



# SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES PROGRAM

## APPLICATION FOR DESIGNATION RENEWAL

### Eligible Applicants:

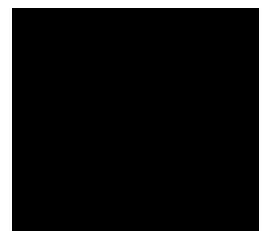
*Local Governments with a Sustainable Communities  
Designation*

*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 - 12.04.2024**



## **Overview of Sustainable Communities**

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

## **Purpose or Renewal and Streamlined Application**

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

## **Application Eligibility and Threshold Requirements**

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

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

## **Threshold Requirements**

All Sustainable Community applications must meet the following threshold requirements:

- 1) Sustainable Community Area boundaries must be entirely within a Priority Funding Area (PFA) and should be an area in need of renewal and reinvestment that would benefit from a targeted long-term strategy. Applicants can verify Priority Funding Area boundaries by visiting the MDP website at:  
<http://www.mdp.state.md.us/OurProducts/pfamap.shtml>
- 2) The proposed Sustainable Community is within or near a town center or transportation center, or there is a need for financing assistance for small businesses, nonprofit organizations or microenterprises;
- 3) The updated Plan must be consistent with other existing community or comprehensive plans;
- 4) A Sustainable Communities Workgroup is re-convened and a roster of members should be provided with the application.

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

### **Application Submission and Evaluation**

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

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

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

**Incomplete applications will not be accepted.**

Deliver Sustainable Community Applications via email:

To: Carter Reitman

[carter.reitman@maryland.gov](mailto:carter.reitman@maryland.gov)

Copy: Olivia Ceccarelli-McGonigal

[olivia.ceccarelli@maryland.gov](mailto:olivia.ceccarelli@maryland.gov)

### **Site Visits, Follow-up, and Technical Assistance**

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

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

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

### **Approval**

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

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

## **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. Report on accomplishments over past five years:**

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

### **C. Sustainable Communities Action Plan Update:**

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

## **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES PLAN ELEMENTS**

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

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

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

**ECONOMY:** Describes projects centered on economic growth and management.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN UPDATE**

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

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

### **Action Plan Guidance**

**1) For each element, identify the essential strengths and weaknesses of your community.**

*Example:*

Strength - Good sidewalk connectivity

Weakness - Insufficient bicycle infrastructure

**2) Based on those strengths and weaknesses, formulate specific outcomes that address the most pressing issues or greatest opportunities. Identify a way to measure the success of that outcome.**

*Example:*

Outcome - Expand fiber optic broadband Internet connections in Town

Progress Measure - Linear measurement of broadband fiber laid

**3) After defining the outcomes, list detailed strategies and discrete actions that will serve as the means to achieve those goals.**

*Example:*

Strategy A - Increase number of Town sponsored events

Action A - Organize a workgroup tasked with planning weekend events

Action B - Develop, with community input, a series of weekend events that the Town could host

**4) List potential partners that can support the successful implementation of these strategies through different types of resources.**

*Example:*

Partner 1 - DHCD (Community Legacy program)

Partner 2 - Small Business Administration (Services and financial assistance)

## **CHECKLIST AND TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**APPLICANT:** Baltimore County Department of Planning

**NAME OF SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY:** Towson

**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>             |                                 | Towson   |                        |
| <b>Name of Applicant:</b>                         |                                 | Baltimore County Department of Planning          |                        |
| <b>Applicant's Federal Identification Number:</b> |                                 |  |                        |
| <b>Applicant's Street Address:</b>                |                                 | 105 W Chesapeake Avenue                          |                        |
| <b>City: Towson</b>                               | <b>County: Baltimore</b>        | <b>State: MD</b>                                 | <b>Zip Code: 21204</b> |
| <b>Phone Number: 410-887-3480</b>                 | <b>Fax Number: 410-887-5696</b> | <b>Web Address:</b><br>www.baltimorecountymd.gov |                        |

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

|                               |            |                                 |            |
|-------------------------------|------------|---------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Name: David Birkenthal</b> |            | <b>Title: Community Planner</b> |            |
| [REDACTED]                    | [REDACTED] | [REDACTED]                      | [REDACTED] |
| [REDACTED]                    | [REDACTED] | [REDACTED]                      | [REDACTED] |
| [REDACTED]                    | [REDACTED] | [REDACTED]                      | [REDACTED] |

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

|                               |            |                                 |            |
|-------------------------------|------------|---------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Name: David Birkenthal</b> |            | <b>Title: Community Planner</b> |            |
| [REDACTED]                    | [REDACTED] | [REDACTED]                      | [REDACTED] |
| [REDACTED]                    | [REDACTED] | [REDACTED]                      | [REDACTED] |
| [REDACTED]                    | [REDACTED] | [REDACTED]                      | [REDACTED] |

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

|                              |            |   |            |
|------------------------------|------------|---|------------|
| <b>Name: Ngone Seye Diop</b> |            | <b>Title: Community Planning Division Chief</b> |            |
| [REDACTED]                   | [REDACTED] | [REDACTED]                                      | [REDACTED] |
| [REDACTED]                   | [REDACTED] | [REDACTED]                                      | [REDACTED] |
| [REDACTED]                   | [REDACTED] | [REDACTED]                                      | [REDACTED] |

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

- (1) Are you requesting any changes to your Sustainable Community boundary? Why or why not? If you are requesting an expansion of your boundary, identify at least one outcome in your Action Plan that would serve the expanded area and at least one State benefit that would support achievement of that outcome (e.g. Community Legacy grants, Safe Routes to School, etc.)

Yes. We are expanding the boundaries of the Towson Sustainable Community area to allow state funding to be used for a larger portion of the Road to Freedom trail project (Quality of Life, Outcome 2, Strategy B &



## Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section A

Transportation, Outcome 1, Strategy E.) The boundary expansion along Bosley Avenue is intended to include the entire Baltimore County right of way and sites along the trail, including the Howard Cooper Memorial Marker, the Bykota Senior Center, and the Pleasant Rest Cemetery. The Road to Freedom project represents a potential Community Legacy application or a SEED program application, as Goucher College is a partner for the project, to support a variety of capital improvements, such as wayfinding installations, public art, and interpretative signage.

Additionally, small portions of the boundary are being adjusted to correct mapping errors from previous iterations by better aligning the boundary with property lines and roadways.

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

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

(3) Approximate number of acres of entire SC Area: 493.04 ac

(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 X Other(s): Main Street Affiliate, Baltimore County Commercial Revitalization District, Baltimore County Design Review Panel area, Downtown Towson District

(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?

The Towson Sustainable Community area ("SC area") has an estimated 2022 population of 15,009, representing an increase of 45 individuals since 2018.

Approximately 20.51 % of the SC area's population is 65 years of age and over. This age bracket's share of the total population increased by 2.91% from 2018. Additionally, 32.26% of the SC area's population is 24 and younger, which slightly decreased by 0.24% since 2018.

The racial profile of the SC area is predominantly white, with 59.13% of the population in the "White alone, Not Hispanic or Latino" racial group. This percentage decreased from 2018, when 63.51% of the population was white. The "Black or African American alone, Not Hispanic or Latino" population has increased by 2.44% since 2018, and the "Hispanic/Latino of any race" population decreased by 0.95% since 2018 (individuals of this ethnicity may be of any race, according to the federal definition).

There are approximately 8,547 housing units in the SC area. 7,787 are occupied, representing a 91.11% occupancy rate. Since 2018, occupancy rate has increased while the vacancy rate has decreased by 1.36%. Housing occupancy was split with 31.65% of units being owner occupied and 59.45% being renter occupied, whereas in 2018 30.01% of units were owner occupied and 59.74% were renter occupied. More the half of housing units being renter-occupied likely reflects the concentration of apartment complexes in the downtown Towson area.

## Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section A

Among individuals 25 years old or over in the SC area, 94% graduated with a high school diploma or equivalent and 61% of individuals in the same range hold a bachelor's or advanced educational degree. These two figures have increased since 2018. The area's median household income increased by \$11,813 to \$78,646 since 2018.

|  | ACS 2018 5-Year<br>Estimates | ACS 2022 5-Year<br>Estimates | Change     |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------|
| Total estimated population:                                    | 14,964                       | 15,009                       | +45        |
| Median Age   | 37.2                         | 33.2                         | - 4.0      |
| Estimated population 65 and older                              | 2,632                        | 3,078                        | +446       |
| Estimated population 24 and younger                            | 4,864                        | 4,842                        | -22        |
| Estimated White population                                     | 9,504                        | 8,876                        | -628       |
| Estimated Black/African American population                    | 3,533                        | 3,911                        | + 378      |
| Estimated Hispanic/Latino (of any race) population             | 807                          | 667                          | -140       |
| Total housing units  | 7,314                        | 8,547                        | + 1,233    |
| Vacant housing units   | 750                          | 760                          | + 10       |
| Occupied housing units   | 6,564                        | 7,787                        | + 1,223    |
| Occupancy – owner occupied                                     | 2,195                        | 2,705                        | + 510      |
| Occupancy – renter occupied                                    | 4,369                        | 5,082                        | + 713      |
| Age 25 and over with high school diploma/equivalency or higher | 9,306 (92%)                  | 9,541 (94%)                  | +235       |
| Age 25 and over with bachelor's degree or higher               | 5,600 (56%)                  | 6,209 (61%)                  | + 609      |
| Median Household Income  | \$66,833                     | \$78,646                     | + \$11,813 |

**Source:** 2018 and 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables; 2022 Feature Layer Generated from ArcGIS GeoEnrichment Service

**Selected Geography:** 2018 Census Tracts 4903.01, 4907.03, 4909 & 2022 Census Tracts 4903.03, 4903.04, 4907.03, 4909

In addition to the demographic data above based on an approximation of the Towson Sustainable community area geography using publicly available Census Tract information, Baltimore County has also prepared a more precise demographic profile of the SC area using ArcGIS's Community Analyst tool. As the only data available

## Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section A

for the area through Community Analyst is that from the 2022 American Community Survey, the change over five years cannot be shown using this method.

|  | <b>ACS 2022<br/>(Community Analyst)</b> |
|--|---|
|  |   |
| Total estimated population:                                    | 6,930                                   |
| Median Age   | 33.3                                    |
| Estimated population 65 and older                              | 1,436                                   |
| Estimated population 24 and younger                            | 2,425                                   |
|  |   |
| Estimated White population                                     | 3,286                                   |
| Estimated Black/African American population                    | 2,436                                   |
| Estimated Hispanic/Latino (of any race) population             | 212                                     |
|  |   |
| Total housing units  | 4,467                                   |
| Vacant housing units   | 490                                     |
| Occupied housing units   | 3,997                                   |
| Occupancy – owner occupied                                     | 915                                     |
| Occupancy – renter occupied                                    | 3,062                                   |
|  |   |
| Age 25 and over with high school diploma/equivalency or higher | 4,124 (91.5%)                           |
| Age 25 and over with bachelor's degree or higher               | 2,714 (60.2%)                           |
|  |   |
| Median Household Income  | \$72,621                                |

### (2) Organizational Structure, Experience and Public Input:

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

The Sustainable Communities Workgroup is comprised of different partners compared to the 2018 application process. Baltimore County Department of Planning has remained the lead for the renewal process, and workgroup members have been comprised of both Baltimore County Agency representatives as well as local organizations and stakeholders. Baltimore County will be responsible for managing and monitoring the

## Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section A

implementation of the SC Area Plan through partnerships with other County Agencies, and local stakeholders and organizations.

The Towson Sustainable Community Workgroup for the 2024 renewal included:

- Towson Chamber of Commerce
- Greater Towson Committee
- Goucher College
- Towson Communities Alliance
- Baltimore County Recreation and Parks
- Baltimore County Department of Economic and Workforce Development
- Baltimore County Department of Public Works and Transportation
- Baltimore County Department of Housing and Community Development
- Baltimore County Department of Environmental Sustainability
- Baltimore County Department of Permits, Approvals, and Inspections
- Baltimore County Department of Health and Human Services
- Baltimore County Police Department
- Baltimore County Public Schools
- Baltimore County Public Library
- Maryland State Highway Association
- Maryland Department of Transportation
- Maryland Transit Authority

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

Towson Sustainable Community area is fortunate to have a series of strong advocates and implementation partners. The Towson Chamber of Commerce has proven to be an effective community leader in the effort to employ State Revitalization Program funds in Downtown Towson. Since 2018, the Chamber has received funding to support streetscaping, beautification, security cameras, and commercial façade improvement projects which have all been successfully implemented or, for recent awards, are still in progress. Additionally, the Towson Chamber of Commerce hosts annual festivals and weekly events that draw large numbers downtown. These include weekly farmers' markets, the annual County Holiday celebration, and the Towson Fall Festival amongst many others.

Additionally, as the County's urban core and seat of government, Baltimore County government has continued to implement new initiative in downtown Towson. The StarTUp at the Armory represents a successful partnership between Baltimore County and Towson University to create a place for both students and community members to gather, work, and learn. The Towson Loop is a first of its kind in Baltimore County local circulator operated by the County's Department of Public Works and Transportation.

The Towson Sustainable Community area is well-equipped with experienced institutions and people capable of realizing the goals of the Action Plan.

## Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section A

- (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?

During this Renewal Application process, the Baltimore County Department of Planning led a public engagement process to ensure the community could provide input. There were two virtual “focus group” style meetings held on June 25th and 27th of 2024 to meet with local stakeholders and allow them an opportunity to discuss strengths, weaknesses, and potential outcomes or action steps for each of the six topics in the Action Plan with representatives from County agencies. Additionally, there was a survey created and distributed to gather further input on the six action plan topics between June and July of 2024.

The Action Plan update is based on community needs heard during the public engagement process, the previous 2018 Action Plan, the Baltimore County Master Plan 2030, existing County plans for projects to take place in the next five years, and existing initiatives being conducted, or soon to be conducted, by local organizations.

Many plans in Baltimore County are outdated. The majority of input to guide the development of the action plan was collected through public input, workgroup meetings, and discussions with implementation partners, agencies, and organizations. Existing plans include:

- Downtown Towson District Guidelines and Standards (2016)
- Eastern Baltimore County Revitalization Strategy (1996)
- Eastern Baltimore County Pedestrian and Bicycle Access Plan (2006)
- Baltimore County Master Plan 2030

- (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.

N/A

## **SECTION B - SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY RENEWAL** **REPORT**

### **PART I: QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT**

#### **Purpose:**

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

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

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

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

##### **Example – Accomplishment 1**

*Outcome: Improved stormwater management*

##### **Projects:**

*Project 1: Stormwater Retrofit Plan – In October 2014, the Town Council approved the Town's stormwater retrofit plan which outlines various strategies and capital budget expenditures over the next five years. Strategies include reducing the amount of impervious surface in the community and improving stormwater management. One of the plan recommendations is to pass an ordinance that assesses an environmental protection fee on municipal permits.*

*Project 2: Green Streets – The Town added green elements to approximately 600 linear feet of roadway that had been experiencing severe flooding. Specifically, bioswales were constructed and trees were planted.*

##### **Partners:**

*Chesapeake Bay Trust – provided technical assistance*

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

*Impact: The implementation of the projects had a significant impact on the community by improving stormwater runoff. The streets with the newly constructed bioswales no longer experience flooding.*

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

**Accomplishment 1:**



*Outcome:* Business attraction and retention/ Increase Towson University programs and activities

*Projects:* Towson Circulator ("The Loop")

Launched in 2019, the \$14 million investment directly addresses the dearth of transportation options and addressed the traffic congestion that previously made commuting and visiting Towson challenging. The Towson Loop is a free transit service that quickly and conveniently connects residents, commuters, students and visitors to stops throughout Towson's central business district. The Towson Loop launched two routes in October 2021 and is Baltimore County's flagship bus circulator service.

*Partners:* Baltimore County Government, MD State Department of Public Works and Transportation, U.S. Department of Transportation

*Impact:* The Circulator provides a weekly capacity of 7,800 riders via free transportation for students (Towson, Fortis, Morgan State) County employees, health care workers (GBMC, UMD Medical System, St. Joseph Medical Center, Sheppard Pratt Health System, and a host of others seeking better transit options around Towson. The successfully deployed program is serving as a model for other communities building out their own transportation options across the State (e.g. Owings Mills, Middle River, Sparrows Point, and Catonsville). The Circulator is also expected to reduce auto emissions and contribute towards Maryland's climate goals.

**Accomplishment 2:**



*Outcome:* Business attraction and retention/ Increase Towson University programs and activities

*Projects:* StarTUp at the Armory

## Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section C

Renovations were completed on the historic National Guard Armory, initially leased to Towson University. The university relocated their incubator and business accelerator program, StarTUP at the Armory, and the redeveloped space accommodates a number of programs and offices focused on community engagement and outreach, entrepreneurship, continuing education and workforce development. StarTUP provides public co-working space as well as a place for students to engage with the business community as young entrepreneurs, interns and future workers. The university also purchased and occupied 401 Washington Avenue, across the street from the Armory. The 130,000 square foot office building is used for university administrative functions, bringing TU employees into the heart of Towson. TU purchased the Armory (2023, following lease) for \$8.6 million as a component of the larger Towson Row project and relieving the University from paying leasing costs.

*Partners:* Baltimore County Government, Towson University, Maryland Department of Commerce, Greenberg Gibbons

*Impact:* To date, Towson University has invested over \$20 million dollars into 401 Washington and the Armory, and will continue these investments over the next five years. In 2023, two hundred organizations reserved business convening space at StarTUP, with 10,000 overall visitors using the StarTUP coworking and conference room space. 38 active startups are supported through the StarTUP space and/or the accelerator, representing aggregate employment of 275 employees in Maryland. These ventures have secured \$10,417,500 in funding, including \$5,057,500 in non-dilutive funding. At the 2022 University Economic Development Association Summit, StarTUP was honored with the Engaged University Award of Excellence. The award recognizes universities for engaging multiple community partners, to leverage and streamline talent development, innovation and community development

### **Accomplishment 3:**



*Outcome:* Increased number of trees within the sustainable community by 100 trees (1 acre of total tree canopy).

*Project 1:* Phases 1 & 2 of the Towson street-tree plan were completed during December of 2022. This is part of an ongoing effort to increase the tree canopy in downtown Towson. 73 of the 100 trees were planted by Baltimore County as part of the Towson Street tree project.

*Project 2:* Baltimore County DEPS supports environmental non-profits through a County administered grant. Blue Water Baltimore, one of the recipients of this grant, planted or distributed 27 of the 100 trees included in the total.

*Partners:* Blue Water Baltimore, Towson Chamber of Commerce, Green Towson Alliance

*Impact:* These projects aim to increase the tree canopy in downtown Towson to create shade for pedestrians, cars, and businesses as well as generate clean air and a comfortable atmosphere. The presence of street trees also helps reduce the risk of flooding. While these trees are still young and have not had a major impact on the overall canopy of the Towson SC Area, they have provided an elevated quality of life in downtown Towson by providing shade, clean air, and an aesthetic streetscape.



#### Accomplishment 4:



*Outcome:* Business Attraction/Community Development (Towson Row)

*Projects:* Towson Row

Leveraging \$350 million in private/public funding, to include commercial redevelopment and RISE zone designations, the 1.2 million SF mixed-use project focused on redevelopment of 100,000 square feet of restaurant and retail space, 150,000 square feet of Class A office space, 300 student housing units and 250 high rise residential units.

Architect on call – This program allowed two (4) Towson businesses to take advantage of free architectural design services to plan building facades in their location, made possible via the Commercial Revitalization District (CRD). Twenty-one (21) local businesses utilized the CRD property tax credits, reducing their tax payment by \$166,298 and freeing them to redeploy their funding on business growth: infrastructure, hiring, and business operations planning activities.

*Partners:* Greenberg Gibbons, Shamin Hotels, Gilbane Development Co. Baltimore County & MD State Government

*Impact:* The multi-year build out of Towson Row has generated over 4,500 jobs (to include ~1,700 permanent jobs in addition to construction roles), translating into ~\$200 million in annual business sales and ~80 million in annual employee compensation.

**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.**

## Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section C

*Outcome:* Addressing Office Vacancies.

*Narrative:* Office vacancies, driven by the pandemic, work-from-home, and other trends, increased sharply: from roughly 6% in the prior period to approximately 18% currently. This trend is mirrored throughout the state and across the country, and there is an ongoing effort through local and state governments, chambers of commerce, brokers and developers to increase office occupancy rates via competitive pricing, incentives, favorable loans, and tax incentives.

*Outcome:*

*Narrative:*

*Outcome:*

*Narrative:*

## **Part II: Competitive Funding**

| Use the rows below to list awards for sustainability or revitalization projects your community has received through the Sustainable Communities designation. Add rows as necessary. | Source<br>(federal, state,<br>foundation, etc.) | Amount Received   | If no funding was received, what<br>technical or other assistance from the<br>state would help with future<br>applications? | Other Notes |
|---|---|---|---|-------------|
| <b>Community Legacy (CL):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>   | DHCD  | Towson Chamber of Commerce: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FY24: \$75,000</li> <li>• FY23: \$100,000</li> <li>• FY22: \$40,000</li> <li>• FY21: \$80,000</li> <li>• FY19: \$50,000</li> </ul> |   |             |
| <b>Strategic Demolition Fund (SDF):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>  | DHCD  |   |   |             |
| <b>Maryland Facade Improvement Program (MFIP)</b>   | DHCD  |   |   |             |
| <b>Operating Assistance Grant (OAG)</b>   | DHCD  | Towson Chamber of Commerce: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FY24: \$10,000</li> </ul>  |   |             |
| <b>National Capital Strategic Economic Development Fund (NED)</b>   | DHCD  |   |   |             |
| <b>Safe Routes to School:</b>   | MDOT  |   |   |             |

## Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

|  |         |  |  |  |
|--|---------|--|--|--|
| <b>Bikeways Network Program:</b>   | MDOT    |  |  |  |
| <b>Sidewalk Retrofit Program:</b>  | MDOT    |  |  |  |
| <b>Water Quality Revolving Loan Fund:</b>  | MDE     |  |  |  |
| <p><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></p> <p>*Please add more rows if necessary</p> |         |  |  |  |
| <b>Homeless Solutions Program (HSP)</b>  | State   | \$617K (SFY19)*<br>increased to \$892K (SFY24)*<br>*County-wide.         |  |  |
| <b>HUD Continuum of Care (CoC) funding</b>   | Federal | \$1.382 mill (FFY19)*<br>increased to \$3.280 mill (FFY23)* *County-wide |  |  |
| <b>Emergency Solution Grant (ESG)</b>  | Federal | \$322K (FFY18)*<br>increased to \$385K (FFY24)* *County-wide             |  |  |
| <b>Community Safety Works-Business District Improvement Grant</b>  | DHCD    | \$66,000   |  |  |

## Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

|   |                             |  |  |  |
|---|-----------------------------|--|--|--|
| <b>Community Safety Works</b>                 | DHCD                        | Towson Chamber of Commerce:<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FY24: \$99,200</li> </ul>  |  |  |
| <b>Commercial Revitalization Action Grant</b> | Baltimore County Government | Towson Chamber of Commerce:<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FY24: \$28,120</li> <li>FY23: \$28,817.18</li> <li>FY22: \$15,082.51</li> <li>FY21: \$36,155.16</li> <li>FY20: \$18,581.23</li> <li>FY19: \$18,131.42</li> </ul> |  |  |
| <b>Baltimore County Safety Grant</b>          | Baltimore County Government | Towson Chamber of Commerce:<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FY24: \$99,000</li> <li>FY23: \$350,000</li> </ul>   |  |  |

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

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

N/A

**SECTION C - SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ACTION PLAN**

Towson

## Example Section

| <u>Strengths</u>   | <u>Weaknesses</u>   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insert bulleted list of strengths (provide some detail as to why and how this is a strength in your community)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insert bulleted list of weaknesses (provide some detail as to why and how this is a weakness in your community)</li> </ul> |

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



## 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>• The SC Area falls within three watersheds; the majority is in the Loch Raven Reservoir (54%) and the Jones Falls (39%), while the southeastern corner is in Back River (7%). Within those are three watershed planning areas in which Small Watershed Action Plans (SWAPs) have been developed: Loch Raven Urban, Northeastern Jones Falls and Upper Back River. SWAPs have assessed water resources, quality influencers, and opportunities for restoration within the area of interest.</li> <li>• Various water pollution impairments are present in the watersheds that make up this SC Area. Total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) have been issued by the State of Maryland for the most severe impairments. TMDLs and their associated implementation plans establish an official pollution management and reduction strategy that must be met by the County.</li> <li>• The Towson Chamber of Commerce is a valuable partner in helping Baltimore County DEPS reach a wider audience within this area and supports environmental sustainability initiatives that positively impact the community.</li> <li>• Roughly 15% of the SC Area is owned and managed by Baltimore County, this allows for Baltimore County Government's "good housekeeping" plans and sustainable practices to have a significant impact on the community.</li> <li>• Redevelopment projects since the previous Towson SC application have increased the area treated by water quality storm water management facilities from 147 acres to 154.6 acres. Ongoing redevelopment projects will further increase stormwater management in the SC area.</li> <li>• The County's 2013 tree canopy goals include reaching and maintaining 40% tree canopy cover in each Census Designated Place (CDP) within the County. The Towson CDP currently meets this goal</li> <li>• Variety of preserved green spaces, including: parks, open spaces, public plazas, grassy and wooded areas at public school recreation centers and colleges/universities (most outside of the SC area boundaries, but in close proximity).</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A few neighborhoods in the SC Area have been identified as having moderate water pollution.</li> <li>• It is unsafe to swim or enjoy water contact sports in several of the streams in the Jones Falls, Back River, and Loch Raven watersheds due to bacterial contamination.</li> <li>• Toxic contamination of fish tissues makes it unsafe to eat several species of fish caught in the Jones Falls watershed (PCBs) and in Loch Raven Reservoir (mercury).</li> <li>• Aquatic life and wildlife in the Jones Falls, Back River and Loch Raven watersheds are impaired by chloride, sulfate, and suspended sediment pollution. Inadequate riparian buffers also impair streams in Back River and Loch Raven. Stream channelization further impairs streams in Back River and Jones Falls. High water temperatures impair streams in the Jones Falls. Phosphorus pollution impairs Loch Raven Reservoir.</li> <li>• The Towson SC has a high concentration of developed land, 65% of the total area is covered by impervious surface and only 37% of the total impervious area is treated by stormwater management facilities with water quality benefits. Untreated impervious surface can increase the amount of pollution that ends up in our streams and increase stream temperature. High levels of impervious surface increase the risk of flooding and urban heat island effect, which adds to the demand on the power grid in the summer.</li> <li>• Limited amount of woodlands and green space, particularly within the Downtown Towson portion of the SC area.</li> <li>• Although there is a high tree equity score, the percentage of canopy cover remains low in this area, on average less than 30%, with the downtown area as low as 6-12%. Low canopy coverage is associated with increased heat island effects.</li> </ul> |

## Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This area has a high tree equity score. Tree equity measures how well the benefits of trees are reaching communities living on low-incomes, communities of color and others disproportionately impacted by extreme heat and other environmental hazards.</li><li>• Presence and activism of Green Towson Alliance</li></ul> |  |
|---|--|

| <u>Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures</u>   | <u>Strategies and Action Items</u>  | <u>Implementation Partners</u>   |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Outcome 1: Expand access to community greenspaces and improve tree canopies</p> <p>Progress Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tree canopy - Measure tree canopy of the SC boundary when new land use data is available.</li><li>• Identify community greenspaces that can contribute to additional tree canopy</li></ul> | <p>Strategy A: Acquire/provide additional parklands and community green spaces, such as pocket parks, and encourage new development to include some form of green space, potentially through the use of green roofs.</p> <p>Strategy B: Complete phase 3 of the Towson Street Tree project.</p> <p>Strategy C: Identify additional County owned land for further tree planting and continue to support local non-profit watershed partners in their restoration efforts through the Watershed Association Restoration, Planning and Implementation Grant.</p> <p>Strategy D: Continue to implement best tree care practices for tree planting projects through Baltimore county’s forest maintenance team</p> <p>Strategy E: Improve amenities and increase access to existing environmental and recreational assets in the Towson area</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability</li><li>• Department of Recreation and Parks</li><li>• Department of Planning</li><li>• Department of Public Works and Transportation</li><li>• Green Towson Alliance</li><li>• Community Groups</li></ul> |
| <p>Outcome 2: Improve water quality and reduce litter and pollution</p> <p>Progress Measures:</p>   | <p>Strategy A: Continue to promote and organize litter clean-up programs and promote anti-litter behavior change through social marketing, signage, advertisements, and in-person events.</p> <p>Strategy B: Implement capital projects such as stream restorations and stormwater management facility upgrades and continue to implement</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability</li><li>• Department of Recreation and Parks</li><li>• Department of Planning</li><li>• Department of Public Works and Transportation</li></ul>  |

## Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress on TMDLs: reductions in pollutant loads and/or progress on TMDL Implementation Plan actions.</li> <li>• Reduced severity or elimination of water quality impairments.</li> <li>• Increase in drainage areas of Stormwater Management ponds that provide water quality improvement in addition to water quantity management.</li> </ul>   | <p>and refine monitoring programs to better depict progress toward meeting TMDL's and water quality standards.</p> <p>Strategy C: Conduct programmatic actions such as street sweeping, and modifying practices to reduce the quantity of applied road salt.</p> <p>Strategy D: Allow for implementation of up-to-date stormwater management requirements through redevelopment</p> <p>Strategy E: Continue to promote and organize various anti-pollution initiatives and continue to perform upland "Hot-Spot Inspections" as a method for policing stormwater risks that come from public and private commercial and industrial sites.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green Towson Alliance</li> <li>• Community Groups</li> </ul>   |
| <p>Outcome 3: Mitigate impacts of climate change, including heat islands effects and install electric vehicle charging infrastructure for public charging and to support the EV transition of the County fleet.</p> <p>Progress Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of adaptation projects at Baltimore County facilities</li> <li>• Number of EV charging installations at Baltimore County facilities</li> </ul> | <p>Strategy A: Add artificial shade where tree canopy is limited and planting is not possible.</p> <p>Strategy B: Complete installation of EV Charging stations at Olympian Park and Public Safety Building</p> <p>Strategy C: Evaluate additional public spaces with parking lots and parking spaces along roadway curbs to potentially install EV charging stations.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability</li> <li>• Department of Recreation and Parks</li> <li>• Department of Planning</li> <li>• Department of Public Works and Transportation</li> <li>• Green Towson Alliance</li> <li>• Community Groups</li> </ul> |
| <p>Outcome 4: Support native habitat and pollinators.</p> <p>Progress Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the number of plantings and landscaping that incorporates native pollinator plants.</li> <li>• Eradicate or control invasive species in park/open spaces.</li> </ul>   | <p>Strategy A: Assess sites to gather data on plants present in green space, including native plants and invasive plants and identify which green spaces need to be prioritized for planting and invasive species control.</p> <p>Strategy B: Encourage and support landscaping and community groups that want to start and maintain native habitat gardens.</p> <p>Strategy C: Add programming/events that utilize volunteer efforts to remove invasive species.</p> <p>Strategy D: Work in collaboration with local universities to support data collection and monitoring efforts.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability</li> <li>• Department of Recreation and Parks</li> <li>• Towson University</li> <li>• Goucher College</li> <li>• Green Towson Alliance</li> </ul>  |

## 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

- Educated resident workforce
- Low crime rate (~40/1000)
- High household incomes (~\$98,000)
- Close proximity to other employment hubs (Baltimore City, White Marsh, Hunt Valley)
- Anchor educational (Towson, Goucher) and training (Fortis) centers
- Largest regional mall in area
- Recent development in downtown Towson, such as Towson Row
- County seat of government (including headquarters for Baltimore County Public Schools and Baltimore County Police Department)
- Houses several major hospitals (Greater Baltimore Medical Center, Sheppard Pratt, St. Joseph's Medical Center)
- Multiple involved stakeholder groups (Greater Towson Committee, Towson Communities Alliance)
- The Towson Chamber of Commerce is a well-established organization in Towson that has proven to be capable of various types of project implementation

### Weaknesses

- Increased number of vacant businesses in downtown Towson area
- Abundance of restaurants in Towson area leads to challenging conditions for new business entrants
- Residential community concerned with commercial/business encroachment
- Small businesses challenged by large mall presence (e.g. York Road corridor)

## Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

| Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures  | Strategies and Action Items   | Implementation Partners   |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Outcome 1: Increase attraction and retention of establishments outside of the restaurant industry within the Towson SC boundaries</p> <p>Progress Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business net addition, quantified by industry.</li> <li>• New building permits issued</li> <li>• New business licenses issued</li> <li>• County revenue-from development fees</li> <li>• Permits issued for significant improvements to existing structures;</li> <li>• Applications for economic development incentives provided for relocating and expanding businesses,</li> <li>• New job creation and overall employment totals</li> </ul> | <p>Strategy A: Conduct strategic outreach to businesses within an industry framework, to increase visibility of County's business incentives, programs and services in the Towson area</p> <p>Strategy B: Collaborate with businesses to establish awareness of needs and challenges, and/or identify key indicators that may contribute to the overall longevity of establishments within the area.</p> <p>Strategy C: Strengthen partnerships between public and private funding entities, to provide access to capital needed to fill funding gaps and mitigate project/development cost</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department of Economic and Workforce Development</li> <li>• Department of Planning</li> <li>• Towson Chamber of Commerce</li> </ul>                              |
| <p>Outcome 2: Increase entrepreneurial opportunities through ongoing support of Towson University's StarTUp Accelerator program, RISE designation incentives, and career pathways offered through the community institution.</p> <p>Progress Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of accelerator participants employment and estimated revenue</li> <li>• Enrollment and number of degrees awarded by program</li> <li>• Applications for economic development incentives provided for relocating and expanding businesses,</li> <li>• New jobs created and overall employment totals</li> </ul>                                   | <p>Strategy A: Scale up a marketing strategy that positions the Towson Armory as an entrepreneurial designation, establishing a sense of place for new businesses and investors in support of eligible businesses.</p> <p>Strategy B: Implement a partnership with Towson University's Career Center to retain educated graduates and strengthen workforce pipeline.</p> <p>Strategy C: Facilitate placement of interns and experiential learning participation through relationships with local area establishments.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department of Economic and Workforce Development</li> <li>• Department of Planning</li> <li>• Towson Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• Towson University</li> </ul> |

## Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Outcome 3: Improve the quality and usability of commercial structures and spaces in Downtown Towson</p> <p>Progress Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of projects completed and amount of funds spent on commercial façade improvement projects</li> <li>• Number of projects completed and amount of funds spent on streetscaping and other beautification projects</li> <li>• Number of security cameras installed in the commercial area</li> <li>• Number of placemaking installation in the commercial area</li> </ul> | <p>Strategy A: Provide funding and technical assistance to local business and property owners to improve the conditions of their commercial facades</p> <p>Strategy B: Enhance beautification efforts, such as seasonal plantings, public art, and other streetscaping elements, in the Downtown Towson commercial area.</p> <p>Strategy C: Continue to partner with the Baltimore County Police Department to identify appropriate locations for the installation of security cameras and provide funding for cameras and installation where required</p> <p>Strategy D: Provide funding and technical assistance for physical placemaking improvements and installations in Downtown Towson, such as gateway improvements, wayfinding signage, and light pole banners.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department of Economic and Workforce Development</li> <li>• Department of Planning</li> <li>• Towson Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• Police Department</li> <li>• Department of Public Works and Transportation</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>• High MTA bus line ridership rates</li> <li>• Central location makes major automobile corridors, namely I-695, easily accessible</li> <li>• Towson Loop provides free circulator service along two separate routes</li> <li>• Towson University and other nearby higher education institutions provide local transit options</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sidewalks are narrow which results in spatial constraints on complete street implementation at points throughout the downtown area</li> <li>• Peak and off-hour congestion throughout downtown and extended commercial area is a regular source of community complaints</li> <li>• Limited multi-modal connectivity installations</li> <li>• Limited access to rapid transit from downtown core</li> </ul> |

## Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

| Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures   | Strategies and Action Items  | Implementation Partners  |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Outcome 1: Improve the connectivity of the Sustainable Community area's active transportation network.</p> <p>Progress Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in miles of bike lanes and sidewalks</li> <li>• Better community access for pedestrians and bikers</li> <li>• Number of additional traffic calming improvements</li> </ul> | <p>Strategy A: Require additional walkability improvements and biking facilities or infrastructure for new developments</p> <p>Strategy B: Increase crosswalks and accessibility improvements between commercial and residential areas</p> <p>Strategy C: Increase public transit access between residential and business corridors</p> <p>Strategy D: Coordinate with community groups to identify areas to target for new automobile traffic calming improvements or expanded maintenance</p> <p>Strategy E: Continue to install facilities listed in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, including the Road to Freedom Trail</p> <p>Strategy F: Continue to provide free, local circulator services through the Towson Loop</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department of Public Works and Transportation</li> <li>• Department of Permits, Approvals, and Inspections</li> <li>• Department of Economic and Workforce Development</li> <li>• Department of Planning</li> <li>• Maryland Department of Transportation - State Highway Administration</li> <li>• Community Groups</li> </ul> |
| <p>Outcome 2: Expand the implementation of Complete Streets principles in Downtown Towson.</p> <p>Progress Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of construction projects incorporating complete streets elements</li> <li>• Number of County-led projects incorporating placemaking elements</li> </ul>                                     | <p>Strategy A: Requiring complete street elements on retrofit and new construction projects</p> <p>Strategy B: Incorporate placemaking elements in County-led connectivity installations</p> <p>Strategy C: Increase pedestrian safety on the roads and sidewalks surrounding the County Courthouse and nearby office buildings, particularly Chesapeake Avenue and Pennsylvania Avenue, by enhancing crosswalks and signage and implementing traffic calming measures.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department of Public Works and Transportation</li> <li>• Department of Permits, Approvals, and Inspections</li> <li>• Department of Economic and Workforce Development</li> <li>• Department of Planning</li> <li>• Maryland Department of Transportation - State Highway Administration</li> <li>• Community Groups</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 increased state funding has allowed us to sustain necessary emergency programs within the homelessness continuum. We have housed more people through short term rental assistance (RRH) and are re-establishing a targeted prevention program and a shelter diversion program to help prevent people from becoming homeless for the first time. These funds have also allowed us to expand our homeless outreach response by expanding to two providers.</li> <li>The County's vacant property database has been established and is regularly updated. The database is available to the public, and the County encourages its use as a tool for developers to identify opportunities for scattered site and infill development.</li> <li>Variety of housing types that are within walking distance of the downtown area</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Like many communities nationwide, Baltimore County has seen an overall increase in first time homelessness since the COVID pandemic, due to the end of the extra \$115 mill. In homeless prevention funds awarded to Baltimore County.</li> <li>FMR funding, awarded through the CoC federal funding that supports county permanent supportive housing (PSH), has not kept pace with the overall 25% average rental increase in the county since COVID.</li> <li>Much of the Towson Sustainable Community boundary covers identified areas of opportunity. The County has made efforts to promote the creation and preservation of affordable housing within areas of opportunity, but the progress made within Towson has not kept pace with the existing need.</li> </ul> |

| Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures   | Strategies and Action Items   | Implementation Partners  |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Outcome 1: Maintain and increase affordable and livable homeownership</p> <p>Progress Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of families assisted through homebuyer counseling and financial literacy courses.</li> <li>Number of households assisted through relevant County programs, including the Settlement Expense Loan Program (SELP), the Single-Family Rehabilitation Loan</li> </ul> | <p>Strategy A: Collaborate with housing counseling services to provide tools to current and prospective homeowners and provide classes regarding financial responsibility and financial literacy.</p> <p>Strategy B: Continue to promote county housing programs such as first-time home buyers program, single-family rehabilitation loan program, closing cost programs, emergency repair grant program and foreclosure prevention. Collaborate with MD DHCD to take advantage of the various homeownership programs and loans offered.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department of Planning</li> <li>Department of Permits, Approvals and Inspections</li> <li>Private and non-profit organizations</li> <li>Department of Housing and Community Development</li> <li>Towson Communities Alliance</li> <li>Towson Chamber of Commerce</li> </ul> |



## Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

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| <p>Program, the Maryland Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program (MHRP), and the Lead Hazard Reduction Grant Program (LHRP).</p>   |  |   |
| <p>Outcome 2: Promote and maintain a variety of housing choices to meet the needs of the population and encourage socioeconomic diversity</p> <p>Progress Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of a Housing Needs Assessment.</li> <li>• Number of households assisted through relevant County programs, including the Single-Family Rehabilitation Loan Program, the Housing Accessibility Modification Program (HAMP), and the Conciliation Housing Accessibility Modification Program (CHAMP).</li> <li>• Number of affordable housing units created or preserved at various income levels.</li> <li>• Establishment of “Live Near Your Work” programs.</li> </ul> | <p>Strategy A: Conduct a Housing Needs Assessment to support strategic planning and other efforts, including an analysis of how many affordable units are needed by type, location, and price point.</p> <p>Strategy B: Expand full spectrum housing for residents at diverse income levels and life stages and for individuals with disabilities by encouraging high quality mixed income, multigenerational developments. Promote Housing Accessibility Modification programs to make housing more accessible.</p> <p>Strategy C: Encourage mixed-use housing options that combine commercial and office spaces with residential units in order to create a more dynamic environment.</p> <p>Strategy D: Provide gap financing, PILOT agreements, and other financial tools to developers to fund the creation of new units of affordable housing and preservation of affordability at existing properties with naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH). Rental units should be preserved at various income levels, including 30% AMI, 60% AMI, and 80% AMI.</p> <p>Strategy E: Engage with major employers in the area (Towson University, GBMC, Sheppard Pratt, and St. Joseph Medical Center) to explore housing incentives such as “Live Near Your Work” programs.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department of Planning</li> <li>• Department of Permits, Approvals and Inspections</li> <li>• Private and non-profit organizations</li> <li>• Department of Housing and Community Development</li> <li>• Developers (market-rate and affordable)</li> <li>• Towson University</li> <li>• Goucher College</li> <li>• Local Hospitals</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>● Education anchors of Towson University and Goucher College, with significant cultural assets connected to both, such as theater, music, and art</li><li>● Access to Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) for residents</li><li>● Nearby high-quality hospitals and health care facilities</li><li>● Towson Health Center- Residents can access healthcare related services, WIC, and HIV testing</li><li>● Home of central County library</li><li>● Variety of well-established faith-based organizations</li><li>● Proximity to Hampton National Parks Service site</li><li>● Large number of community celebrations, festivals, and other events</li><li>● Numerous community/neighborhood pocket parks in and around the SC area, including public plazas and greenspaces in Downtown Towson.</li><li>● All residents living in the SC area are within 0.5 miles or approximately a 10-minute walk of a park or school recreation center.</li><li>● SC area is ranked above-average walkable on the National Walkability Score due to the diversity in employment types, mix of residential and commercial spaces, density of street intersections, and proportion of workers that commute by carpool.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Lack of architectural identity can impede efforts to create cohesion and a sense of place</li><li>● Ongoing inequitable health outcomes</li><li>● Lack of attention to the Towson area's history</li><li>● Safety concerns for pedestrian and non-vehicular travel around Downtown Towson resulting from high volume vehicular traffic</li></ul> |

## Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

| Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures  | Strategies and Action Items   | Implementation Partners  |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Outcome 1: Incorporate placemaking principles into efforts to improve upon the sense of place in the Towson area through community events and physical improvements</p> <p>Progress Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of placemaking projects completed</li> <li>Amount of public or non-profit funding directed towards their completion</li> </ul> | <p>Strategy A: Identify locations for public art to distinguish culturally and economically significant areas of the Towson community</p> <p>Strategy B: Continue holding annual community events and identify additional programs to bring people together in the Downtown Towson area.</p> <p>Strategy C: Identify opportunities to incorporate designated design choices into public and private improvements of structures, streetscapes, and other components of the physical environment to highlight the distinguishing characteristics of Towson.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department of Economic and Workforce Development</li> <li>Department of Public Works and Transportation</li> <li>Department of Planning</li> <li>Department of Permits, Approvals and Inspections</li> <li>Towson Communities Alliance</li> <li>Towson Chamber of Commerce</li> </ul> |
| <p>Outcome 2: Connect residents with the history of the Towson area.</p> <p>Progress Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of resources available to residents to learn about the area's history</li> </ul>   | <p>Strategy A: Identify cultural resources and assets in the Towson area and determine strategies for their ongoing maintenance</p> <p>Strategy B: Create interpretive signage, pursue historic markers, and/or install other appropriate improvements to provide information about locally relevant history</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department of Recreation and Parks</li> <li>Department of Planning</li> <li>Office of Community Engagement</li> <li>Department of Economic and Workforce Development</li> <li>Property Management</li> <li>Towson Communities Alliance</li> <li>Towson Chamber of Commerce</li> </ul> |
| <p>Outcome 3: Provide expanded and/or improved recreational opportunities and increase participation in existing recreational services, programs, and events</p> <p>Progress Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of recreational programming opportunities made available to the community</li> </ul>   | <p>Strategy A: Provide outreach in schools and communities advertising the programming available at recreational centers.</p> <p>Strategy B: Schedule a diverse set of programming options that will interest a diverse demographic of people at recreation facilities</p> <p>Strategy C: Maintain updated websites and social media to provide residents with updated and accurate information</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department of Recreation and Parks</li> <li>Maryland Department of Natural Resources</li> <li>Community Groups</li> <li>Green Towson Alliance</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Outcome 4: Strengthen and preserve the Historic East Towson Community</p> <p>Progress Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completion of Road to Freedom trail</li> <li>Number of home maintenance projects completed</li> </ul>   | <p>Strategy A: Create the Road to Freedom Trail to connect Historic East Towson with the Hampton National Park Service site and commemorate the history of the African-American community in the Towson area</p> <p>Strategy B: Continue ongoing support to families to maintain their homes through physical upkeep and continued livability</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Northeast Towson Improvement Association</li> <li>National Parks Service</li> <li>Goucher College</li> <li>Department of Public Works and Transportation</li> <li>Department of Planning</li> </ul>   |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of the Elks Lodge restoration project</li> <li>• Completion of a planning process to provide zoning and land use recommendations to prevent commercial encroachment in Historic East Towson</li> <li>• Number of pedestrian safety and traffic calming installations</li> </ul>  | <p>Strategy C: Continue to support efforts to reestablish the Elks Lodge facility as a usable community gathering space</p> <p>Strategy D: Seek to prevent further commercial encroachment in Historic East Towson through appropriate planning consideration of future land use and zoning regulations</p> <p>Strategy E: Increasing pedestrian safety along neighborhood roads in Historic East Towson by enhancing crosswalks and signage and implementing traffic calming measures.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department of Housing and Community Development</li> <li>• Department of Permits, Approvals and Inspections</li> <li>• Department of Economic and Workforce Development</li> <li>• Property Management</li> </ul>                     |
| <p><b>Outcome 5: Improve outcomes for targeted public health issues</b></p> <p><b>Progress Measures:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of health communication campaigns conducted</li> <li>• Number of stroke awareness materials distributed</li> <li>• Number of citations issued to retailers for tobacco sales to individuals under 21</li> <li>• Number of tobacco retailers that receive education materials</li> </ul> | <p>Strategy A: Increase awareness of stroke symptoms and the importance of early intervention through advertising campaigns and the dissemination of educational materials</p> <p>Strategy B: Prevent the sale of tobacco products to individuals under 21 through education of retailers, ID verification, penalties for sales to underage individuals, and compliance check.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baltimore County Public Libraries</li> <li>• Department of Health and Human Services</li> <li>• Department of Aging</li> <li>• Local Hospitals and Medical Providers</li> <li>• Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs)</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>• Area well established and built out</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shallow lots in commercial areas may impede redevelopment</li> </ul> |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Substantial number of passive parks in area providing green amenities and tree canopy</li> <li>• Mix of residential, commercial and institutional land use</li> <li>• Existing Downtown Towson District (DTD) guidelines for Design Review Panel area</li> <li>• Towson Commercial Revitalization District (CRD)</li> <li>• Towson Main Street affiliate</li> <li>• Downtown Towson (DT) overlay district allows for flexibility in density and form, while requiring high quality design</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited historically significant architecture represents a difficulty for defining the areas' architectural character</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

| Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures   | Strategies and Action Items   | Implementation Partners   |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Outcome 1: Expand the provision of Code Enforcement services in the Towson area</p> <p>Progress Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Code enforcement complaints in the Sustainable Community area</li> <li>• Issues cited by proactive sweeps in the Sustainable Community area</li> </ul>                     | <p>Strategy A: Continue ongoing outreach to community and business groups to provide information on the services provided by Baltimore County Code Enforcement</p> <p>Strategy B: Continue the increase in regular proactive enforcement sweeps by code enforcement inspectors in the area</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Code Enforcement</li> <li>• Community Associations</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Outcome 2: Support existing non-profit, community and civic organizations through targeted capacity building initiatives</p> <p>Progress Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased capacity of existing organizations</li> </ul>   | <p>Strategy A: Coordinate with existing community organizations and other relevant stakeholders to areas of needed support and appropriate target outcomes</p> <p>Strategy B: Provide funding and technical assistance to support existing organizations in expanding their administrative and implementation capacity</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department of Planning</li> <li>• Towson Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• Community Associations</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Outcome 3: Support local stakeholders efforts to access underutilized state revitalization opportunities in the Towson area</p> <p>Progress Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transition of Towson Main Street to a full Main Street Maryland designation</li> <li>• Number of Seed fund projects</li> </ul> | <p>Strategy A: Coordinate with existing community organizations and other relevant stakeholders to transition the Towson Main Street from the current affiliate status to a full Main Street Maryland designation.</p> <p>Strategy B: Encourage institutions of higher education and hospital institutions in the Towson area to work with community partners to develop and seek funding for projects eligible to use the Seed Community Development Anchor Institution Fund</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department of Planning</li> <li>• Towson Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• Community Associations</li> <li>• Goucher College</li> <li>• Towson University</li> <li>• Local Hospitals</li> </ul> |

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| <p>Outcome 4: Encourage redevelopment of aging commercial and residential structures and the creation of new mixed-use development in Towson.</p> <p>Progress Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• New mixed-use developments</li><li>• Redevelopment of existing structures</li></ul> | <p>Strategy A: Maintain the Downtown Towson (DT) zoning overlay and identify additional zoning changes to encourage the development of high-quality, mixed-use development in the Sustainable Community area.</p> <p>Strategy B: Provide suitable incentives for key redevelopments of aging commercial and multi-family properties in Towson.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Department of Housing and Community Development</li><li>• Department of Planning</li><li>• Department of Permits, Approvals, and Inspections</li></ul> |
|---|--|--|