
CHECKLIST & 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 notebook should be tabbed and organized as follows:

- TAB #1 Applicant Information**

- TAB #2 Sustainable Community Baseline Information - In addition to hard copies of the project location map, a detailed listing of parcels (i.e. Parcel ID Numbers) that form the project boundary should be included. Maps should also be submitted in electronic GIS form (shape file). If you have additional comments or questions, please contact Brad Wolters, Senior GIS Specialist, DHCD, wolters@mdhousing.org.**

- TAB #3 Local Capacity to Implement Plans & Projects: Attach Sustainable Communities Workgroup roster noted in Section III**

- TAB #4 Sustainable Community Plan**

- TAB #5 Progress Measures**

- TAB #6 Local Support Resolution**

- TAB #7 Signed Sustainable Community Application Disclosure Authorization and Certification**

**All documents on this checklist are mandatory.
Failure to provide the requested document will automatically deny your application.**

II. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY BASELINE INFORMATION

Through this section, applicants will demonstrate that trends and conditions in homeownership, property values, employment, commercial and residential vacancy, community facilities and infrastructure, natural resources, the local business and residential districts show a need for new or continued revitalization reinvestment. Demographic data and trends provided by Applicants should support the choice of the proposed Sustainable Community Area boundary and help form a basis for needs and opportunities to be addressed through the initiatives and projects described in the Sustainable Community Action Plan (Section IV).

POINTS IN THIS SECTION WILL BE AWARDED BASED ON THE SC AREA'S NEED FOR REINVESTMENT AS EVIDENCED BY THOROUGH DESCRIPTIONS OF CURRENT CONDITIONS OR TRENDS (and will not be based upon current or planned revitalization activities which will be covered in Section IV).

A. Proposed Sustainable Community Area (s):

County: Baltimore

Name of Sustainable Community: Towson

Include boundary descriptions and a map of the Sustainable Community. In addition to hard copies of the of the project location map, a detailed listing of parcels (i.e. Parcel ID Numbers) that form the project boundary should be included. If possible, maps should also be submitted in electronic GIS form (shape file). If you have additional comments or questions, please contact Brad Wolters, Senior GIS Specialist, DHCD, Wolters@MdHousing.org

The Towson Sustainable Community area is generally bounded by Bosley Avenue & Kenilworth Avenue on the west, Fairmount Avenue & Goucher College on the north, historic East Towson on the east and Towsontown Boulevard and Burke Avenue on the south. It includes the downtown, commonly referred to as the "core" and the historic East Towson residential community. The core is bi-sected by York Road, which is the historical main street and functions as the heart of the core.

The core of Towson is situated immediately north of Towson State University, GBMC, St. Joseph - University of Maryland Medical Center, and the Baltimore County Government Center.

II. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY BASELINE INFORMATIONApproximate number of acres within the SC Area: 450.00

Existing federal, state or local designations (check all that apply):

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Legacy Area | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Designated Neighborhood |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Main Street | <input type="checkbox"/> Maple Street |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local Historic District | <input type="checkbox"/> National Register Historic District |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A & E District | <input type="checkbox"/> State Enterprise Zone Special Taxing District |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BRAC | <input type="checkbox"/> State Designated TOD |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other(s): <u>Commercial Revitalization District, Design Review Panel Area</u> | |

II. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY BASELINE INFORMATION

Prior Revitalization Investments & Smart Growth:

(a) List and describe any significant State and local smart growth or revitalization related program investments (for instance, Community Legacy or SC Rehab Tax Credit) that have been invested in the Area since the launching of Maryland's Smart Growth initiative and programs in 1997 (including Housing investment). What impact have these investments made in the community? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

The Towson Sustainable Communities area is currently a Maryland Designated Neighborhood and a Commercial Revitalization District. It is the urban center of Baltimore County. In addition to being the county seat, it is the location of a growing business district, surrounded by three large hospitals and anchored by Towson University and Goucher College. Within the last several years, the Towson core has become a residential center as well with approximately 1300 housing units being constructed in the last five years and another 500+ projected to be complete and added to the market within the next five to ten years.

Over the last 20 years, Baltimore County has engaged in numerous planning efforts that focused on the Towson core and the greater Towson community. These efforts have examined regulatory measures such as zoning and land use as well as financial incentives targeted specifically at growing downtown Towson. Listed below is a chronology of planning efforts:

The Towson Community Plan – adopted by the County Council in 1992, this plan examined both the core and the broader surrounding residential neighborhoods focusing on design principles to promote growth in the downtown and protect the identity of the strong and viable surrounding residential communities that surround the core.

The Towson UDAT – a visioning exercise undertaken by a panel of experts in 2006 that examined Towson's strengths and weaknesses and set the stage for the urbanization of downtown Towson.

The Walkable Towson Charette – undertaken in 2007, this intensive workshop developed concepts to improve the walkability, hence the economic viability of the Towson core. The charette proposed a master plan concept for Towson as well as building design principles. Topics such as a parking management study, a walkability index, and a downtown façade program were developed. From this work, the Walkable Towson Plan was created in 2008 which takes a Form Based Code approach to implementing urban design principles.

Towson is a designated Commercial Revitalization Area. As such, the properties are eligible for free architectural assistance, façade loans at 0 percent interest rates, and revitalization tax credits which in essence freeze property taxes for a 5 year period for any project in which the investment causes the assessment to increase by \$100,000, or more. To encourage larger scale investment and redevelopment, the credit is extended for 10 years, if \$10 million invested.

In the last ten years, development and redevelopment efforts in Towson have increased, utilizing and leveraging private capital with county, state and federal funds. The funds have been used to increase residential and commercial opportunities in the core, and improve infrastructure to prepare for additional development.

Perhaps the most notable developments are the Towson City Center, and Towson Square Development. Towson City Center, located in close proximity to the Towson Roundabout represents a \$27 million dollar redevelopment of a former privately owned (leased by County from NYC Reinvestment Trust) building into a mixed use building that houses the corporate offices of Mile One Automotive and Caves Valley Partners, the Towson University Center for Wellbeing and WTMD radio station, first floor restaurants and parking. The financing for the project included a \$7.5 million loan and grant package from Baltimore County and the State Department of Economic Development. The building opened in July 2012 and a year later is almost 100% occupied. Towson Square, currently under construction, will add retail and entertainment uses in the form of 16 theaters, 8 restaurants, and a public parking garage.

These projects have added significant activity to the downtown with residents patronizing local businesses and services.

II. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY BASELINE INFORMATION

(b) Describe any existing barriers to Smart Growth that may affect your jurisdiction or the proposed SC Area. For instance, does your area have higher development fees than outer “cornfields”?

(Answer Space 4,000 characters)

Despite the positive transformation of much of Towson’s core, York Road, the historical heart of Towson remains an obstacle from several perspectives. Multiple property owners of small businesses make it difficult to assemble sites for redevelopment, heavy traffic with narrow sidewalks make it difficult for businesses to create a street presence and to create pedestrian activity. Longtime property owners with little debt on their buildings are satisfied with mediocre uses and rental income. Lack of building character, and insufficient landscaping by property owners, all lend to the haphazard and somewhat deteriorated appearance of the areas main street -- York Road.

The growth of Towson University from a small state teachers college to one of the largest undergraduate universities in the MD University state system has perhaps both enhanced and detracted from smart growth efforts in the Towson core. The desire and advocacy of the surrounding residential communities to remain single-family communities has had the positive effect of driving higher density redevelopment projects to be focused in the core, promoting reuse of obsolete sites and buildings that will accommodate the new, younger population and the uses they desire. There are, however, neighborhoods on the edge of the core that remain vulnerable to uses and development that may affect their current quality of life. The East Towson community specifically is not separated by any substantial physical boundary, and therefore have been forced to be historically vigilant about development issues associated with the student housing and intensive development in the edge of the community.

In recent years, the projected growth of Towson has prompted a discussion about a possible redevelopment authority or an entity that would guide development in a specified area and be supported by funding such as a Business Improvement District. Currently, multiple sets of regulations directed towards various aspects of Towson’s growth, and enforced by different entities have hindered the coordination of development. This fragmentation is a barrier to smart growth and redevelopment in Towson.

II. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY BASELINE INFORMATION

B. Community Conditions: Strengths and Weaknesses

(1) Describe the strengths and weaknesses in the proposed Area's existing built environment. For example, what is the condition of housing? Are there underutilized historic buildings and cultural places? What is the condition and availability of community parks and recreational assets? Are there transportation assets? What is the current condition of community infrastructure such as roads and lighting? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

Strengths

Downtown Towson includes many strengths such as central location, strong demographics with a median household income of \$60,000, a median housing price of \$300,000, an active engaged population, strong anchor institutions including Towson University and Goucher College, Greater Baltimore Medical Center, St. Joseph Hospital and Sheppard Pratt. It is the location of a large regional shopping destination, - the Towson Town Mall, home of county government and the county court system and the location of several new developments creating momentum. Additionally, it is well served by a strong Chamber of Commerce and strong surrounding residential communities.

Downtown Towson is served by several bus lines, a variety of housing choices with varying architecture and price points, and a diverse population. The many institutions provide substantial green space in addition to several county parks. The area surrounding downtown Towson has several top-ranked schools with substantial green areas for passive and active recreation. The public schools that serve Towson are among the best in Baltimore County, offering opportunity for magnet programs and extracurricular programming.

Towson, which has the largest job base in the county, is served by many transit corridors ranging from major regional arterials to interstate highways and major transit. York Road is a major State highway that has traditionally been Towson's main arterial. Other local vital arterials that have connected Towson have been Joppa and Dulaney Valley Roads. Interstates I-695 and I-83 have long served as Towson traditional northern and western borders but also the major points of access for local commuters, students and visitors. Towson is also connected by mass transit with 6 connecting bus lines and two nearby light rail stations that connect the Towson area to Downtown Baltimore and BWI Airport.

Weaknesses

A primary weakness in Towson is the non-descript architecture, primarily office and residential buildings, constructed during the 1960's. The lack of character in the built environment, coupled with the fact that Towson is located only _ miles from downtown Baltimore City has contributed to Towson's struggle to identify itself as an urban place of distinction.

There has also been historically a "luke warm" relationship between Towson University and the surrounding area, with a lack of pedestrian connections from the college to the core, no real marketing of the area as a college town and businesses that do not cater to the student population. This is starting to change slowly, but could be greatly enhanced by marketing and branding.

Lack of land assemblage tools has posed challenges in Towson's redevelopment. As mentioned in the introduction, many property owners carry little debt on their building and have no incentive to sell, upgrade or redevelop their properties. Older infrastructure is predominate throughout the Towson core. Sidewalks are narrow and in disrepair particularly east of York Road and lighting is inadequate. Most often cited as a major issue during community planning processes is inadequate lighting and the need for traffic calming.

As Towson continues to grow and expand, so does the need for public transit. While Towson has several well maintained bus lines and nearby light rail stops, more modes of public transit are needed. In the future the possibility of high volume public transit such as a heavy rail station in the Towson core will need to be discussed as well as increasing bicycle access and connectivity to keep up with the current pace of development.

II. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY BASELINE INFORMATION

(2) Describe the Area's land use/zoning make-up (residential, commercial, industrial, and mixed-use). Is the current land use or zoning conducive to revitalization investment? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

For purposes of describing land use, the Towson core can be divided into five major categories or focus areas: 1) The area south of Towsontown Boulevard, often referred to as the "triangle" is a mix of residential and low intensity commercial uses that cater to Towson University; 2) The 400 and 500 blocks of York Road, often referred to as Main Street are a blend of older, historic two story buildings comprised of 1st floor retail uses with some residential use on the upper levels, and the large Towson Commons office and retail center constructed in the 1980's; 3) North of the roundabout are regional commercial destinations mixed with Class A office buildings and newly constructed midrise housing; 4) West of York Road between Joppa and Towsontown Blvd. is the government center which houses the county administration, County Council, circuit court and the many offices that serve the county administration and court system; 5) Finally, on the east side of York Road is the Towson Library, the District court, the future Towson Square entertainment facility and garage, and the historic east Towson residential community.

Open Space in Towson is limited primarily to the green space associated with the many institutional uses. Both Towson University and Goucher College, which bookend the core, have large green campuses. Additionally, Immaculate Conception Church located at Bosley and Joppa has athletic fields and the Prospect Hill Cemetery also constitutes green space in the core. The historic gardens around the county courthouse, designed by Wolfgang Oehme, also provide green in the heart of the urban center.

The County Council passed legislation to create a new zoning overlay - the Neighborhood Commons (NC) district. The intent of the NC zone is to provide a means to control development potential of land near or within neighborhoods inside the Urban Rural Demarcation Line (URDL) acquired by non-profit organizations that favor community open space. The open space would be available for use for civic, social, educational or recreational uses. During the County's most recent Comprehensive Zoning Map Process (CZMP), the council placed the NC district on several parcels of open space throughout the general Towson community. Within the SC area specifically, the NC zone was placed on the historic Prospect Hill cemetery to preserve the expansive green area in the core.

The predominate zoning category for downtown Towson is Business Major-Town Center (BM-CT). The BM-CT zone allows the density and flexibility consistent with an urban center. It allows for higher density residential buildings, commercial uses of a regional character, active uses on the first floors and the flexibility to support mixed use development. Additionally, the CT overlay zone relaxes parking requirements, allows greater floor area ratio (FAR) relaxes setback and bulk requirements and addresses design review consistent with the design criteria of a town center. The area also contains pockets of BM and BR zoning further north on York Road. A newly created overlay district, the Neighborhood Commons (NC), has been applied in the Towson SC to control development and preserve land near or within neighborhoods inside the URDL.

In addition to the BM CT zoning, the East Towson residential community is a mix of office residential and residential land use and zoning categories including Residential Office Accessory, Office Residential and Density Residential. The office residential zones abut the CT district in most cases and act as a transitional buffer between the core and the adjacent residential community. East Towson is a designated Design Review Panel area requiring architectural review of new and rehabilitated residential structures.

II. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY BASELINE INFORMATION

3) Describe strengths and weaknesses in basic features of community quality-of-life. For instance, is crime an issue for this SC Area? What is the condition and quality of educational choices available to the community? Are artistic, cultural, or community resources, events or facilities within or accessible to residents in the proposed SC Area? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

Strengths:

Residents, students, business owners, workers, and patrons that live, work and recreate in the Towson core enjoy a high quality of life. The area offers quality housing at a mix of prices both for sale and for rent, and neighborhoods with highly performing schools. The housing stock is varied, offering both new and older, homeownership and rental, and at varying levels of neighborhood density.

Education opportunities are plentiful with Towson University and Goucher College anchoring the core, as well as some of the highest ranking public schools in the Baltimore County school system serving area residents. The presence of the institutions also provide the area with cultural resources including concerts, lectures, specialized workshops, adult education, and resources for area youth including day care and camps.

Access to quality healthcare at all levels is easily obtained with the Greater Baltimore Medical Center, St. Joseph's Hospital, the Sheppard Pratt Hospital and the many medical office that support these uses located in the immediate vicinity.

The active and engaged community, both business and residential, has worked consistently with area law enforcement as well as Towson University and Goucher College campus police to keep Towson a safe and inviting environment. As Towson grows, the Chamber of Commerce and Greater Towson Committee are implementing increased safety measures to assure that Towson stays a safe and welcoming environment. Increased lighting will be an important feature as Towson takes on additional nighttime uses with the addition of the Towson Square entertainment complex.

Weaknesses:

Despite the many strengths that add to Towson's quality of life, the lagging development of York Road with marginally used storefronts and limited transit opportunities continue to hinder Towson's reputation as a destination with a strong identity.

The physical age of many of the surrounding area public schools requires substantial capital improvement dollars to bring them up to today's standards. Several schools require substantial additions and installation of air conditioning, at minimum, to modernize them.

II. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY BASELINE INFORMATION

C. Natural Resources and Environmental Impact: Strengths and Weaknesses

(1) Describe the strengths and weaknesses of the community's "natural environment." in or near the Sustainable Community Area. What is the current condition of key natural resources - lands, air, water, watersheds, tree canopy, other? If the community is located in a coastal zone, what risks might the community be subject to associated with climate induced sea level rise? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

The Towson Core is part of the Jones Falls Watershed area. The county's watershed program consists of characterizing and prioritizing watershed management plans, including Small Watershed Action Plans (SWAPS) and evaluating resource systems and functions at varying scales. Assessments of pollutant loads, stream stability and forest community structure provide the framework for the implementation of capital projects, facility maintenance, education programs and cooperative citizen actions. The goals for the SWAP program include: Improving and maintaining healthy streams, restoring and maintaining aquatic biology and habitat, improving stream corridors for water quality, increasing the tree canopy, reducing storm water for impervious surface, increasing the use of Best Management Practices (BMP's), improving access to streams and enhancing unused green spaces.

The area also falls within the geographic purview of the long established non -profit Blue Water Baltimore, who's purpose is to use community based restoration, education and advocacy to achieve clean water in Baltimore's rivers, streams, and harbor. Blue Water Baltimore is the combination of several organizations including the Jones Falls Watershed Association, Herring Run Watershed Association, the Gwynn's Falls Watershed Association, the Baltimore Harbor Watershed Association, and the Baltimore Harbor Water Keeper.

Baltimore County recently completed an assessment of the tree canopy in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service and the University of Vermont. The county is working to finalize multiple tree canopy goals for individual communities, watersheds, and reservoirs, and on a countywide bases as well. Currently the county recommends that each Census Designated Place reach 40% tree canopy cover. The goal is consistent with the States' goal and the recommended forest cover by the American Forests Inc. The tree an copy in Towson is currently 50% area coverage, which is the highest ranking category in the county as a whole.

II. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY BASELINE INFORMATION

(2) Describe the strengths and weaknesses of any current efforts to reduce the community's "carbon footprint" or impact on the environment. Is recycling (commercial or residential) available to minimize waste? Are there current efforts to encourage the purchase and availability of fresh local food and other local products and services to the community? Describe any current energy or water conservation efforts that may be underway. If the community has not implemented one of the above initiatives, has the community identified a need or interest to pursue these or other efforts to reduce environmental impact, for instance through the new Sustainable Maryland Certified initiative? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

Baltimore County is working on a number of ways to reduce the carbon footprint in all of its communities. The county has an ongoing relationship with the State to reduce its carbon footprint through clean energy loan programs and clean communities grants. Through these state grant and loan programs, Baltimore County has been able to promote weatherization, encouraging the community to purchase compost bins from the county, planting young slow growth trees and installing rain barrels and rain gardens.

The Baltimore County Master plan 2020 states that the benefits of local food production are enormous and include energy conservation, sustainability food security and the potential for green jobs. The county's green building program requires the use of green and sustainable building and remodeling practices when using County financing instruments. The program has two primary goals: improving energy efficiency and indoor air quality. Increased energy emissions and enhances the value and durability of the housing. Lower health care cost, and a higher quality of living can be achieved with cleaner indoor air.

There are several new housing developments in the SC area that feature green building practices. The Palisades of Towson (355 units) is a certified Leed Silver apartment home community demonstrating concern for the comfort of residents as well as the environment. The Promenade (379 units) is an architecturally driven building designed to complement it's surrounding and engage onsite topography to create an inviting human scale in an urban environment. Towson Green (210 units) has ecofriendly features which are a center piece of the development's design – proximity to central Towson, a rain garden on the grounds, and energy efficient design.

In addition, the goal of Baltimore County's transportation plan is to provide infrastructure that will reduce the carbon footprint by doing several things. The county supports diverse travel needs with the regions, fosters responsible land use decisions to enhance economic development strategies and promotes environmental stewardship. In particular the Greater Towson Committee's transportation committee in cooperation with elected officials has been developing a "bike beltway" and received a \$100,000 grant to implement signage and lane striping along a specified route that will link Towson University with several destinations in and around the core.

As mentioned earlier, the community has also partnered on an extensive basis with Blue Water Baltimore to reduce environmental impacts on a number of water conservation and stream restoration and cleanup projects.

Weaknesses

There remain opportunities for improvement. Despite participation on the County's bike plan process, there is limited bicycling activity on the streets in the area. The streets are narrow without room for bike lanes, and also difficult for walking in some cases. This continues to make vehicular travel the preferred method of transportation, negatively impacting the carbon footprint. County staff, business and community leaders will continue to include environmental policies and goals in future plans by promoting environmental stewardship and encouraging creative redevelopment strategies.

II. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY BASELINE INFORMATION

(3) Describe the strengths and weaknesses of the jurisdiction's current stormwater management practices and how these may affect the proposed SC Area. Is redevelopment and retrofitting of infrastructure an issue or opportunity in this SC Area? Stormwater runoff is a significant source of pollution to Maryland's streams and the Chesapeake Bay. Buildings constructed before 1985 have little or no stormwater controls, and development between 1985 and 2010 have some controls. Updated stormwater regulations passed by Maryland's General Assembly in 2010 require that development and redevelopment projects utilize stringent stormwater controls. Sustainable Community Areas may have opportunities for redevelopment practices that can reduce stormwater flows. (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

The Storm water Management Program addresses the impacts of storm water quantity and quality resulting from new development after the construction phase is complete. Baltimore County has been delegated authority by the State of Maryland to enforce storm water management regulations. The Storm water Management Program is located within the Department of Environmental Protection & Sustainability (DEPS)– Storm water Engineering Section. DEPS currently implements the requirements of the 2000 Maryland Storm water Design Manual to new and redevelopment activities. The Storm Water Management Act of 2007 was incorporated into the County's regulations in May 2010 and further refinements will be integrated when all state regulatory changes have been completed.

Approved in 2013, the fee requires the 10 largest jurisdictions in the state to contribute funds to establish watershed protection and restoration. Fees will be calculated based on the number of impervious surfaces. The fees will be added to the Baltimore Co. Stormwater Management Funds, which will be used to improve water quality of storm water run off , reduce runoff, reduce adverse water impacts from development, and fund the implementation of water quality education and restoration projects.

The delegation of this program is periodically reviewed by MDE and has consistently passed the review requirements. The program contains several components, including:

Review of storm water management facilities plan

Review of variance and associated fee in lieu requests

As built inspections, and periodic inspections

Baltimore County code significantly affects the design of storm water components for land development projects. Some of the more significant changes are:

Environmental Site Design to the Maximum Extent Practicable must be addressed for all projects, including redevelopment

Three sequential plan submissions and reviews are now required: Concept SWM Plan, Development SWM Plan, and Final SWM plan

Redevelopment projects will require 50 percent reduction in impervious surface or equivalent water quality management. Currently the requirement is 20 percent.

No grading or building permits may be issued until sediment control and SWM plans are signed.

II. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY BASELINE INFORMATION

D. Economic Conditions & Access to Opportunity: Strengths and Weaknesses

(1) Describe the jurisdiction's current economic strengths and weaknesses. For example, are there distinct economic drivers in the area or region that will affect access to job opportunities and the progress of the SC Plan? What are the main barriers to the Area's economic competitiveness? What is the current level of broadband access available to serve residents, businesses and public facilities? What efforts are currently in place to increase worker skills and employment? Describe trends in employment rates and business formation.

(Answer Space 4,000 characters)

Baltimore County is the major economic engine in terms of jobs in the region with the second largest number of jobs in any Maryland jurisdiction(515,000). The county economy is highly diversified, not dependent on any single industry or company. Among the sectors where the county is strong are financial services, defense, manufacturing, transportation, information, technology, and life sciences. The federal government also has a major presence in the County, as the national headquarters for both the Social Security Administration and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid. The County's interconnected web of large, medium and small firms in traditional and high technology sectors and the high quality of the local workforce, also foster stability and resilience.

Local serving businesses are those whose products or services are primarily consumed in the county, such as restaurants, grocery stores, bookstores, medical offices, banks, dry cleaners etc. They range from national retailers to local family owned businesses. Regardless of their size, these companies provide the good and services that county residents need and want and provide employment to a large number of County residents.

The most successful downtowns have a mix of synergistic uses that support each other. Downtown housing and office uses have residents and employees that patronize retail shops, restaurants, and services. Theaters and other entertainment uses are destinations that draw customers into downtown, who then also patronize restaurants and bars before and after a movie or performance. The Towson Square development, mentioned previously, is expected to bring about 750,000 customers to the Towson core on a yearly basis.

Original town centers, such as Towson, often have unique challenges. Redevelopment costs can be higher with land assemblage and parking needs being difficult to achieve. Incomes from business properties are diverse, as multiple owners have different perspectives and infrastructure needs.

Baltimore County offers a range of incentives that can be tailored to individual project needs in the Towson core, including low interest loans, tax credits, specialized grants, key infrastructure improvements such as parking garages, sewer expansion, and road realignments and improvements, sale of publicly owned land, demolition of obsolete structures, permitting process assistance, flexible zoning support and liquor licensing assistance.

The Baltimore County Economic Development Strategic Operations Plan outlines a work plan to defend and expand the county's current employment base, guide new job generating employers, and ensure that business communities are prepared to attract the companies and workers of the future. The Towson area has major competitive advantages including major private employers such as GBMC, Sheppard Pratt and St. Josephs Hospital, along with the presence of Towson University and Goucher College. The Towson Town Center Mall is in walking distance of significant amounts of new upscale housing and the New Towson City Center Building. Using all of these advantages, the Towson SC has the potential to be a dynamic downtown employment and destination center with appealing residences, corporate offices and distinctive retailers, drawing people to live, work, shop, dine and socialize.

II. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY BASELINE INFORMATION

(2) Describe the jurisdiction's housing market and access to affordable workforce housing. What are the trends in residential construction (rental and homeownership), homeownership rate, foreclosure rate and, property values. Describe how and whether your jurisdiction's prevailing housing costs - both homeownership and rental - are affordable to households below 120% AMI, 80% AMI and 50% AMI. What efforts are in place currently to house individuals, families and the disabled at or below the AMI levels described above? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

Baltimore County has a fairly stable housing market with pockets of distress and opportunity regarding affordability and property values. The Consolidated Plan represents a deliberate effort in an open and participatory process to foster accountability between County government and residents and manages funding allocation to create desirable housing choice and expand opportunities to persons of low to moderate incomes.

The homeownership rate in the county is 67%, compared with the regional rate of 66%. The median home value in 2010 was \$277,500, falling slightly above the regional median which was \$260,000. The county median rent in 2010 was \$1033 compared with the regional median of \$1,018. There were 5900 incidents of foreclosures in the county, which accounted for 11.60% of the State.

The area median income in 2010 was \$63,959. Household incomes in the region break down as follows:

Metropolitan Region - \$66,195
Household Income < 50% of regions - \$33,098
Household Income <80% of regions - \$26,478
Household Income <120% of regions - \$31,774

II. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY BASELINE INFORMATION

(3) Describe the SC Area's demographic trends (with respect to age, race, household size, household income, educational attainment, or other relevant factors). (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

There are approximately 6,000 people who reside in the Towson Sustainable Community (TSC). Reflecting the demographic trends in Baltimore County, TSC has become diverse in socioeconomic characteristics of population. The emerging mixture of demographics emphasizes the necessity to promote a variety of housing choices, transportation modes, public school programs, workforce development, and social services in TSC.

TSC has experienced an increase in population in all racial or ethnic groups. White population grew the most, representing nearly 60% of the total growth in the past decade. All minority groups and people from Hispanic or Latino origin showed the remarkably high rate in population growth, though they are small in numbers.

Also, population in most age cohorts has grown since 2000. There was a decrease in 65 to 84 age cohorts. Population in the 15-34 age cohorts demonstrated an increase. This illustrates that young persons have chosen to live in the area for career building or family establishments. Off-campus students may also result in the growth in these young age cohorts. As indicated previously, 2000 data included group quarters population of Goucher College. Should Goucher's population not be taken into account, the population increase in the young age cohorts could be larger than the numbers in the simple comparison between 2000 and 2010.

Between 2000 and 2010, 684 units were built including 673 units in the Dulaney Valley, The Quarter, and Towson Promenade. The homeownership rate is less than one-third that is notably lower than the county's average (66.8%). The multi-family construction has been increasingly important, revealing economic conditions and current housing market dynamics and demands.

Data on educational attainment indicate that people in the Towson area have excelled in high school performance and advanced education. This is chiefly true for the bachelor's or higher grouping, which is considerably higher than the county's average (35.2%). The county's superb public schools in the York Road corridor and exceptional private and public employers have attracted well-educated people to locate in the Towson area including TSC.

The unemployment rate in the Towson area deflated to some degree in the past decade. The recent unemployment rate is 4.65%, similar to the county's average. The low unemployment rate is attributable to distinguishably high educational attainment. Note that the unemployment rate is computed with different methodologies at the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and Census (see notes in the chart).

The Towson area's housing costs are higher than the county's average. This especially bears true for the median home value, which is 143.43% of the county's median. The median gross rent in TSC is 115.59% of the county's median. In addition, since 2007, foreclosures in the Towson zip codes including TSC have intensified. Yet, its percent share of the county's just rose slightly.

The Towson area's median household income was \$33,800 in 2000 and \$59,900 in 2010. This income level was 67.88% of the Baltimore region's median household income in 2000 and grew to 90.47% in 2010 as compared to the regional value. The percent share of the area's households who are in the 50%, 80%, or 120% of the Baltimore region's median household income has dropped since 2000.

III. LOCAL CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT PLANS & PROJECTS

A. Organizational Structure:

Describe the Applicant's organizational structure. Specifically, which organizations are members in the Sustainable Communities Workgroup and who are the respective staff? Who are the leaders, and how will the Workgroup advisor or staff manage implementation of the SC Area Plan? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

The Baltimore County Department of Planning assumes lead responsibility for preparing Sustainable Community applications and for creating and implementing Sustainable Community Action Plans. The agency has the capacity and the will to maximize the impact of the SC designation. The agency has formed a county government based Sustainable Communities Workgroup. Presently two additional county agencies are active in the group, the Department of Economic Development and the Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability. Additional agencies, such as Recreation and Parks and Public Works, are engaged through their prior participation in existing plans that are important components of our applications and future projects. Our government based workgroup and more formal agency representation will expand as we identify and pursue specific SC project applications.

The county's SC Workgroup has a leadership team composed of the department director, two division heads and five additional staffers who are highly experienced in community development, community revitalization, community outreach and community planning. The SC leadership team will guide and supervise several departmental divisions that will be engaged. The department's recently established Neighborhood Response Team (NRT) will take on leadership and implementation responsibilities associated with individual sustainable communities. The NRT will interface with community-based organizations, non-profit organizations and other stakeholders.

Additional resources include the agency's Housing Opportunities Program and the Commercial Revitalization Program. The Commercial Revitalization Program consists of experienced professionals from various disciplines including planning, commercial real estate, neighborhood stabilization and banking. The program will continue to offer low interest loans, tax credits and technical and business assistance to attract new investment.

Through the recent consolidation of county government, Planning acquired functions formerly associated with the Office of Community Conservation, including the Housing Opportunities Program, administration of CDBG funds, Home funds and other HUD state and federal programs. The Housing Opportunities Program originates, underwrites, administers and services housing loans, grants and tax incentives utilizing state, local, and federal resources. The program works to increase the supply of affordable housing, improve and maintain the existing housing stock, and strengthen neighborhoods through expanding public facilities and community amenities.

III. LOCAL CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT PLANS & PROJECTS

B. Organizational Experience:

Describe the Applicant organization's past experience in administering revitalization plans and projects. Describe the roles of the members of the Sustainable Communities Workgroup, including their experience in implementing revitalization initiatives. What are the strengths and challenges of the capacity of these groups with respect to implementation of the SC Plan? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

The Department of Planning, including new divisions recently attained through a consolidation of county agencies, is well versed in leading large-scale planning efforts and implementing a wide variety of projects associated with those revitalization plans. This robust capacity includes plans that have received crucial support from the Maryland Community Legacy Program administered by DHCD and gap financing for revitalization projects generating downtown employment with DBED and MDOT. All of this work has involved close collaboration and partnerships with key county agencies, state agencies, federal agencies, community organizations, and private-sector stakeholders. This work also involves many contracts, requests for proposals and memoranda of understanding to clearly guide the involvement of formal partners.

The county has tackled significant redevelopment projects involving the transformation of formerly blighted and neglected properties. Working with HUD and other partners, the county gained control of the former Riverdale apartments and resolved a longstanding case of blight and neglect in Middle River. The property, now known as Waterview, stands as a beacon of neighborhood stability, comprising more than 60 acres of newly built residences. Similar transformative initiatives to overcome blight were carried out at the former Kingsley Park apartments in Middle River and the former Yorkway apartments in Dundalk. Both of these properties are now occupied by newly built residences, including a multi-family building at Kingsley Park.

The county launched its partnership with DHCD's community legacy program as part of the Dundalk Urban Design Assistance Team (UDAT) planning process. Baltimore County administers a comprehensive Commercial Revitalization Program that seeks to reposition the County's aging downtown business districts. Using targeted Public investment to leverage private reinvestment, the Program offers a range of complementary development and financial assistance tools to implement area specific revitalization strategies. These include Architect on Call Program, Building Improvement Loan Program, tax credits, property and demographic data, small business loans, infrastructure improvements, organizational grants, regulatory changes etc. Prior to the economic downturn, the county generally loaned over \$650,000 annually for revitalization projects and granted \$150,000 annually to business organizations for a variety of promotional events and beautification projects. The county has partnered with the State on several large revitalization projects, most recently with DBED on the complete renovation of 150,000 square foot Towson City Center and with MDOT on the Towson Square entertainment complex.

Baltimore County then received crucial Community Legacy funding that supported the Randallstown UDAT of 2003-2004. This planning process received a community participation award from the American Planning Association. The plan's leading recommendation was to establish a multi-faceted community center. The project, involving an investment of \$9.7 million in county funds, \$2.9 million in state funds, \$400,000 in federal funds and YMCA as a partner - was opened in 2009. Earlier a signature gateway park was completed.

III. LOCAL CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT PLANS & PROJECTS

C. Public Input:

How did residents and other stakeholders in the community provide input to Action Plan described below in Section IV? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

Residents, property owners, business owners, and institutional representatives in the Towson SC area have participated in extensive community planning processes over the last 20 years. They worked collaboratively with the guidance of staff, elected officials, The Greater Towson Committee, the Towson Chamber of Commerce, and the Greater Towson Council of Community Organizations (GTCCA). These groups of stakeholders were intimately involved in the development of The Towson Community Plan, The Towson UDAT, The East Towson Design Guidelines and the Walkable Towson Plan.

The recommendations stemming from these plans deal with urban design and density, historic preservation, creating an active and comfortable pedestrian realm, exploring transportation options in the core, and branding and marketing of Towson as an urban destination. Substantial public input was sought in all of these plan efforts by a sophisticated and engaged constituency. They continue to monitor progress and provide input as projects are implemented and new projects come on line.

IV. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

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, increased prosperity for local households and improved 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 in the SC Plan should improve the livability of community places -- residential, commercial, or other public or private properties - and create new work, retail, recreational and housing opportunities for residents. These projects should also reduce the environmental impact of the community through water and energy resource conservation and management strategies. In this way, the Plan can be a road map for local stakeholders as well as State agencies to work together to create a more a sustainable and livable community.

A. Supporting existing communities & reducing environmental impacts.

(1) A community's approach to Smart Growth generally includes two inter-related areas of focus: encouraging reinvestment and growth in existing communities; and, discouraging growth that degrades natural resources, and farms and rural landscapes. Broadly describe your jurisdiction's Smart Growth approach and any significant accomplishments made over the last decade or so. (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

Baltimore County has been successful in safeguarding its urban communities as viable places to live, work, and raise families. The establishment of the Urban Rural Demarcation Line (URDL) in 1967, designation of the Owings Mills and White Marsh Growth Areas in 1975, creation of land management areas in the 1980's and formation of the Middle River Redevelopment Area in 2010 are essential to maintaining the sustainable development and resource preservation throughout county communities. The county's growth and development has mainly taken place within the URDL, Ninety percent of its population resides in the urban areas.

Development statistics authenticate Baltimore County's success in enhancing community conservation and resource preservation. Within the county's urban areas, there exists a diversity of housing types for an emerging diversity of residents. The largest growth has occurred in the community conservation districts, designated growth and redevelopment areas, and urban core. Major redevelopment projects have featured high density, multi family dwellings in recent years. In addition, the county's permanent conservation goal established in 1989 is to preserve 80,000 acres of agricultural and resource preservation areas. Baltimore County has ranked among the top dozen counties nationwide for preservation progress, successfully saving approximately 52,000 acres of such valuable land.

Master Plan 2020 continues the county's success on growth management and emphasis on promoting healthy and cohesive neighborhoods, supporting transit oriented and walkable development, improving functional and efficient transportation networks, enhancing workforce training and business attraction and reinvesting in existing infrastructure and aging housing stock.

Building on nationally renowned strengths and success, Baltimore County continues to work towards providing an adequate supply of residential dwellings with a variety of types to meet the needs of people at different ages and stages of their lives. The Consolidated Plan is a five year strategy proposing utilization of federal, state, and local resources and funds to create decent housing, expand economic opportunities, and ensure a suitable living environment for low to moderate income persons. The county has implemented policies to assist its rental population for their affordable living conditions. The county is also committed to increasing the availability and accessibility of public services, economic advancement, transportation opportunities and vital resources to improve the quality of life of minorities and low to moderate-income families and communities.

In 2012, Baltimore County adopted the growth tiers map, as required by the Md. Sustainable Growth and preservation Act. The map classifies land into different density levels of residential development. The map supports the policy of directing growth into areas that already have infrastructure to support development rather than create sprawl. The Towson SC area is classified as Tier One and is served by Public Water and Sewer inside the URDL.

IV. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

(2) Describe any major investments in community infrastructure -water, stormwater, sewer, sidewalk, lighting, etc. -- that must be undertaken in order to improve the readiness or competitiveness of the proposed SC Area for private investment and compliance (if applicable) with TMDL regulations. Addressing the stormwater during redevelopment can reduce the pollution entering our streams and contribution to the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay. Investments in infrastructure, generally, can be an important catalyst for new private investment in the community. (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

As mentioned previously, the Storm water Management Program addresses the impacts on stormwater quantity and quality resulting from new development after the construction phase is complete. Baltimore County has been delegated authority by the State of Maryland to enforce stormwater management regulations. The Stormwater Management Program is located within DEPS – Stormwater Engineering Section. DEPS currently implements the requirements of the 2000 Maryland Stormwater Design Manual to new and redevelopment activities. The Stormwater Management Act of 2007 was incorporated into the county's regulations in May 2010 and further refinements will be integrated when all State regulatory changes have been completed. The delegation of this program is periodical reviewed by MDE and has consistently passed the review requirements. The Program contains several components, including:

Review of stormwater management facilities plans
 Review of variance and associated fee in lieu requests
 As built inspections and
 Periodic inspections

The proposed Sc area is basically ready to compete with some infrastructure limitations that are in the process of being corrected and some that are planned for future action. The county's compliance with the TMDL requirements and the areas competitiveness will be enhanced and improved by the following actions:

The following infrastructure projects are planned for the Towson SC area and/or surrounding area:

- Widen Hillen Road from Burke Avenue to Fairmount Avenue
- Study Towson transit access
- Replace and upgrade lighting, sidewalks and paving on Jefferson Street from Chesapeake Avenue to Shealy Avenue
- Upgrade Shealy Avenue with new pavement and lighting for enhanced pedestrian use
- Complete Towson "Bike Beltway" improvements including striping of lanes and directional signage
- Replace major water line extending from Washington Avenue to the Beltway exit.
- Repaving of York Road in area of Towson University
- Install pedestrian wayfinding signs

IV. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

(3) Describe policies, initiatives or projects that the community will undertake or expand in order to reduce the SC Area's impact on the environment. Examples include but are not limited to: conservation or management of stormwater through retrofitting of streets and by-ways (Green Streets, rain gardens, etc.); retrofitting of facilities and homes for energy conservation; implementation of "green" building codes and mixed-use zoning; recycling of waste; clean-ups of watersheds; and, encouragement of "Buy Local" approaches that benefit local suppliers and food producers. A comprehensive menu of such actions may be found through the nonprofit Sustainable Maryland Certified initiative. (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

There are several policies, initiatives or projects underway or recommended in order to reduce the negative impacts on the environment. These policies/projects were developed and reinforced through the recent Community Planning Processes that took place and were referenced in Section 11, (a).

- Single stream recycling for residents, and possible expansion of recycling
- Tree plantings where possible throughout the area
- Stream restoration projects budgeted through the county's Capital Improvement Process
- Installation of streetscape measures that "green" such as landscape buffers along paved areas and promoting shared parking
- Redevelopment and preservation of existing structures as opposed to new construction: The County has spent more than \$3.5 million in federal HOME funds in East Towson.
- Supporting local farmers in the Towson Commercial Revitalization District through the Towson Farmers Market
- Redeveloping underutilized sites with mixed use development
- Installation of the Towson Bike Beltway to encourage more travel by bicycle, connecting students and residents to destinations, and discouraging additional auto traffic
- Encouragement of transit service offered by "Collegietown" network that connects students of area universities to area destinations
- Redevelopment projects will be required to reduce the amount of impervious surface by 50%

IV. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

(4) Which community groups or stakeholders will be key to the implementation of the initiatives and projects noted in this section? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

The key community groups and stakeholders that will be involved in implementation of this section's initiatives and projects include:

- Baltimore County government including the Department of Planning, The Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability, the Department of Economic Development and the Department of Public Works

- Community and Business Associations including: The Greater Towson Committee, the Towson Chamber of Commerce, and The Greater Towson Council of Community Associations

- Institutions including Towson University and Goucher College

- The State Highway Administration

- Additionally, Baltimore City is our regional partner on a future York Road corridor Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Project

IV. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

B. Valuing communities and neighborhoods -- building upon assets and building in amenities:

(1) What are the key assets that exist in the community upon which the Plan's projects and initiatives will build? Assets may include physical assets such as parks and historic structures and also civic and economic assets such as employers, educational institutions, and cultural organizations and activities. (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

The Towson SC Area contains the following assets on which to build:

- Central Geographic Location
- Strong Community Associations
- Location of county seat
- Home of Towson University and Goucher College
- Home of Greater Baltimore Medical Center, St. Joseph's Hospital, and Sheppard Pratt Hospital
- Location of largest regional shopping mall in area – Towsontown Center
- Higher than average incomes of surrounding neighborhoods
- The presence of many national chain tenants.
- Home of the central library for Baltimore County
- New upscale residential development of "downtown" living units - 1300+ units
- An abundance of grocery stores, services, and class A office space
- Future home of regional entertainment complex with theaters and upscale restaurants - Towson Square
- Recent investment by some of the regions top developers
- Successful schools
- Senior housing developments - Blakehurst, Pickersgill, Edenwald

IV. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

(2) What policies, initiatives or projects will reuse or enhance the historical assets, traditional business districts/Main Streets and cultural resources of the community? What actions will reinforce your community's authentic "sense of place" and historic character? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

The Towson SC area contains two major historical assets -York Road, the historical heart of the community and the East Towson African American residential community, which was settled before the Civil War. The York Road corridor started to develop soon after the construction of the county courthouse in 1857. Over the years it has functioned as the major transportation connection from downtown Baltimore City through Towson to destinations north. York Road has remained Towson's "main street" with several historical structures and original storefronts that offer goods and services. It is also the road that Towson University has been located on since its inception even as the campus has expanded substantially.

Baltimore County has invested and will continue to invest its resources on York Road. The Department of Planning is focusing the financial incentives of the Commercial Revitalization Program on York Road by targeting businesses for façade upgrades, tax credits and business loans to expand business activity on York Road. The Department is also working on making greater physical connections between Towson University and downtown York Road by exploring creative lighting and public art that create a sense of place and shared connection between the university and the historical downtown Towson.

Additionally, the county in cooperation with the state has invested substantial dollars in a streetscape program for the "main street" portion of York Road including brick paved sidewalks, street trees, planting beds, wayfinding signage and screening of parking areas. These public improvements will be coordinated with targeting of commercial revitalization resources and private resources to bring back York Road as the walkable main street and the heart of downtown Towson.

In East Towson, the county's Housing Opportunities Program will continue to invest federal funds in this historic neighborhood to upgrade the housing stock, provide affordable housing, continue to offer community services including recreation and daycare, and preserve historic buildings and sites.

IV. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

(3) Describe policies, initiatives or projects that will increase community access to green spaces, parks and other amenities? A community can gain social and physical benefits from access to a healthy natural environment. The inclusion of complete streets, trails, green space, parks and trees contribute to the character and health of a community. Examples might include improvements to the tree canopy by planting street trees, improving local neighborhood streams, or reusing a vacant lot for a new community park or playground.*(Answer Space 4,000 characters)*

The county has several policy initiatives to increase access to green space within the URDL.

Established in 2002 by County Resolution, the Neighborspace program is a private non-profit program that identifies and acquires parcels of land in established communities to preserve green open space that residents can enjoy as small parks, gardens, and natural areas.

As recently as last year, the County Council passed legislation to create a new zoning overlay - the Neighborhood Commons (NC) district. The intent of the NC zone is to provide a means to control development potential of land near or within neighborhoods inside the Urban Rural Demarcation Line (URDL) acquired by non-profit organizations that favor community open space. The open space would be available for use for civic, social, educational or recreational uses. During the County's most recent Comprehensive Zoning Map Process (CZMP), the council placed the NC district on several parcels of open space throughout the general Towson community. Within the SC area specifically, the NC zone was placed on the historic Prospect Hill cemetery to preserve the expansive green area in the core.

IV. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

(4) Which community groups or stakeholders will be key to the implementation of the initiatives and projects noted in this section? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

As with previous sections, the key stakeholders will be:

Baltimore County Department of Planning
Baltimore County Department of Public Works
Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks
Baltimore County Department of Economic Development
Baltimore County Library
Baltimore County Department of Aging
Towson Chamber of Commerce
Greater Towson Committee
Greater Towson Council of Community Associations
Towson University
Greater Baltimore Medical Center
St. Joseph's Hospital
Sheppard Pratt Health System

IV. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

C. Enhancing economic competitiveness

(1) What economic development policies, initiatives or projects will improve the economy through investments in small businesses and other key employment sectors? What economic development and business incentives will you build upon or implement as part of the SC Plan? Examples could include but are not limited to: green-taping for expedited project application review; permitting and inspection; job training; business tax credits; and, revolving loan funds. (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

The proposed SC area is a designated Commercial Revitalization area and priority area for redevelopment opportunities. The vision is to have a dynamic downtown employment and destination center with appealing residences, corporate offices and distinctive retailers, drawing people to live work, shop, dine and socialize throughout the day and into the evening. This vision will be achieved by utilizing the following policies and resources:

- Exterior façade loans targeted in commercial revitalization districts
- Commercial revitalization tax credits
- Architectural assistance through the Architect on Call Program
- Partnering with the Chamber of Commerce and Greater Towson Committee on events
- Working with Towson University on branding and marketing the “college town’ concept.
- Partnering with the Baltimore County Revenue Authority to complete infrastructure improvements around the new Towson Square Entertainment complex.
- Working with the State Highway Administration on streetscape improvements to York Road
- Architectural review of projects by the Design Review Panel (DRP)

IV. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

(2) What workforce development policies, initiatives or projects will increase access to jobs and economic opportunity for residents in the SC Area? Do you have a goal for job creation? Are green jobs an opportunity in the jurisdiction or SC Area? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

Baltimore County utilized the Baltimore Regional Careers Pathways initiative for its workforce initiatives. It's a series of connected education and training programs and student support services that enable individuals to secure a job or advance in a demand industry or occupation. This program will partner with the Community College of Baltimore County, which is in close proximity to the proposed SC area. Some workers of the recently closed RG Steel Plant closure reside in the proposed SC area.

Job growth in the area will continue to expand in the service area as new residential and retail establishments bring more individuals to the Towson core as a destination. Central location and efficient transportation access to the proposed sc area will enable citizens at varying levels of the workforce spectrum to access the employment opportunities located in the core that will expand as a result of the redevelopment - specifically Towson Square and Towson University. The Small Business Resource Center is also located in the SC area.

IV. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

(3) Describe whether the Sustainable Community will be impacted by the Base Re-alignment and Closure (BRAC) activities in Maryland. If impacted, how do the initiatives and projects in your Plan complement BRAC-related growth? (If not applicable, all ten points will be assessed based on answers to questions 1, 2, and 4) (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

BRAC activities in the area are fairly limited. Residential demand may increase in the area based on its relative close proximity to Aberdeen Proving Ground and its central location.

IV. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

(4) Which community groups or stakeholders will be key to the implementation of the initiatives and projects noted in this section? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

Many of the stakeholders are the same but the focus would fall within the purview of the following:

Baltimore County Division of Workforce Development
Baltimore County Department of Planning
Baltimore County Small Business Administration
Towson University

IV. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

D. Promoting access to quality affordable housing.

(1) What housing policies, initiatives or projects will expand housing choices - rental and homeownership -- for people of a range of ages, incomes, and also for disabled individuals? How will these actions address the current housing conditions and needs noted in Section II? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

Affordability is the most important element of housing sustainability. A housing cost burden is experienced when a household's housing costs exceed 30% of the household's income. The county will use its federal resources to increase and preserve the number of affordable housing units available to renter households and owner occupied households. The County will provide a variety of financing mechanisms to achieve this goal.

Baltimore County's Department of Planning's Housing Opportunities Program has administered housing programs and services for more than 30 years. The mission of the Housing Opportunity Program is to provide access to resources that provide access to affordable, high quality, durable and sustainable housing for low to moderate income households in Baltimore County. The Housing Opportunities program offers a myriad of affordable housing programs and incentives including the Single Family Rehabilitation Loan and Emergency Grant Program, Lead Safe Baltimore County (lead hazard reduction demonstration program) the Settlement Expense Loan Program, the Mortgage Assistance Loan Program, the Payment in Lieu of Taxes Program (PILOT), the Rental Assistance program and the Multifamily Housing Finance Program.

These programs seek to expand the supply of affordable rental housing for families, disabled and homeless households and elderly households. Existing homeownership programs including the Settlement Expense Loan Program and the Mortgage Assistance Loan Program provide deferred loans and grants to provide affordable homeownership opportunities for low and moderate-income households. Further, Single Family Rehabilitation Loan Program, Lead Hazard Reduction Program and Emergency Repair Grant Program help existing homeowners make repairs and improvements to their homes to maintain and improve value, bring the properties up to the current building code, and to enable aging homeowners to remain in their homes. Emphasis on sustainability requires that developers and households seeking resources for rehabilitation or new construction must use green building practices to ensure energy efficiency, improved air quality, and water conservation. All new construction must be Energy Star compliant at a minimum. These programs, along with a focused community-based strategy that builds upon the community's existing strengths, and engages the community leadership and residents will be utilized to revitalize and stabilize communities within the Sustainable Community Designated Areas.

IV. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

(2) Will these housing initiatives or projects increase access to transit or community walkability and/or decrease transportation costs? In other words, will the housing investments result in more people living near work or town centers, or able to more conveniently reach work, school, shopping and/or recreation? *(Answer Space 4,000 characters)*

Baltimore County will support the construction of new affordable housing that is located close to transportation, employment and services to provide occupants with the ability to sustain their housing and access to employment opportunities. Baltimore County will assist increasing partnerships and linkages to increase access to transportation and transportation services. The county will participate in initiatives that seek resources to revitalize, stabilize and enhance communities, including transportation access as a key resource. These same areas will be targeted such that they are eligible for other state resources such as community legacy, Main Street and historic tax credits.

The new housing that is planned for the Towson SC area is expected to serve a variety of affordability levels from student housing to moderately priced rental units to upscale, upper income units that are being offered for rent and for sale. All of this housing within the proposed boundary will be accessible to public transportation and current and future planning efforts are aimed at increasing the walkability of Towson through the following:

- Providing sidewalks that are wide enough for broad pedestrian pathways, street signs, parking meters, and pedestrian amenities such as shade trees that facilitate walking and lighting.
- Locate building facades at the back of and abutting the sidewalk, aligning with other buildings to a build to line making the street a distinct public place separate from the sidewalk.
- Undertake a transit study
- Market and advertise the use of the collegetown network and the TU shuttle
- Study the feasibility of a downtown Towson shuttle
- Provide for bicycle access and connectivity

Additionally, all of the new housing that is being constructed within the core is within walking distance to regional shopping and entertainment areas, offices and services.

IV. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

(3) What is your goal for number of units to be created of affordable workforce housing, rental and homeownership? What populations (by income or special needs) will benefit from this increased access to affordable housing? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

Housing market data reveal that Baltimore County has a need for additional housing that meets the needs of households earning from 30% to 120% of the Area Household Median Income as defined by HUD based on household size. Research indicates that there is an increased need for rental housing that meets the needs of families including large families and families with disabilities. The Baltimore County Housing Office reports that there are over 20,000 households on the Housing choice voucher program waiting list with an expected waiting period of 9 years or more. Further, the presence of foreclosures in several communities demonstrates the reduction in the number of owner occupied households and indicates the presence of distressed housing in many older neighborhoods in the county. Baltimore County has identified as a major housing goal to increase the number of housing opportunities for low to moderate-income households that are located in the areas of opportunity. This will include: 1)Increasing the number of affordable rental housing units that meet the need of families 2)Increasing the availability of rental and for sale housing that is accessible to households with disabilities 3)Increasing homeownership opportunities for low to moderate income households 4)Reducing the presence of foreclosures through outreach, education and prevention activities as well as providing incentives for the purchase of foreclosures.

The proposed Towson SC area poses several opportunities for creating affordable housing. The zoning (BM-CT) offers density opportunities that allow for multi-family housing units that are smaller and could be priced at affordable levels and available in mixed income for rent and for sale buildings. Residents that could occupy these units have the opportunity to send their children to highly performing area schools, participate in Towson's active recreation programs, access the programs associated with Towson University and the Towson Library, access available public transportation to jobs and walk to services and amenities.

IV. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

(4) Which community groups or stakeholders will be key to the implementation of the initiatives and projects noted in this section? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

Baltimore County Department of Planning
Baltimore County Department of Social Services
Greater Towson Committee
Greater Towson Council of Community Associations
Legal Aid of Baltimore County
Area churches

IV. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

E. Support transportation efficiency and access.

(1) What policies, strategies and projects are envisioned to strengthen the transportation network that affects the proposed SC Area? How will these initiatives support transportation choices (including walking, bicycling, bus or rail transit, and carpooling) or otherwise promote an efficient transportation network that integrates housing and transportation land uses? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

The county Pedestrian and Bicycle Access Plan identifies the Towson community as a high priority target area for improved bicycle and pedestrian access. The framework for establishing a highly walkable and bikeable community already exists and can be readily built upon. There are many opportunities to build on the spine that has been created or is currently under construction as recommended by the county pedestrian and bicycle plan. Within the SC area, the plan identifies 15 miles of on road bicycle facilities such as bike lanes, 5 miles of shared use paths, and 35 miles of sidewalks. In addition, locations for improved crosswalks, bicycle parking and other facilities are identified.

Within the SC area, improvements to the pedestrian environment will support use of the downtown, and help alleviate a perceived parking shortage and improve access to a number of bus stops in the area. The recommended bicycle improvements, which are part of a county-wide network, will provide local as well as more regional access. Major regional destinations that will be able to be accessed by bicycle include two local colleges/universities and major medical institutions.

Finally, the County plan recommends that supportive programming accompany the infrastructure improvements. Encouragement, education, and enforcement programs to initiate and ensure continued safe use of these new facilities will be essential to the development of a truly multimodal environment that integrates land use and transportation.

IV. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

(2) If applicable, describe the SC Area's connection or proximity to transportation centers (e.g. Metro, MARC, and light rail stations) and describe opportunities for Transit - Oriented Development (TOD). Will Plan strategies and projects contribute to jobs/housing balance or otherwise provide a mix of land uses that can be expected to reduce reliance on single-occupancy automobiles? (If transit or TOD is not applicable in your community, all points in this section will be based on questions 1 and 3) (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

Towson has two light rail stations in the area in Lutherville and along Falls Road. These two light rail stations however are not in the study area.

There are currently 77 bus stops in the SC area.

IV. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

(3) Which community groups or stakeholders will be key to the implementation of the initiatives and projects noted in this section? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

Baltimore County Department of Planning
Baltimore County Department of Public Works
The Baltimore County Department of Economic Development
State Highway Administration
Baltimore Metropolitan Council
The Greater Towson Committee
Towson University
Towson developers
Towson Chamber of Commerce

IV. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

F. Coordinating and Leveraging Policies and Investment

(1) What specific steps will the Sustainable Community Workgroup take to coordinate policies and funding streams to remove barriers to investment and maximize and increase funding in the proposed Sustainable Community Area? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

The SCW is composed of governmental, non profit, business and residential stakeholders representing a range of interest groups who will be well educated and motivated for success. County staff will be amply able to coordinate public policies and funding streams, especially as the Capital Improvement Program is extensively reviewed by Planning, and the commercial revitalization program is administered by the Department of Planning.

Specifically, the workgroup will be made up of county agencies and non-profits focused on the revitalization and redevelopment of downtown Towson. They have an on-going work program to coordinate public and private improvements including streetscape, façade improvements along York Road, coordinating improved transportation access in the form of the proposed Towson bike beltway, facilitating the improved physical connection between Towson University and downtown Towson.

IV. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

(2) How is the proposed Sustainable Community Plan consistent with other existing community or comprehensive plans? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

The Action Plan for the area is consistent with the Baltimore County Master Plan 2020.

The existing conditions described in Section one and the proposed plans described in this section originated in the extensive and on going planning efforts that have taken place over the last 20 years. As mentioned earlier in the Chronology of Planning efforts – each plan (listed below) has taken on a different emphasis and approached various broad issues through a specific lens. Issues such as commercial revitalization, increasing urban character through design, improving walkability, creating a workable relationship between the core and the surrounding neighborhoods, have been examined extensively.

- The Towson Community Plan
- The Towson UDAT
- The Walkable Towson Charrette
- The Walkable Towson Plan

IV. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

(3) How will the Plan help leverage and/or sustain more private sector investments? *(Answer Space 4,000 characters)*

The private sector is directly involved in the Sustainable Community Workgroup, with many business owners and developers participating in the Greater Towson Committee – a key player whose mission is to guide the physical development of Towson. The business and development community will continue its strong involvement in implementation of the planning efforts undertaken for Towson – most recently, Tomorrow's Towson.

V. PROGRESS MEASURES

For the Plan parts of section IV (A through F):

(1) List the specific outcomes that the Plan seeks to produce. (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

A revitalized York Road that offers retail, restaurant, and entertainment opportunities with attractive buildings that features pedestrian curb appeal and offer day and night time uses.

Attractive and user friendly physical connection between Towson University and the Towson Core that incorporates traffic calming, directional signage and pedestrian safety measures as well as branding characteristics such as artistic lighting and a public art campaign.

Establishment of a developer's roundtable that provides a forum for discussions dealing with density, affordable housing, urban design, and funding mechanisms such as a BID, etc – all issues facing the future growth of the Towson core.

Improved and expanded transportation services for transit riders, pedestrians and bicyclists.

New mixed-use development on underutilized parcels throughout the study area.

Enhanced economic competitiveness through improved branding and marketing.

Creation of a "redevelopment overlay district" that comprehensively addresses the regulatory and financial mechanisms unique to the core including commercial revitalization incentives, design criteria, special land use and zoning regulations, public works standards.

Design and development of specific gateway treatments at significant locations along York Road, Dulany Valley Road, Towsontown Boulevard, Fairmount Avenue and Bosley Avenue.

V. PROGRESS MEASURES

(2) And, list the specific benchmarks that will be used to measure progress toward these outcomes. (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

A revitalized York Road.....

Upgraded building facades in the 400-500 blocks of York Road
 Previous underutilized vacant storefronts occupied by healthy, thriving businesses
 Evidence of outdoor café's with seating and /or open storefronts
 Identifiable streetscape theme that includes public art, incorporation of Towson University theme
 A balanced mixture of retail, service, restaurant, and entertainment uses.

Attractive and user friendly physical connection...

Install safety lighting on York Road and Towsontown Blvd around the Towson triangle
 Develop branding campaign that incorporates TU' logo on area streets connecting the campus to the core i.e. banners, street painting pattern (paw prints) overhead theme lighting at gateway
 Street trees and landscaping installation
 Construction of mixed use and student housing buildings with a strong street presence and active uses on the first floor (Ex: 101 York Road)

Establishment of a developer's roundtable.....

Initiate and pass legislation that establishes a developers task force to study future growth and redevelopment in the Towson Core – specifically affordable housing, density, traffic, market conditions, special taxing districts, and land assemblage tools.

Develop a model for a Towson Redevelopment Authority that would implement the recommendations of the taskforce.

Improved and expanded transportation.....

Complete an analysis of ways to promote and enhance the built environment to support cycling
 Assess current transit routes and schedule to determine if expanded service is warranted

Implement the proposed "Towson Bike Beltway" and evaluate expanding the route by adding destinations to enhance connections.

New mixed use development...

Redevelopment of key underutilized sites including Manzo Property, Federal Realty Site, Branco Property, and the Towson Row Development.

Targeted county and state resources to support Towson Row mixed use development proposed for the square block encompassing Chesapeake Avenue, York Road, Towsontown Blvd and Washington Avenue.

Enhanced economic competitiveness.....

Work with Chamber of Commerce and Greater Towson Committee to develop comprehensive marketing campaign in collaboration with area developers.

Redevelopment Overlay District.....

Develop a comprehensive set of regulations that are aimed at guiding development in the Towson Core specifically
 Greater ease in development review and permitting due to clarity in regulations, therefore promoting greater development participation

Gateway treatments

Design competition that utilizes students from two bookend universities and fosters incorporating student

perspective in planning

Assess condition and usefulness of existing signage at area gateways to define the area boundaries, promote area as urban center of county, and increase visitation of area residents and tourists.

REPLACE THIS PAGE WITH
LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT
RESOLUTIONS

**SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY APPLICATION
DISCLOSURE AUTHORIZATION AND CERTIFICATION**

The undersigned authorizes the Department of Housing and Community Development (the “Department”) to make such inquiries as necessary, including, but not limited to, credit inquiries, in order to verify the accuracy of the statements made by the applicant and to determine the creditworthiness of the applicant.

In accordance with Executive Order 01.01.1983.18, the Department advises you that certain personal information is necessary to determine your eligibility for financial assistance. Availability of this information for public inspection is governed by Maryland’s Access to Public Records Act, State Government Article, Section 10-611 et seq. of the Annotated Code of Maryland (the “Act”). This information will be disclosed to appropriate staff of the Department or to public officials for purposes directly connected with administration of this financial assistance program for which its use is intended. Such information may be shared with State, federal or local government agencies, which have a financial role in the project. You have the right to inspect, amend, or correct personal records in accordance with the Act.

The Department intends to make available to the public certain information regarding projects recommended for funding in the Sustainable Community Plan. The information available to the public will include the information in this application, as may be supplemented or amended. This information may be confidential under the Act. If you consider this information confidential and do not want it made available to the public, please indicate that in writing and attach the same to this application.

You agree that not attaching an objection constitutes your consent to the information being made available to the public and a waiver of any rights you may have regarding this information under the Act.

I have read and understand the above paragraph. Applicant’s Initials: _____

Anyone who knowingly makes, or causes to be made, any false statement or report relative to this financial assistance application, for the purposes of influencing the action of the Department on such application, is subject to immediate cancellation of financial assistance and other penalties authorized by law.

The undersigned hereby certifies that the Sustainable Communities Plan or Project(s) proposed in this Application can be accomplished and further certifies that the information set herein and in any attachment in support hereof is true, correct, and complete to the best of his/her knowledge and belief.

Authorized Signature

Print Name and Title

Date