11th Street
- 502 St. Louis Avenue
- 506 St. Louis Avenue
- 609 St. Louis Avenue
- 710 S. Atlantic Avenue
- 1210 Philadelphia Avenue
- 1403 St. Louis Avenue
- 1619 St. Louis Street

#### **Business Assistance Program**

- 14 Worcester Street - Selfie Fantasy
- 309 Atlantic Avenue - Telescope Pictures
- 404 S. Atlantic Avenue - Haagen-Dazs
- 1109 Atlantic Avenue - Quickies Mini Donuts & Coffee

### **Accomplishment 2: Growing Special Events**

#### **Articles Chronicling Special Events**

- Sunset Park Party Nights
- OCtoberfest Shore Craft Beer Festival
- Springfest
- Sunfest
- Ocean City Running Festival
- Ocean's Calling Music Festival

### **Accomplishment 3: Relocate Downtown Public Works Transit Facilities**

#### **Photos Include**

- Whiteside Lot Public Transit Station
- Demolition of Whiteside Lot Public Transit Station
- New Public Works and Transit Facility at 200 St. Louis Avenue (3 Photos)
- New Municipal Parking at Whiteside Lot

### **Accomplishment 4: Seasonal Workforce Housing**

- 104 Dorchester Street
- 204 Dorchester Street
- 206 Dorchester Street
- Zoning Code Changed for Workforce Housing

### **Accomplishment 5: Beach to Bay Access**

- Somerset Streetscape Improvements
- Cambria Bayside Boardwalk Extension
- Art Outside the Box Walking Tour
- Downtown Recreation Complex Redevelopment