

APPROVED

SGCC 1/12/2022

City of Westminster

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application



City of Westminster, Maryland
45 West Main Street
Westminster, Maryland 21157
www.westminstermd.gov

Dr. Mona Becker, Mayor

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application

I. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY RENEWAL APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name of Sustainable Community: Westminster, Maryland		
Name of Applicant: City of Westminster		
Applicant's Federal Identification Number: [REDACTED]		
Applicant's Street Address: 45 W Main Street		
City: Westminster	County: Carroll	State: MD Zip Code: 21157
Phone Number: 410-848-9002	Fax Number: 410-857-7476	Web Address: www.westminstermd.gov

Sustainable Community Application Local Contact:

Name: Mark Depo		Title: Director, Community Planning and Development	
Address: 45 W Main Street	City: Westminster	State: MD	Zip Code: 21157
Phone Number: [REDACTED]	Fax Number: [REDACTED]	E-mail Address: [REDACTED]	

Sustainable Community Contact for Application Status:

Name: Andrew R. Gray		Title: Comprehensive Planner	
Address: 45 W Main Street	City: Westminster	State: MD	Zip Code: 21157
Phone Number: [REDACTED]	Fax Number: [REDACTED]	E-mail Address: [REDACTED]	

Other Sustainable Community Contact:

Name: Andrea Gerhard		Title: Comprehensive Planner	
Address: 45 W Main Street	City: Westminster	State: MD	Zip Code: 21157
Phone Number: [REDACTED]	Fax Number: [REDACTED]	E-mail Address: [REDACTED]	

I. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY – General Information

A. Sustainable Community Boundary and Description

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

The City of Westminster (City) does not wish to modify the boundary of our Sustainable Community area at this time. The City has projects we wish to focus on in the current Sustainable Communities area, within our downtown, and does not wish to extend such boundary to encompass other possible projects outside the downtown area at this time. A boundary modification will be made when other projects outside the boundary are identified in later years.

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

The City is not requesting a modification to our boundary at this time.

- (3) Approximate number of acres of entire SC Area: 481+

- (4) Existing federal, state or local designations:

☒ Main Street ☒ Maple Street

☒ National Register Historic District ☒ Local Historic District ☒ Arts & Entertainment District

☐ State Enterprise Zone Special Taxing District ☐ BRAC ☐ State Designated TOD

☒ Other(s): Smart Energy Community, Targeted Investment Zone (TIZ), Tree City USA, Bee City USA, Priority Funding Area, Sustainable Maryland Registered.

- (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 tables below compare the *United States Census Bureau* data from 2010, 2015 and 2019 (most recent data available). Although the City experienced growth in population mid-decade, the most recent population figures show the population decreasing. This may be a result of new construction housing becoming available just outside the City limits. The City's major race remains white; however, the area is becoming more diverse as non-white race populations are increasing. In 2019, approximately 30% of the population over age 18 have Bachelor's degrees or higher, about a 5% increase over the number having Bachelor's degrees or higher in 2010. Median household income also saw an increase from \$48,117 in 2010 to \$60,518 in 2019.

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United States Census Bureau-Age	2010	2015	2019
Total population	18,591	18,646	18,552
AGE			
Under 5 years	6.6%	7.0%	5.4%
5 to 9 years	5.4%	7.0%	5.3%
10 to 14 years	5.1%	6.2%	4.7%
15 to 19 years	10.2%	8.2%	9.4%
20 to 24 years	12.5%	9.7%	11.7%
25 to 29 years	6.8%	7.6%	5.7%
30 to 34 years	5.2%	8.0%	7.0%
35 to 39 years	5.3%	4.8%	4.9%
40 to 44 years	5.5%	6.2%	5.9%
45 to 49 years	5.5%	6.2%	5.8%
50 to 54 years	6.2%	6.6%	8.2%
55 to 59 years	4.7%	4.8%	4.1%
60 to 64 years	4.5%	3.6%	5.5%
65 to 69 years	2.5%	2.7%	3.9%
70 to 74 years	3.3%	2.7%	3.3%
75 to 79 years	3.5%	2.4%	3.0%
80 to 84 years	2.8%	2.6%	2.6%
85 years and over	4.4%	3.5%	3.6%
SUMMARY INDICATORS			
Median age (years)	33.0	32.4	35.8
Sex ratio (males per 100 females)	87.3	91.2	91.0
Age dependency ratio	58.7	58.9	54.9
Old-Age dependency ratio	26.1	22.2	25.4
Child dependency ratio	32.6	36.7	29.4

United States Census Bureau Race and Housing Units	Year 2010	Year 2015	Year 2019
RACE			
Total population	18,591	18,646	18,552
One race	18,306	18,177	17,759
Two or more races	285	469	793
One race	18,306	18,177	17,759
White	16,347	16,245	14,747
Black or African American	1,598	1,365	1,902
American Indian and Alaska Native	20	56	48
Cherokee tribal grouping	20	23	0
Chippewa tribal grouping	0	0	0
Navajo tribal grouping	0	0	0
Sioux tribal grouping	0	0	0
Asian	146	411	628
Asian Indian	48	41	300

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Chinese	0	40	59
Filipino	0	61	70
Japanese	0	0	0
Korean	18	17	12
Vietnamese	19	0	64
Other Asian	61	252	123
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0	0	0
Native Hawaiian	0	0	0
Guamanian or Chamorro	0	0	0
Samoan	0	0	0
Other Pacific Islander	0	0	0
Some other race	195	100	434
Two or more races	285	469	793
White and Black or African American	90	206	319
White and American Indian and Alaska Native	51	94	26
White and Asian	106	66	246
Black or African American and American Indian and Alaska Native	0	0	23
Total housing units	7,303	7,636	7,601
CITIZEN, VOTING AGE POPULATION			
Citizen, 18 and over population		13,997	14,276
Male		6,373	6,590
Female		7,624	7,686

United State Census Bureau Education Attainment	Year 2010	Year 2015	Year 2019
Population 18 to 24 years	3,600	2,810	3,239
Less than high school graduate	331	150	227
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	1,022	626	1,177
Some college or associate's degree	1,984	1,777	1,496
Bachelor's degree or higher	263	257	339
Population 25 years and over	11,172	11,528	11,788
Less than 9th grade	492	420	377
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	1,274	884	1,177
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	3,676	3,511	3,317

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Some college, no degree	2,089	2,585	2,263
Associate's degree	592	698	797
Bachelor's degree	1,855	2,190	2,484
Graduate or professional degree	1,207	1,240	1,373
High school graduate or higher	9,407	(X)	10,234
Bachelor's degree or higher	3,061	(X)	3,857
Population 25 to 34 years	2,235	2,909	2,347
High school graduate or higher	2,003	2,715	2,063
Bachelor's degree or higher	816	907	827
Population 35 to 44 years	2,008	2,056	2,018
High school graduate or higher	1,827	1,835	1,799
Bachelor's degree or higher	791	819	934
Population 45 to 64 years	3,873	3,956	4,376
High school graduate or higher	3,304	3,656	3,899
Bachelor's degree or higher	984	1,164	1,262
Population 65 years and over	3,056	2,607	3,047
High school graduate or higher	2,277	2,018	2,473
Bachelor's degree or higher	468	540	834
POVERTY RATE FOR THE POPULATION 25 YEARS AND OVER FOR WHOM POVERTY STATUS IS DETERMINED BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT LEVEL			
Less than high school graduate	23.4%	24.4%	25.5%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	10.6%	14.2%	13.8%
Some college or associate's degree	5.8%	10.6%	4.1%
Bachelor's degree or higher	5.1%	2.0%	3.1%
MEDIAN EARNINGS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS (IN 2019 INFLATION-ADJUSTED DOLLARS)			
Population 25 years and over with earnings	39,591	(X)	48,347
Less than high school graduate	16,242	(X)	23,618

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High school graduate (includes equivalency)	32,395	(X)	31,569
Some college or associate's degree	41,250	(X)	45,560
Bachelor's degree	44,647	(X)	59,663
Graduate or professional degree	56,701	(X)	70,426

United Census Bureau-Household Income	Year 2010	Year 2015	Year 2019
Total Households	6,678	7,070	7,228
Less than \$10,000	10.8%	6.6%	7.1%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	5.3%	5.9%	3.1%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	11.7%	11.3%	10.7%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	10.0%	10.1%	8.9%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	14.0%	13.5%	12.2%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	13.6%	15.8%	15.5%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	12.3%	13.7%	13.8%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	15.2%	13.5%	18.2%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	5.2%	6.3%	6.2%
\$200,000 or more	1.9%	3.4%	4.5%
Median income (dollars)	48,117	55,122	60,518
Mean income (dollars)	63,783	70,242	80,850

Organizational Structure, Experience and Public Input:

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

In July 2019, the City hired a new Comprehensive Planner. In December of 2019, the City hired a new Director of Community Planning and Development. In May 2021, the citizens of Westminster elected a new Mayor and Councilmember. In July 2021, the former *Sustainable Communities Local Contact*, Sandy Anderson, retired from the City. The new contact is Andrew Gray, whom was the secondary contact for the last application. In September 2021, the Mayor and Common Council hired a new City Administrator to oversee the daily operations of City government.

Formulating a new Sustainable Community Workgroup is currently one of the focuses for this administration. The Sustainable Community Workgroup is composed of active City staff members and members of the Community appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Common Council.

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

Strengths include elected leadership who fully supports the City's commitment to a sustainable future. For instance, the Mayor of Westminster, upon completing her PhD in Geology, lived abroad in England, working in the Earth Science Department at the University of Oxford. Upon moving to Westminster, she began teaching for Carroll County Public Schools in the area of secondary science. The Mayor has also served on the faculty of McDaniel College (2010 – 2018) where she co-founded the Environmental Studies Department and served as chair for several years. She now works at Westminster High School as the Chair of the Science Department.

Challenges include a lack of funding, staff, and water capacity.

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

The Sustainable Communities Plan is based upon the goals and objectives of the City of Westminster 2009 Comprehensive Plan (Comprehensive Plan). The Department of Community Planning and Development conducted the mid-cycle review of the Comprehensive Plan in which, after review, the Planning and Zoning Commission provided many recommendations for City action during the second half of the 20-year planning Cycle, in the following categories: 1. Public Outreach and Neighborhood Planning; 2. Growth; 3. Economic Development; 4. Economic Activity; 5. Sustainability 6. Inter-Jurisdictional Coordination; and 7. Transportation.

- (4) Would you like any technical assistance from State agencies to help expand the capacity of your SC Workgroup or implement your SC plan? Please describe with which revitalization strategies you would like assistance.

The City welcomes technical assistance, ideas, and information on best practices from

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the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and other State agencies. The City is currently looking for DHCD assistance in the following areas:

- Community Development Block Grants
- Community Legacy Funds
- Main Street Maryland Technical Assistance Grants
- Historic Preservation Capital Grant Program
- Neighbor Business Works
- Strategic Demolition Funding
- Sustainable Maryland Certification
- Economic Development Grants

PART I: QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT

Accomplishments

Accomplishment 1

Outcome: Encourage Clean Energy Programs

Project: Zoning Changes to allow for Community Solar

The Mayor and Common Council adopted Ordinance 934 on June 24, 2021. This ordinance changed the City's Zoning Ordinance to include new definitions for rooftop solar energy facilities and to allow the use of rooftop solar energy facilities in four different zones and to include them as accessory uses in all other zones.

Partners: City of Westminster, Westminster Planning and Zoning Commission, Alder Energy Systems, and Baltimore Gas and Electric Company.

Impact: This project is complimentary to the Maryland Renewable Portfolio Standard and provides residents and businesses of Westminster an opportunity to be a part of the State's effort to increase the amount of renewable energy electricity suppliers. This project will also help the State to achieve renewable source procurement as required by the Clean Energy Jobs Act of 2019.

Accomplishment 2

Outcome: Increased Participation from Tree Commission

Project: Changes to City Code to increase City Staff to Tree Commission

The Mayor and Common Council adopted Ordinance 908 on March 11, 2019. This ordinance reduced the number of voting members by one and added a non-voting City staff member. The ordinance also removes certain language from the Code and refers to the newly created Comprehensive Tree Plan.

Partners: City of Westminster, City of Westminster Tree Commission, and the Westminster Planning and Zoning Commission.

Impact: This change allows for the Tree Commission to receive more professional expertise and to utilize this professional expertise to create the Comprehensive Tree Plan.

Project: Comprehensive Tree Plan

The Mayor and Common Council adopted Resolution 19-08 on February 25, 2019. The resolution adopted the Westminster Comprehensive Tree Plan.

Partners: City of Westminster, City of Westminster Tree Commission, Towson University

Impact: This resolution provides a written, actionable plan for the future of trees and the tree canopy in Westminster. The plan explains the value of trees and outlines goals and objectives for the Tree Commission and City staff to implement. The plan also states how the objectives in the Westminster Comprehensive Plan are being fulfilled. Achievements highlighted in the Comprehensive Tree plan include: 1. achieving “Green Level” status in the Maryland People Loving and Nurturing Trees (PLANT) Program; 2. being recognized for the 30th year as a Tree City USA, and 3. obtaining drone imagery and technical mapping from Towson University.

Project: Beneficial Insect Release

The City partnered with the Tree Commission and Bartlett Tree Experts to conduct a beneficial insect release on June 17, 2017 and a second release on July 19, 2021.

Partners: Westminster Tree Commission, City of Westminster, Bartlett Tree Experts

Impact: The release of several hundred thousand insects was an effort to control pest pressure and enhance the sustainability of the City’s natural and urban environment.

Accomplishment 3

Outcome: Environmental Protection

Projects: Plastic Bag Ban

The Mayor and Common Council adopted Ordinances 911, 923, and 927. These ordinances change the City Code to restrict the use of plastic bags by certain business owners. The City of Westminster is proud to be the first incorporated city in Maryland to pass a plastic bag ban.

Partners: City of Westminster, Westminster Businesses.

Impact: Reduction of unsightly plastic bags in public streets, gutters, rights-of-way, and trees; protection of the City's watershed and wildlife; and reduction of the City's impact on climate change.

Project: Bee City

On December 14, 2020, the Mayor and Common Council adopted Resolution 20-14. This resolution designates the City as a Bee City USA Affiliate.

Partners: City of Westminster, Bee City USA, and Local Residents

Impact: Reducing the use of pesticides by using an Integrated Pest Management plan; increased pollinators in City gardens; pollinators in park events; improved environmental protection; a healthier ecosystem; and an increased bee population.

Project: Green Purchasing Policy

The Mayor and Common Council adopted Resolution 21-02 and Ordinance 933 in April 2021. This resolution creates a Sustainable Procurement Policy and this ordinance creates a section of City Code titled "Sustainable Procurement Practices".

Partners: None

Impact: Minimizes negative impacts on human health and the environment while supporting a diverse, equitable, vibrant community and economy.

Project: Growth Tiers

The Mayor and Common Council adopted Resolution 19-02 on January 28, 2019. This resolution was adopted as a result of the mid-cycle review of the City's Comprehensive Plan. This resolution formally adopts a growth tiers map as a plan amendment.

Partners: City of Westminster, Westminster Planning and Zoning Commission, Maryland Department of Planning

Impact: Adopting growth tiers controls the number of new subdivisions on septic fields and therefore, protects agriculture, controls growth in rural areas, promotes growth in areas that have infrastructure in place for such growth and reduces nitrogen from septic systems, a primary pollutant of the Chesapeake Bay.

Project: Water and Sewer Allocation Policy

The Mayor and Common Council adopted Resolutions 18-04, 18-08, 19-05, 19-16, 20-06 and Resolution 21-05. These resolutions adopt and amend a Water and Sewer Allocations Policy.

Partners: City of Westminster, Westminster Planning and Zoning Commission

Impact: The Water and Sewer Allocation Policy bridges the gap between the City's water supply, new development and demand during drought conditions by regulating the issuance of water and sewer connections and allocations in the water and sewer service areas. The policy serves a community good, provides fairness, and generally promotes economic development objectives.

Accomplishment 4

Outcome: Promote Sustainability

Projects: Maryland Sustainable Communities

The Department Community Planning and Development is renewing the City's application with Sustainable Communities to continue to set goals and achieve accomplishments related to sustainability.

Partners: The City of Westminster and Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development

Impact: A sustainable and vibrant community.

Project: Sustainable Maryland

The Mayor and Common Council adopted Resolution 20-01. This ordinance authorizes the City to pursue certification through the Sustainable Maryland Program.

Impact: A clear plan with goals to create and maintain a sustainable and vibrant community.

Accomplishment 5

Outcome: Preservation of the City's Historic Fabric

Projects: Adopt Historic Design Standards for Development

On March 13, 2019, the City of Westminster Historic District Commission voted to approve the Standards for Renovation Westminster. These standards for rehabilitation consider the various historic characteristics and elements of the Westminster National Historic District. Key contributing historic characteristics for preservation consideration include buildings and outbuildings. Those historic characteristics include the building's exterior i.e., the "building shell"; rear lot areas such as yards and service zones; store fronts; show windows; and the design, size, and locations of signs. Of concern is any portion of the historic structure seen by the public.

Partners: Westminster Historic District Commission, The City of Westminster

Impact: Clear definitions of design guidelines for future renovations to Westminster's historic buildings.

Accomplishment 6

Outcome: Increase connectivity between downtown businesses, McDaniel College, community services, and surrounding neighborhoods.

City Planning Staff worked diligently with Carroll County Department of Planning Staff to review proposed information regarding the consistency of the 2019 Carroll County Bicycle-Pedestrian Master Plan (County Plan) with the 2007 Westminster Environs Community Comprehensive Plan and the 2009 Comprehensive Plan. City Planning Staff also assisted with the formation of information related to existing and planned bicycle/pedestrian routes in and around the City of Westminster for incorporation into the (County Plan). On March 14, 2019, the Westminster Planning and Zoning Commission voted to certify that proposed Chapter 3: Existing Conditions and proposed Chapter 4: Future Connections of the County Plan, as it pertains to the City of Westminster, is consistent with the *2009 Comprehensive Plan*. This countywide plan was subsequently adopted by the Carroll County Planning and Zoning Commission on May 29, 2019.

Partners: City of Westminster, City of Westminster Planning and Zoning Commission, Carroll County Department of Planning, Carroll County Planning and Zoning Commission.

Impact: Clear vision and goals for planned bicycle and pedestrian routes in and around the City.

Accomplishment 7

Outcome: Increase high-tech industrial and institutional employers.

The City provides funding in the amount of \$80,000.00 a year to the Mid-Atlantic Gigabit Innovation Collaboratory (MAGIC). MAGIC's mission is to build a tech ecosystem that creates and nurtures talent, entrepreneurship, and tech businesses, elevating the Westminster Gigabit Community to lead the Mid-Atlantic region. MAGIC strives to make the Westminster Gigabit Community a premier technology hub in the Mid-Atlantic region.

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

Outcome 1

Outcome: Invest in a State-of-the-Art Wastewater Treatment Plant

Narrative: This construction project includes three major components of the Wastewater Treatment Plant: solids processing and generator, aeration tank diffusers, and utility water station. This project provides for the Enhanced Nutrient Removal at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Currently, the Maryland Department of the Environment requires the Plant to meet a total nitrogen (TN) limit of 8 mg/l on a yearly average and a total phosphorous (TP) limit of 2mg/l on a monthly average. Newly proposed TN and TP limits are 3.0 mg/l and .03 mg/l, respectively. An Enhanced Nutrient Removal upgrade will be needed to meet the new regulation.

The solids processing building, and generator includes a new biosolids dewatering and drying facility. The new building will house belt-filter presses, a biosolids drier, an odor control system, and a wastewater plant maintenance shop. The biosolids drier is a thermal process with an extensive fire suppression system for safety. This process will generate a class “A” biosolid that will allow recycling of the City’s biosolids instead of landfill disposal. A Carroll County manufacturer currently utilizes biosolids in its processing facility to replace a portion of the coal used to fire its machinery.

Adjacent to this structure will be an emergency backup generator for the solids processing and the secondary clarifier processes. This standalone generator is needed to ensure the solids processing building electric power is maintained in the event of a power outage when the biosolids drier is in operation.

The aeration tank diffusers will replace the existing aeration diffusers with a new diffuser and dissolved oxygen control system. The new diffusers and control system will provide for a more efficient balance of dissolved oxygen throughout the aeration tanks, which will result in an energy savings and better treatment.

The new utility water station is designed to satisfy the increased utility water demand associated with the end project, as well as furnish process water and fire protection to Performance Food Group.

Construction is about 74% complete. It is expected to be 100% complete by fiscal year 2023. This project is funded with Bay Restoration Grant, Maryland Water Quality Financing Loan and use of City reserves.

Outcome 2***Outcome: Design Guidelines for Transportation Throughout the City***

Narrative: These design guidelines have not been a priority for City Staff to complete. Leading factors include: 1. Staff time and 2. other pressing City priorities.

PART II: COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT

ENVIRONMENT	YES	If YES, specify in quantifiable units and compare values from the last five years	NO	If NO, why not? What kept you from achieving your plan's desired outcomes?	N/A	Interested in technical assistance
<p>1. Has there been an improvement in water quality? Have you completed any projects intended to improve water quality?</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>A new valve, new liner, and cover was added to the City's emergency reservoir in 2019 and 2020.</p> <p>A Mixed Oxidant (MIOX) Disinfectant System was added to the Cranberry Water Plant in 2020. This system provides a mixed oxidant solution for disinfection of potable water while improving water quality in the distribution system. It will take several years to fully evaluate the effectiveness of this project.</p> <p>The City added a new well (Gesell Well) and performed stream rehabilitation at this new location. This project came online in March of 2018 after a membrane microfiltration system was installed in the new facility</p> <p>The City invested in new Diatomaceous Earth filters in 2017.</p> <p>The City invested in a Storage Tank mixing project aimed at removing chlorine by-products in 2019. It will take several years to fully evaluate the effectiveness of this project.</p>				

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2. Have you improved wildlife habitat in your community? Ex. native plantings, pollinator gardens, rain gardens	X	New pollinator gardens have been planted at King Park (4,000 Square Feet) and Wakefield Valley Park (12,500 Square Feet).				
3. Have you increased access to green space, parks or outdoor recreational opportunities?	X	<p>A feasibility study and parking lot improvements were made at Wakefield Valley Park in 2021.</p> <p>Electricity and lights were added to City Park in 2021.</p> <p>Playground equipment was added to Tahoma Farm Boulder Park in 2021.</p> <p>Fencing and ball field improvements were completed at Jaycee Park. A new tot lot was added to the Green's Tot Lot in 2018 and 2019.</p> <p>Many improvements were made to the Longwell Facility in the past five years including a new roof, new HVAC system, Architectural Study, and Shower Room renovation . This facility houses the City's Family Center (gym, weights, classes) .</p> <p>A feasibility study was conducted at the City Pool and construction will begin in the fall of 2021.</p>				
4. Have you implemented operational sustainability practices (example: town hall enhancements) and or community-based practices?	X	As part of the renovation and relocation of the City Administrative Offices, the City has installed four water bottle filling machines in order to reduce plastic bottle consumption by employees. As of October 11, 2021, these machines have				

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		saved over 1,153 water bottles from being consumed since late March 2021.				
OTHER: Do all residents have access to healthy food options (i.e. fresh food grocery stores, farmers' markets etc.) within the Sustainable Community?	X	<p>The City has several grocery stores that offer fresh food and organic food options.</p> <p>The City also sponsors a Farmer's Market that is held weekly from May to November that promotes local farmers' products and produce. This year, the City's Farmer's Market will also operate several weekends throughout the Winter.</p> <p>The City provides space for a community garden (Key Street) where residents are encouraged to maintain their own garden on a specific plot. The City provides 15 plots.</p>				
OTHER: Continued public tree maintenance	X	<p>City staff continues to ensure that the public trees located along the many streets and parks are maintained at the highest level. Before any tree is removed due to hazardous conditions, City staff analyzes the proposal and sends a recommendation to the Tree Commission for final analysis and approval. The City also coordinates with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources for Roadside Trees.</p> <p>The City Arborist, in conjunction with Bartlett Tree Experts, has been monitoring the City's Ash tree population since 2008. Each tree is inspected at least twice a year. In spring 2018, all the previously injected Ash trees were treated</p>				

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		with Arboformectin. Currently, the treatment cycle for the City's Ash trees are once every two years. In the spring of 2020, the City treated half of its inventory of Ash Trees with Tree-Age. The current Tree-Age treatment is highly effective, with a success rate of 98%. Currently, there are 57 Ash trees that are proposed to be re-treated in the City. Five of the largest Ash trees can be found on the grounds of Westminster City Hall. Re-treating the City's Ash trees every two years is essential to effectively sustaining Westminster's urban tree canopy for years to come.				
OTHER: Public engagement	X	The City of Westminster and the Westminster Tree Commission engage in public outreach events. These events include: 1. Annual Arbor Day Celebration 2. Annual Beneficial Insect Release				
OTHER: Has the amount of impervious surface in your Community been reduced? (Amount in SF)			X	New development may have increased the amount of impervious surfaces within the City. After reviewing the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index of the City from 2017 to 2020,		

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				it would appear that there are more impervious surfaces in 2020. However, a more detailed map will be needed for analysis. This can hopefully be obtained in May of 2022.		
OTHER: Did the Sustainable Community implement any recycling or waste reduction programs?	X	<p>The City implemented a plastic bag ban that took effect on July 1, 2021. The City was the first municipality in Maryland to take such action.</p> <p>The Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade includes a process that will generate a class “A” biosolid that will allow recycling of the City’s biosolids instead of landfill disposal.</p>				

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ECONOMY	YES	If YES, specify in quantifiable units and compare values from the last five years	NO	If NO, why not? What kept you from achieving your plan's desired outcomes?	N/A	Interested in technical assistance
1. Has there been an increase in the number of new businesses in your Main Street/ Commercial District?	X	There have been 76 commercial property improvements; 9 change of uses, 3 new construction permits approved within our sustainable community.			X	The City is always open to information or grant funding that will help attract businesses to our Main Street.
2. Did the Municipality/Sustainable Community area receive any designations that support local economic development?	X	The City continues to be recognized as a National Main Street Community each year. The City is in a Priority Funding Area and portions are also in an Opportunity Zone.				
3. Has there been an increase in foot traffic in the Main Street/commercial district?			X	The City does not have enough staff to track this metric. The City has applied for grant funding to locate public accessible cameras on the City Administration Offices so people can view Main Street in real time. Visually inspecting camera footage can provide a better idea of on average fluctuation of foot traffic on Main Street.	X	The City would appreciate assistance if there is a better way to track foot traffic on Main Street and in the rest of the commercial district.

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4. Have the number of commercial vacancies decreased?			X	We are not certain if the number of commercial vacancies decreased from 2017 to 2021. The City Main Street Manager retired just before work on this application was initiated and there is no clear documentation on this metric. With the addition of a Planner/Main Street Manager, the City will be able to track this metric in more detail.		
5. Has there been an increase in local jobs within the Sustainable Community for its residents?			X	We are not certain if there has been an increase in local jobs within the Sustainable Community for its residents from 2017 to 2021. The City Main Street Manager retired just before work on this application was initiated and there is no clear documentation on this metric. With the addition of a Planner/Main Street Manager, the City will be able to track this metric in more detail.		
6. Has there been an increase in workforce development training or other opportunities for connecting potential employees to well-paying jobs?	X	BERC is the local workforce board for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) they provide job training to youth, dislocated workers and adults. They also provide occupational training for a sustainable lifestyle and connect citizens to local employers.				

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

OTHER: Engage business owners in the Downtown area.	X	<p>Before the pandemic, the City met regularly with Westminster business owners/operators. At these meetings, major downtown events were discussed and local business owners or their representative had the opportunity to provide input and feedback. The City plans to continue these meetings once the Planning Department is fully staffed, and people feel safe to meet again in-person.</p> <p>Additionally, City staff reaches out to individual downtown business owners/operators to discuss their needs and concerns.</p>				
OTHER: Coordinate economic development initiatives with Carroll County Government.	X	The City continues to collaborate with Carroll County Economic Development, Carroll County Health Department, and Carroll County Bureau of Development Review on new development proposals in and around the City.				
OTHER: Purchase of 45 W. Main Street for re-development and use as City Offices	X	In 2016, the City purchased a large vacant building on Main Street located in the downtown area. The City has invested over \$7 million to acquire and develop the property into City Offices, that will serve the City for decades to come. The City offices				

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

		were previously located in rented office space.				
OTHER: Purchase of 17-25 W. Main Street for re-development	X	In 2020, the City purchased a vacant building located on Main Street and Liberty Street, in the heart of downtown. This property is expected to be re-developed.				We are interested in learning more about possible funding opportunities to attract developers to this property.
OTHER: Provide economic incentives for economic development.	X	<p>The City works with downtown property owners through the façade improvement program to help property owners make their historic facades more aesthetically appealing so they can effectively market their buildings to potential tenants.</p> <p>The City also provides a municipal historic tax credit for property owners in the National Register Historic District to renovate their existing historic building or build an architecturally compatible structure.</p> <p>The City also provides a “<i>Job Creation Tax Credit</i>” for new business.</p>				

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

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Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

TRANSPORTATION	YES	If YES, specify in quantifiable units and compare values from the last five years	NO	If NO, why not? What kept you from achieving your plan's desired outcomes?	N/A	Interested in technical assistance
1. Has the amount of bike trails/paths increased? How many linear feet do the trails cover?	X	On September 14, 2020, the Mayor and Common Council authorized execution of a contract with Pennoni Associates, Inc. to assist the City with the development of a master plan for the Wakefield Valley Park. The project will be funded with grant monies from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The master plan will provide a foundation for the future phased development of the property, and also lay the groundwork for future City grant applications to finance park improvements. Currently, the former golf cart paths are used for recreation. These cart paths are now used for hiking, biking, and running. The trail is 2.9 miles long (15,312.00 LFT) and is enjoyed by all.				
2. Have there been improvements to the public transit infrastructure?	X	The Carroll Transit System expanded the Westminster TrailBlazer from two to four routes, which operates about every 30 minutes and serves many of the shopping locations within the Westminster area.				
3. Has there been an increase in sidewalks? (Amount in linear feet) Were accessibility elements added, such as more ADA-accessible ramps and signage/signals? Has there been a noticeable increased use of these walking places?	X	The City has spent \$417,188.00 in sidewalk improvements in the last five years totaling approximately 1,200 LFT. New sidewalks have been added in areas of new construction only by developers. All new sidewalks added are designed to follow ADA standards. During development review, Planning Staff asks for pedestrian signage if applicable.				
4. Have there been any roadway improvements that support "Complete" or "Green" streets?			X	Green or Complete Streets have not been a priority during this cycle period (2017-2022).		

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

<p>5. Has traffic congestion along major roads decreased? (Amount in percent)</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>According to the Maryland Department of Transportation, traffic counts have remained steady through 2019. However, data was not available for 2020 or 2021. It is expected that the COVID-19 Pandemic drastically reduced traffic counts during those two years.</p> <p>The following chart shows traffic counts at five points surrounding Westminster's Downtown. Rt. 31 is between W. Main Street and Rt. 140. Rt. 27 S. is between Main Street and Rt. 140/97. Rt. 27 N. is just north of Rt. 140/97. Rt. 140/97 is near the Rt. 27 junction. Main Street is near the Rt. 31 junction.</p> <div> <p>Traffic Counts 2015-2019</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Location</th> <th>2019</th> <th>2018</th> <th>2017</th> <th>2016</th> <th>2015</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Rt. 140</td> <td>53,000</td> <td>53,000</td> <td>55,000</td> <td>54,000</td> <td>53,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rt. 27 N.</td> <td>18,000</td> <td>18,000</td> <td>20,000</td> <td>19,000</td> <td>19,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rt. 31</td> <td>13,000</td> <td>13,000</td> <td>13,000</td> <td>13,000</td> <td>12,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rt. 27 S.</td> <td>12,000</td> <td>12,000</td> <td>12,000</td> <td>12,000</td> <td>11,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Main</td> <td>5,000</td> <td>5,000</td> <td>5,000</td> <td>5,000</td> <td>5,000</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </div> <p>The change in traffic counts for all five points over the five-year span is less than a thousand for each point.</p>	Location	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	Rt. 140	53,000	53,000	55,000	54,000	53,000	Rt. 27 N.	18,000	18,000	20,000	19,000	19,000	Rt. 31	13,000	13,000	13,000	13,000	12,000	Rt. 27 S.	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000	11,000	Main	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000			
Location	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015																																				
Rt. 140	53,000	53,000	55,000	54,000	53,000																																				
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Main	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000																																				

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

OTHER: Coordinate transportation activities with Carroll County Government.	X	<p>The City and County continue to work together to implement the Westminster Environs Community Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2007. This plan serves as a blueprint for the coordinated growth of the unincorporated area of the County surrounding the City of Westminster. Chapter Seven of this plan addresses transportation issues.</p> <p>The State of Maryland is proposing to add a 10 foot wide trail along Route 27 from Hahn Road west past the on-ramps to Route 140/97. Portions of this route will incorporate a boardwalk to traverse wetlands. This project will create a connection that provides access from the community located along Snowfall Way (2,000 plus residents) to the heart of Downtown Westminster. In 2021, the City, County, and State have been conducting meetings to discuss the planning and construction of this route. The hope is it have this completed by 2022.</p>				
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Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

HOUSING	YES	If YES, specify in quantifiable units and compare values from the last five years	NO	If NO, why not? What kept you from achieving your plan's desired outcomes?	N/A	Interested in technical assistance
1. Have any residential facades or interiors been improved? Has the energy efficiency of any housing units been increased?	X	<p>Several residential façades have been improved through the City's Tax Credit Program.</p> <p>Community Legacy funding was used for commercial façade improvements totaling \$134,718.69.</p> <p>The City requires new development, including the two multifamily apartment building projects approved in 2020 and 2021, to incorporate energy efficient features such as heating, air-conditioning, lighting, and appliances.</p>				
2. Has the home ownership rate increased?	X	According to the United States Census, the homeownership rate for Westminster was estimated at 50.9% in 2010 and 52.3% in 2019. Information from 2019 is the most current data available.				
3. Has there been an increase in the number of housing units in the Sustainable Community area? What number and/or percent are affordable? How many are within .5 miles of a transit stop?	X	<p>According to the United States Census, the total housing units for Westminster was estimated at 7,303 in 2010 and at 7,601 in 2019 (the most current data available).</p> <p>It is estimated there are 1,141 affordable housing units in the City of Westminster. This would be 14% out of the 8,078 total units.</p>				
4. Has there been demolition of blighted properties?		The City purchased 17-25 W. Main Street in 2020. The City expects to apply for a demolition grant to remove the existing aging structure in an attempt to attract a developer for a boutique hotel that would attract both local residents and visitors to the City's downtown area.				Any grant assistance would be welcome.

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

5. Has the residential vacancy rate decreased?	X	According to the United States Census, the total vacant housing units for Westminster was estimated at 566 in 2015 and 373 in 2019. Information from 2019 is the most current data available. This information indicates a reduction in the vacancy rate.				
6. Has the jurisdiction partnered with any community development corporations to improve its housing stock, increase the availability of affordable housing, or support those experiencing homelessness or being threatened with eviction? Has the jurisdiction initiated any of its own programs to do the same?			X	The City has not partnered with any community development corporations, or initiated any of its own programs, to improve its housing stock, increase the availability of affordable housing, or support those experiencing homelessness, or being threatened with eviction in the past five years	X	The City Housing and Preservation Services Department is interested in technical assistance
7. Has there been an increase in homeownership counseling services or individuals accessing such services?			X	There has not been an increase in homeownership counseling services or individuals accessing such services in the past five years.	X	The City Housing and Preservation Services Department is interested in technical assistance
OTHER: Provide a sufficient quantity of safe, sanitary, adequate, and affordable housing.	X	The City operates its own Housing Choice Voucher Program through the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. The City currently issues approximately 282 vouchers per month. The City currently has approximately 288 vouchers under lease. All units are inspected prior to lease for safe and sanitary living conditions.				

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

COMMUNITY HEALTH AND QUALITY OF LIFE	YES	If YES, specify in quantifiable units and compare values from the last five years	NO	If NO, why not? What kept you from achieving your plan's desired outcomes?	N/A	Interested in technical assistance
1. How many historic properties were renovated/improved? To your knowledge, did the renovations mitigate certain environmental hazards such as lead and asbestos?	X	Since 2017, 20 businesses and residences facades have been improved with the use of public funds from the State of Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development's Community Legacy Program and the City's Tax Rebate Program.				
2. Have there been improvements and/ or additions to your public or community available spaces? Examples include museums, community centers, public plazas, murals and public art	X	<p>The City invested \$7.2 million dollars in new City Offices which includes several meeting rooms and training rooms available to the public.</p> <p>The City also invested over \$160,000.00 to upgrade the HVAC equipment in the Carroll Arts Center, an arts and entertainment center located in our downtown, which also serves as the heart of the Arts and Culture Community in Carroll County.</p> <p>The City purchased a portable stage for our well-attended outdoor stroll events and a holiday tree for outdoor holiday events. Nearly \$400,000.00 has been spent in upgrading public parks. The City invested over \$200,000 in the Longwell Armory, a historical building housing the City's Family Center and gymnasium.</p> <p>Over a quarter million dollars was spent updating the downtown parking garages, so parking is available for anyone wishing to come downtown.</p> <p>14,000 square feet of lower-level space of the Carroll County Library is being constructed into a tech-focused Makerspace, Professional Teaching Kitchen, and collaborative workspaces that will be open to the public.</p>				

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

3. Are there opportunities for residents to gather, communicate and celebrate? Do they serve multi-generations and all populations in the community? Examples are wide-ranging and may include fairs, community history days, neighborhood meetings, etc.	X	<p>The City hosts many gathering opportunities, nearly one every weekend (excluding winter months). In addition to our BBQ Stroll, Wine Stroll, and Oyster Stroll, the City hosts Celtic Canter, Flowers and Jazz, Fall Fest, Halloween Parade, Miracle on Main, Easter Egg Hunt, movie nights, Art in the Park, and music festivals.</p> <p>The City runs a Summer Camp and celebrates Parks and Recreation month by having an event every day in July. Most events are planned to involve children of all ages. Even during COVID-19, the City continued to host drive-through events to keep our community engaged.</p>				
4. Have there been any changes in access to health and wellness services? Examples include mobile clinics, hospitals, telehealth opportunities	X	While the City does not have its own Health Department, we work closely with the Carroll County Health Department.				
5. Are there any residential health and wellness opportunities in place (i.e. athletic facilities, recreational indoor/outdoor courses or groups)?	X	<p>The City of Westminster Department of Recreation and Parks operates a full-service athletic facility open to all members of the public. Additionally, the City operates the Westminster Community Pool. The City leases it's ballfields to several sporting leagues in the area.</p> <p>The Boys and Girls Club of America opened a new facility in downtown which adds numerous programs, summer camps and a daycare for disadvantaged youth.</p>				
6. Do all residents have access to healthy food options such as fresh food grocery stores, farmers markets, community gardens, etc., within the Sustainable Community?	X	The City has a community garden located off of Key Street, and a farmer's market. This year, the Farmer's Market is expanding its hours into the winter season for more accessibility.				
7. Has there been a decrease in crime rate?	X	According to municipal crime rate data, the Part I crime rate in 2016 was 3,960 per 100,000 residents. In 2019, the rate was 3,445 per 100,000 residents. This data indicates a net decrease in crime.				

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

8. Do all residents have access to the Internet and other basic utilities and services?		The City owns its own water and sewer utility system and strives to provide affordable, safe, and clean water and sewer services to all residents. In addition, the City recognized the need for affordable internet access, in 2015, and spent three years building the <i>Westminster Fiber Network</i> . This project put dark fiber in areas of the City so that every resident would have access to affordable high-speed internet. The City partnered with Ting so all City residents now have the ability to connect to high speed internet.				
OTHER: Has there been an increase in public art/arts & entertainment programs/venues (i.e. murals, movie theatre, music events)?	X	<p>The City continues to grow its public events including the Westminster Fallfest, Oyster Stroll, Barbecue Stroll, Wine Stroll, Miracle on Main Street Electric Parade, Flower and Jazz Festival, Halloween event, Celtic Canter, Egg Hunt, Mommy and Son Date Night, Daddy and Daughter Date Night, and Summer Camp. Our Family Center has added new classes to their schedule. The City's Farmer's Market is extending its hours of operation into the Winter months. Of course, COVID-19 had an impact on the prior year's attendance of all City events. However, we provided drive-thru events through the pandemic to provide safe at-home activities for children and parents.</p> <p>The City also holds an event every single day of July in honor of Parks and Recreation Month. These events include movie nights, Art in the Park, and free music events. The City also has made a major investment to improve its Community Pool.</p>				
OTHER: Promote the Arts and Culture Community in the City	X	The City owns and leases the Carroll Arts Center to the Carroll County Arts Council. The Carroll Arts Center is the center of the arts and culture community in Carroll County. The Carroll Arts Center holds many events throughout the year, attracting thousands of people from across the State. Programs include the Peep Show, Art in the Park, Gallery of Gifts, and Festival of Wreaths.				

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

<p>OTHER: Support the Police Department’s community initiatives to develop partnerships with the community and to educate residents on public safety issues.</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>The Mayor and Common Council established the Westminster Public Safety Advisory Council in early 2017. This is an ongoing effort between the Westminster Police Department (WPD) and the community. Its mission is to “Provide advice and counsel to the Chief, Mayor, and Common Council on matters relating to law enforcement and public safety in the City. The WPD Community Policing initiatives involve a comprehensive approach to policing that is based on collaboration with members of the community they serve. The WPD strives to practice the philosophy of “community policing” in all that they do, versus the idea that community policing only involves certain programs with specialized, designated personnel. The practice of community policing occurs at all levels of the WPD from the Chief to the Officer. Our sworn personnel are evaluated with community policing standards that are literally built into our performance evaluations. Officers are required to conduct regular foot patrols in their assigned sectors, especially in the downtown business district. They are required to engage in informal interactions with citizens and within businesses. We track this community-oriented policing function, and it is reflected in annual performance evaluations.</p>				
<p>OTHER: Promote community education and sufficient planning to reduce the number of calls for fire and emergency service.</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>The Fire Department conducts tours of the Fire Station, discusses home escape plans, and encourages the annual checking of smoke alarms. The Fire Department continues to work with the State Fire Marshal to promote public safety. Lastly, the Department holds educational sessions for local service clubs and citizens on the proper use of the 911 system.</p> <p>WPD attends HOA and other community group meetings, as appropriate to discuss specific crime and community issues and WPD efforts to address these issues. The Advisory Council provides informational pamphlets to citizens with crime prevention tips such as “See Something, Say Something, Make Your Home and Vehicle a Less Attractive Target and Get a Security Survey.” The Advisory Council also has helped to organize community meetings that hosted WPD liaison Officers/Supervisors to discuss community issues and to be briefed on Department efforts. WPD liaison Lieutenants/Sergeants are also delegated the task of hosting community meetings within their assigned geographical areas.</p>				

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

		These community meetings provide an opportunity for residents and business owners to get to know their local police; ask questions regarding issues or enforcement efforts; get briefed by WPD staff regarding identified crime and disorder patterns and what WPD is doing to combat these issues.				
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Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

LAND USE/LOCAL PLANNING	YES	If YES, specify in quantifiable units and compare values from the last five years	NO	If NO, why not? What kept you from achieving your plan's desired outcomes?	N/A	Interested in technical assistance
1. Have there been any infill developments?	X	The City of Westminster is located in a priority funding area as designated by the State of Maryland. Most of the City is located in an urban setting, with minimal infill areas remaining to be developed. However, miscellaneous development projects have occurred on many underutilized properties within Westminster for both commercial and residential projects				
2. Has there been an increase in the amount of preserved/protected land?	X	The City of Westminster acquired 187 acres of the former Wakefield Valley Golf Course via donation. A variety of recreational and open space uses as well as other options are possible. The City held a year-long process to receive ideas on possible uses for the property. A final decision is pending.				
3. Have there been any developments hindered by growth constraints? If so, please describe.	X	On June 23, 2017, the Mayor and Common Council of the City of Westminster met to enact legislation to temporarily suspend the processing of applications requiring a net new water allocation. The temporary suspension remained in effect for nine months, allowing the City to install a filtration system at one of its wells. Only development which required a net increase in new water usage had been impacted by the legislation.				
4. Have there been any zoning or policy changes that have fostered growth or redevelopment in your Sustainable Community?	X	The City has approved zoning text amendments to allow new development in various locations. Since 2017, there has been a total of 16 Zoning Text Amendments for the entire City. There has also been one property that has been rezoned in our Sustainable Growth Area to the Compatible Neighborhood Overlay Zone for the expansion of the Family and Children Services operations.				

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

5. Have there been any significant improvements to the municipal infrastructure within the Sustainable Community?	X	The City continues to bring all crosswalks up to ADA compliance, in conformance with MDOT standards.				
6. Have you hired any new staff members, reassigned duties, or procured the services of a contractor to increase or better align local capacity? Have you implemented any professional development programs?	X	The City contracts out engineering reviews of all new development to a private engineering firm since the planning department does not employ an engineer.				
7. Has your community initiated or completed any planning efforts that will support the Sustainable Community area, including comprehensive planning, small area planning, or planning studies?	X	In late 2017, Planning Staff and the Planning Commission completed the state mandated mid-cycle review of the City's Comprehensive Plan in which, after review, the Planning and Zoning Commission provided many recommendations for City action during the second half of the 20-year planning Cycle, in the following categories: 1. Public Outreach and Neighborhood Planning; 2. Growth; 3. Economic Development; 4. Economic Activity; 5. Sustainability 6. Inter-Jurisdictional Coordination; and 7. Transportation.				
OTHER: Create a City of Westminster Comprehensive Tree Plan	X	The City of Westminster Comprehensive Tree Plan was approved by the Mayor and Common Council in 2019 to highlight the City's Urban Forestry Program and provide actionable goals to guide City Staff and the Commission on an annual basis. This plan was updated in 2021 by the Tree Commission with more precise and updated information on Land Surface Temperature and Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (vegetation cover).				

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

OTHER: Update a City of Westminster Building Permit Database		In 2021, the City updated its building permit database to tack the type and location of development in the City.				
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Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

COMPETITIVE FUNDING: Use the rows below to list competed funds sought for sustainability or revitalization projects since receiving Sustainable Communities designation.	Source (federal, state, foundation, etc.)	Amount Received	If no funding was received, what technical or other assistance from the state would help with future applications?	Other Notes
Funding Program: Community Legacy Funding MD Department of Housing & Community Development	State	\$134,718.69 received since 2017. Funds were used for 14 façade improvement projects.		
Funding Program: U.S. Department of Justice Bullet Proof Vest Partnership	Federal	\$10,813.12 received since 2017. Funds were used to purchase body armor and reduce crime.		
Funding Program: Program Open Space MD Department of Natural Resources	State	\$61,904.20 received since 2017. Funds were used to make improvements to the Green's Tot Lot.		
Funding Program: U.S. Department of Justice Violence Against Women Formula Grant	Federal	\$32,792.10 received since 2017. Funds were used to reduce crime.		
Funding Program: Emerald Ash Borer Tree Grant MD Dept. of Natural Resources Forest Service	Federal	\$3,000 received in 2018 to treat Ash trees.		
Funding Program: Bay Restoration Funds	State	\$40,347,789.00 awarded		
Funding Program: Carroll County Funding Program	County	\$6,999,679.00 awarded		

Sustainable Communities Renewal Application - Section B

Funding Program: Energy Grant	State	\$672,000 Geo-Thermal Heating System at the Wastewater Treatment Plant.		
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COMPETITIVE FUNDING: Are there any types of projects/needs for which your Sustainable Community needs funding; however, there isn't a funding source?

Sustainable Community Action Plan

City of Westminster, Maryland

Sustainable Community Application 2022

Environment

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

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

Strengths

- Through the Street Department's operating budget, the City employs a City Arborist to maintain the City's Public Trees on a daily basis.
- Through the Street Department's operating budget, the City annually allocates funding to pay for contractual services to maintain Westminster's Public Urban Tree Canopy.
- The first city-wide comprehensive tree plan was adopted in 2019 by the Mayor and Common Council that sets actionable items (short and long term) for the City's Urban Forestry Program.
- As of 2021, the City has been recognized for 31 years as a Tree City USA by the Arbor Day Foundation. The City has also been recognized by the Foundation for 23 years with the Growth Award. The Growth Award is given to local governments that demonstrates high levels of tree care.
- As of 2021, the City has been recognized for achieving Green Level status in the Maryland People Loving and Nurturing Trees (PLANT) Program for the past four consecutive years. The Green Level is the highest level of certification that a municipality can receive.
- The City has hosted 26 consecutive Urban and Community Forestry Workshops.
- The City received a grant from Maryland View, through the Towson University Department of Geography and Environmental Planning, to collect and provided Land Surface Temperature (LST) and Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) maps of the entire City.
- Towson University also provided more precise LST and NDVI data, along with Surface Elevation data, of Main Street, with a quadcopter drone outfitted with a 6-band multispectral sensor. This imagery shows

Weaknesses

- Water capacity constraints have limited growth in Westminster over the past decade. Since 2006, the City has experienced a decrease in development pressure due to the limited water supply available to allocate to new development.
- The City of Westminster is currently not a Sustainable Maryland Certified Community but will be applying for that designation in 2022.

Sustainable Community Application 2022

how different types of land uses and tree species affect LST in the approximately 17 acres of Downtown Westminster.

- A Graduate Thesis “Analyzing the Urban Heat Island Effect in the City of Westminster, Maryland, with attention to Mitigative and Adaptive Measures” was shared with the City to determine if there is an Urban Heat Island Effect in the City and where UHI mitigative measures should be located to help those that are most vulnerable.

Sustainable Community Application 2022

<p><u>Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures</u></p> <p>Based on the strengths and weaknesses identify the strengths you would like to build and challenges you would like to address. What outcomes are you trying to achieve? Where/ in what area do you want those changes to happen? Progress Measure: Identify how you will know that you have achieved your outcome.</p>	<p><u>Strategies and Action Items</u></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><u>Implementation Partners</u></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>Outcome 1: Enhance the City’s Urban Forestry program</p> <p>Progress Measures: Be awarded the Tree City USA, Maryland People Loving and Nurturing Trees (PLANT) award each year, and complete short-term goals as contained in the City Tree Plan.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Utilize the expertise of the Tree Commission and City staff to reinforce and improve the Westminster Urban Forestry Program each year.</p> <p>Strategy B: Continue to hold regular quarterly Tree Commission meetings.</p> <p>Strategy C: Perform a complete update of the 1992 inventory of trees on public property and rights-of-way.</p> <p>Strategy D: Implement the goals contained in the City of Westminster Comprehensive Tree Plan.</p> <p>Strategy E: Revise the Westminster Landscape Manual to reflect current best management practices in landscape management, arboriculture, integrated pest management, water conservation, and aesthetics</p>	<p>City of Westminster Tree Commission, Westminster City staff</p>
<p>Outcome 2: Ensure an adequate water capacity system to serve future business expansion and new residential customers.</p> <p>Progress Measures: Continued water allocation approval with Carroll County Health Department and MDE.</p>	<p>Strategy A: The city has been proactive in its water supply planning to ensure local water reliability now and for the future. One forward-thinking way the city is planning for the future is by launching PUREWater Westminster, which will use proven technology to purify reclaimed water to provide a safe, sustainable, and drought-resistant drinking water supply. This initiative will help Westminster keep local control of its water supply and costs and provide a pathway for economic growth, business, commercial development, and continued community vitality. The City also has adopted and amended its Water and Sewer</p>	<p>Elected Officials and Maryland Department of the Environment.</p>

Sustainable Community Application 2022

	Allocations Policy to serve new business expansion. The purpose of the Water and Sewer Allocations Policy, specifically, is to account for anticipated-future, regular-daily consumption in conjunction with the permitted property uses of new projects, so that the regulatory capacities are not exceeded.	
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Sustainable Community Application 2022

Economy

This section is centered on economic growth and management.

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

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Local employment opportunities close to City include: Carroll Hospital Center (1,997 employees), McDaniel College (800 employees), Penguin Random House (753 employees), and Carroll Community College (677) employees.● Construction of the Westminster Fiber Network is complete.● Recent new perceptions and change in culture within the small business community reinforced by new leadership within the City government.● McDaniel College (1,800 undergraduate population) is within walking distance to downtown, offering the opportunity to increase the total number of consumers and workforce.● The Main Street area of Westminster strives to maintain its historical fabric.● The City has increased the number of special events offered downtown in recent years, drawing people from all over the County and beyond and enhancing the visibility of downtown Westminster businesses.● City staff meets regularly with downtown merchants to discuss special event logistics and how the City can provide support to the business community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Area Medium Income: \$54,000-55,000 - low for Maryland.● Westminster's water capacity constraints have caused the growth of Westminster to slow down significantly. Additionally, the City continues to recover from the economic downturn approximately thirteen years ago not to mention the COVID-19 Pandemic.

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Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Attract and retain small businesses on Main Street</p> <p>Progress Measures: Increase in the number of retail shops downtown</p>	<p>Strategy A: Establish programs that develop and incentivize the growth of local retailers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - City staff will attend small business conferences and conventions to get new ideas on how to attract and keep businesses from peers. - The City will survey business owners to see what types of capital projects can enhance their business environment (i.e., streetscape improvements, increased outdoor seating, façade improvements, etc.) - The City will provide educational workshops for local businesses such as marketing, how to increase foot traffic/sales, social media promotion, etc.). - The City will continue to mention historic tax credits to eligible properties <p>Strategy B: Increase business involvement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The City will develop initiatives to increase business involvement and attract customers. This can be done using a unified campaign, newsletter, and downtown business meetings. - The City will organize events during which businesses can offer discounts or incentives for shoppers (i.e. "Small Business Saturday, Westminster Restaurant Week, and etc.). <p>Strategy C: City staff will reach out to entrepreneurs, through local college partnerships and Small Businesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Partner with “<i>Miller – Resources for Entrepreneurs</i>” at Carroll Community College about incentives and benefits of locating their businesses downtown. 	<p>Carroll County Department of Economic Development</p> <p>Maryland Small Business Development Center (SBDC)</p> <p>Historic District Commission</p> <p>McDaniel College</p> <p>Carroll Community College</p> <p>Small Business Development Center</p> <p>Chamber of Commerce</p>
<p>Outcome 2: : Increase customer base</p> <p>Progress Measures: Increased foot traffic for downtown businesses.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Enhance the City’s relationship with McDaniel College, its faculty, and students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The City will work with businesses to attract students to Main Street. - The City will encourage merchants to establish student reward programs/incentives/discounts. <p>Strategy B: Better market Downtown Westminster</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaborate with local businesses to increase the visibility of downtown on local media platforms 	<p>McDaniel College Staff</p> <p>Downtown Business Merchants</p> <p>Community Media Center</p> <p>Carroll County Economic Development</p>

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<p>Outcome 3: Increase high-tech industrial and institutional employers</p> <p>Progress Measures: Increased high-tech businesses downtown</p>	<p>Strategy A: Explore the potential for creating a business incubator in the Downtown Business District</p> <p>Strategy B: Partner with the Mid-Atlantic Gigabit Innovation Collaboratory (MAGIC)</p>	<p>Small Business Development Center</p> <p>Mid-Atlantic Gigabit Innovation Collaboratory</p>
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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">• Worked with Carroll County Department of Planning to develop and draft the Carroll County Bicycle-Pedestrian Master Plan.• Carroll Transit System provides five fixed route shuttle services as well as demand response service throughout Carroll County, giving those without access to a vehicle an opportunity to be employed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited alternative transportation options such as mass transit, bicycling, and pedestrian infrastructure.• No direct bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure connecting Downtown Westminster to Carroll Community College.

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Increase connectivity between downtown businesses, McDaniel College, community services, and surrounding neighborhoods.</p> <p>Progress Measures: Completion of the Westminster Pedestrian Master Plan.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Westminster has set a goal to develop a Westminster Pedestrian Master Plan and Bicycle Accessibility Strategy that would outline the future of the City's bicycle, sidewalk, and pathways system.</p> <p>Carroll County, with City assistance, has drafted a Bicycle-Pedestrian Master Plan that includes bike-ped infrastructure in and around the City.</p>	<p>Carroll County Department of Planning.</p> <p>Westminster Planning and Zoning Commission</p> <p>Maryland Department of Transportation - State Highway Administration</p> <p>Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development.</p>
<p>Outcome 2: Have Design Guidelines for Transportation throughout the City.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Develop "<i>Transportation Strategy and Design Guidelines</i>" for new developments and improvements to existing transportation systems in Westminster.</p>	<p>Westminster Historic District Commission</p>

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Progress Measures: Adopting Design Guidelines for transportation strategy.		Westminster Planning and Zoning Commission Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration
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Housing

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

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

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is housing for all income levels located throughout the City• The City approved a market rate 35-unit multi-family apartment complex in 2020.• A “Community of Opportunity”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low percentages of home ownership. In August 2021, Carroll County reported that there were 8,078 housing units in Westminster. According to the United States Census the Owner-occupied units (2015-2019) accounted for 52.3% of the units, with a medium value of \$242,700.00.• Lack of quality rental housing for workforce population.• The somewhat high percentage of homeowners spending 30% or more of their income on housing seems to indicate a shortage of affordable housing within the City.• Rents are often kept low by deferring routine maintenance.• Over 1,028 unduplicated individuals have been homeless since July 2004. There have been 112 chronically homeless individuals, indicating that access to the shelter system is not addressing the root cause of their homelessness.

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Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Promote and encourage home ownership</p> <p>Progress Measures: Increased homeownership. Establish a current baseline then reevaluate homeowner's vs renters in five years.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Work with colleges to promote the Maryland Mortgage Program's "You've Earned It!" initiative. Partner with local/state housing organizations to create other housing initiatives that would encourage people to buy homes.</p>	<p>Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development</p> <p>McDaniel College</p> <p>Westminster Department of Housing and Preservation Services</p>
<p>Outcome 2: Increase the percentage of rental housing affordability to the moderate-income population (people who make 60-100% of AMI).</p> <p>Progress Measures: Increased affordable rental housing.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Continue to build relationships with builders and non-profit developers to increase the affordable housing stock. Partnerships between builders/developers, government, and nonprofit organizations will be key to the production of new for-sale units for low- and moderate-income families.</p> <p>The City will strive to be an active part of any such partnerships, such as the partnership formed with Episcopal Housing Corporation. In 2008, the City of Westminster formed a partnership with Episcopal Housing Corporation in the development of Union Crossing Phase I. This partnership provided four new dwelling units for moderate-income families. The project was quite a success and all four were sold within months of completion.</p> <p>Strategy B: Promote infill development and other redevelopment options for underutilized residential or commercial lots, and promote the infill of the existing Central Business District and Downtown Business District with business and high density residential uses.</p>	<p>Westminster Department of Housing and Preservation Services (The City currently administers 293 Housing Choice Vouchers).</p>

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<p>Outcome 3: Maintain quality and character of existing neighborhoods. There is a need for general maintenance standards of all residential buildings, regardless of the type of housing, or whether an owner or a tenant occupies the building.</p> <p>Progress Measures: Increased property maintenance investments within the city.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Improve compliance with the City's Property Maintenance Code through more proactive enforcement. To address this issue, the Department of Community Planning and Development will work with the Code Enforcement Division to support the Property Maintenance Code requirements. The City will also explore enhanced rental licensing requirements.</p> <p>Strategy B: Seek funding for repairs under the various Special Loan Programs that are administered at the local level.</p> <p>Strategy C: Launch an informational program to spread the word about the availability of State rehabilitation funds and educate the community about the City's Property Maintenance Code.</p>	<p>The Department of Community Planning and Development</p> <p>Westminster Department of Housing and Preservation Services.</p> <p>Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, Neighborhood Revitalization</p> <p>Maryland Historical Trust.</p>
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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">• Exceptional quality of life due to proximity of many local parks and high-quality community events and programming• The City of Westminster's inventory of parks consists of 14 municipal parks, a 2-mile-long walking trail, and a park system containing a total of 230 acres. In addition, residents have access to 79 acres of County-owned recreation land within the City and almost 135 acres of County-owned recreation land adjacent to the City. The total amount of local jurisdiction park and recreation land is over 350 acres. The City of Westminster also benefits from over 360.4 acres of private recreation and open space land within the City limits.• The City has increased the number of special events held in downtown Westminster. These events, including the Wine Stroll, BBQ Stroll, and Oyster Stroll, that draw attendees from across the County and beyond.• The City also continues to draw crowds to longstanding community events, such as the Flower & Jazz Festival in May, FallFest in September, and the Electric Light Parade in November.• Westminster, and its downtown area, have many wonderful restaurants. Many new restaurants have opened within the past five years, including: Lost Lion, 84 East Woodfire Kitchen & Bar, and American Ice Co. Café.• Much of Main Street maintains its historical features.• Carroll County Public Schools continues to be one of the top public school districts in the State.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Homelessness continues to be an area of concern. As the County seat, Westminster is the location for a majority of the support services offered to homeless and at-risk-for-homelessness persons. Because of the location of these County services and the lack of a comprehensive transit system in the County, the County's homeless population tends to reside in Westminster.

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Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Provide quality active parks that are accessible to all residents of the City of Westminster.</p> <p>Progress Measures:</p> <p>Increased accessible recreational facilities</p>	<p>Strategy A: The City will continue to seek grant money and work to develop multi-model trails in municipally owned parks that effectively move people of all ages and abilities.</p>	<p>Maryland Department of Natural Resources</p>

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Local Planning and Land Use

(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">• According to the inventory form completed for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, at least 89% of the structures located within the Westminster National Register District were considered to be historically contributing in 1980.• A second National Register District identified within the Westminster corporate limits is located on the McDaniel College campus.• The City of Westminster has an active Historic District Commission that approves all historic tax credit projects, alterations, and renovations to properties located within the local historic zoning district.• The City processes annexation requests when and where appropriate.• The first city-wide comprehensive tree plan was drafted by the Westminster Tree Commission and approved by the Mayor and Common Council in 2019.• Architectural design guidelines, known as 'Standards for Renovation Westminster,' were initially adopted in 1978. The Historic District Commission updated these standards on March 13, 2019.• The City is in the process of updating its sign ordinance to address new innovations in the industry and law.• The City continues to find ways to streamline development approvals so applicants can get through the development review process quicker.• In 2019 the City added a second Planner to help with workload.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited properties in the historic district and minimal protections for historic preservation.• Properties are designated for inclusion in the Local Historic District on a voluntary basis.• There are only two properties located within the Local Historic District.• The City is not in complete control of its Development Review process.

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Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Preserve and protect Westminster's historic character while protecting property rights.</p> <p>Progress Measures:</p> <p>Less demolition permits for historic buildings</p>	<p>Strategy A: Continue to coordinate workshops for home and building owners who want to preserve historic properties and may have questions.</p> <p>Strategy B: Continue to encourage historically sensitive rehabilitation through the administration of rehabilitation tax credits and Façade Improvement Grants.</p> <p>Strategy C: Encourage maintenance and rehabilitation of historic structures through education and outreach.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focus on partnerships with other organizations to anchor preservation efforts. - Continue to conduct educational classes and workshops about the goals of a historic district. This could possibly be funded through other sources, including the Maryland Historical Trust Non-Capital Historic Preservation Grant Program. Explain to the business owners and/or housing owners and landlords the benefits of being part of a historic district. They may include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How historic designation can increase property value. 2. Clarify that the historic district zoning overlay provides guidelines and principles for exterior architectural design and signage. It does not control design or usage on the inside of a property. 3. How property owners can apply for money (i.e. tax credits, etc.) when located in the Westminster National Register Historic District. 4. Develop a list of other funding sources that property owners could apply for. 5. Discuss with the City's elected leadership enactment of a stronger historic preservation law. 	<p>The Westminster Historic District Commission</p> <p>Elected officials</p> <p>Maryland Historic Trust</p>

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<p>Outcome 2: Maintain the long-term viability of farming in the County, including the businesses that support that sector of the economy.</p> <p>Progress Measures: Increased infill development and increase farmland preservation.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Direct growth within the City of Westminster Growth Area Boundary.</p> <p>Strategy B: Partner with Maryland Historic Trust to provide historic tax incentives to encourage historic preservation.</p>	<p>Westminster Planning and Zoning Commission</p> <p>Maryland Historic Trust</p>
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