

America in Bloom 2025 Evaluation Report



Community: Bladensburg, Maryland

Evaluation Dates: July 17-18

Lead Advisor: Sharon Hadden

Co-Advisor: Ellen Paparozzi

America in Bloom envisions communities across the country as welcoming and vibrant places to live, work, and play – benefitting from colorful plants and trees; enjoying clean environments; celebrating heritage and planting pride through volunteerism.

Evaluation Areas	Possible Points	Actual Points	Percent
Community Vitality	128.00	99.00	77.34%
Floral Impact	96.00	27.00	28.12%
Landscaped Areas	96.00	40.00	41.66%
Urban Forestry	104.00	33.00	31.73%
Environmental Initiatives	160.00	94.00	58.75%
Celebrating Heritage	120.00	88.00	73.33%
Overall Impression	112.00	80.00	71.42%
Evaluation Tour Preparation and Actions	14.00	12.00	85.71%
Total Points and Percent	830.00	473.00	56.98%
Star Rating	6		
Community Involvement Total	64	34	53.12%

Star ratings are based on overall percentage.

1 star = 0% - 9.99%

2 stars = 10% – 19.99%

3 stars = 20% – 29.99%

4 stars = 30% – 39.99%

5 stars = 40% – 49.99%

6 stars = 50% – 59.99%

7 stars = 60% – 69.99%

8 stars = 70% - 79.99%

9 stars = 80% – 89.99%

10 stars = 90% - 100%

Community representatives to receive the Evaluation Report (three minimum)		
Name	Title	Email
Michelle Bailey-Hedgepeth	Town Administrator	Mbailyhedgepeth@bladensburgmd.gov
Regine Watson	Town Clerk/Asst. TA	Rwatson@bladensburgmd.gov
Ray Jefferies	Marketing Specialist	Rjefferies@bladensburgmd.gov

GUIDELINES AND INFORMATION:

Communities are required to provide the following prior to evaluation:

- Community Profile organized to follow the criteria and metrics. For repeat communities, call out what is new and/or implemented due to advisors' recommendations.
- Evaluation Tour Itinerary with start and finish times for each day
- Community Map with community boundaries and the tour route
- Communities are responsible for addressing the metrics in the Community Profile, Evaluation Tour Itinerary, and during the Evaluation Tour.

The areas to be scored:

Advisors will review Community Profiles, Community Maps, and Evaluation Tour Itineraries to confirm the appropriateness of the areas to be evaluated and contact communities prior to the tour so adjustments can be made.

- All areas (municipal, commercial, and residential) within the boundaries of the entrant's community/municipality (except as noted below) are scored and a representative portion of all areas must be included.
- Property to be scored, whether public or private, must be subject to the codes and regulations of the entrant's community/municipality.
- When a property does not meet these requirements, but the community's volunteers significantly impact the property with labor and/or funding, then advisors may include in their scoring the property not subject to the codes and regulations of the entrant community.
- A community may request recommendations for areas toured but not scored.

Metrics are noted with unique codes based on the criteria. Ratings include:

N/A (Not Applicable): Communities should strive to implement all metrics; however, advisors will use N/A when a metric is not scorable in a community. N/A metric is not included in the point totals and does not affect percentages. Examples when N/A may apply in a metric: commercial/business areas do not exist; state or county statutes prevent implementation of a metric.

Not Started (0 points): programs or procedures are not in place.

In Progress (1-2 points): programs or procedures are developed, and a plan of action is implemented.

In Place (3-5 points): programs or procedures are utilized and beneficial.

Surpassing (6-8 points): programs or procedures are exceptional, utilized, and beneficial throughout the community.

Other:

- This Evaluation Report's scoring, general observations, and general and criteria recommendations are based upon the community's efforts including its levels of participation in, or implementation of the metrics in each of the criteria.
- Future projects and programs are not scored.
- The scoring for the seven evaluation criteria is adjusted to the climate and environmental conditions of the community's location. Make sure the advisors are made aware of any challenges that were faced during the year.

General Observations and Recommendations (recommendations are indicated in *italics*):



Congratulations, Bladensburg, for your second year in the America in Bloom Program. We are excited to see that you have undertaken and completed so many new projects since last year's advisor's visit. There are many changes that have enhanced Bladensburg for your residents and the wider communities.

Sitting on the Anacostia River, Bladensburg is one of the four Port Towns. With a rich history reaching back to 1742, Bladensburg has played a significant role in the American history books.

The Bladensburg of today has a rich cultural diversity with residents who share their traditions, languages, and cuisines to build a vibrant community with a shared sense of belonging.

We are always happy to hear that there is collaboration between AIB communities. You are very fortunate to have two close neighboring towns within the AIB program; we know that you are working together on new projects which will benefit you all. Well done.



We were impressed on our arrival entering through the 57th Ave corridor to see newly planted trees along streets that were completely free from litter, well designed banners waving from lampposts, and beautiful hanging baskets full of flowers. 57th Ave is a first-class example of how a beautification project can change an area for the community. We congratulate you on your 'Don't Be Bitter Pick Up Your Litter' campaign. This has been a huge success.

On our two-day tour we walked the streets of the town and saw how passionate your residents are about their gardens; many were full of fruit and vegetables. There is a pride around the streets of the town with well-maintained homes and tidy streets. We were able to visit the fantastic EcoFarm open house where we saw youth groups working in the summer program. Lunch with the Police Department was eye opening learning about community policing and how there is engagement through youth cadet groups. We had an impressive demonstration of the police E-Bike. Sitting along the Anacostia River offers a natural environment to enjoy. On our trip down the river, we learned of the continuing environmental initiatives undertaken by the Anacostia Watershed Society to improve water quality and protect wildlife on and in the river. We loved seeing pairs of Osprey. The history of Bladensburg is well preserved within the town under the

guidance of the Aman Memorial Trust; we really appreciate their care and consideration for the historic buildings and memorials of Bladensburg. You were happy to show us your concerns, street trash bins, areas of litter and bus stops. We hope to be able to offer you some solutions in our report.



We will address areas that we observed where we can offer some assistance. Many of our ideas will have come from other AIB communities where we have seen successes.

Some of our observations will be a one-and-done solution, others will be longer-term projects to work on.

Thank you, Bladensburg!

Sharon Hadden and Ellen Paparozzi
AIB Advisors

COMMUNITY VITALITY: Policies, programs, activities, and facilities that lead to a vibrant community and promote a sense of health and well-being. Includes, but not limited to, senior and community centers, libraries, museums, arts/cultural organizations, mentoring programs, schools, faith-based organizations, parks, playgrounds, dog parks, sports fields, water activities, trails, golf courses, and other active and passive recreational opportunities for all ages and abilities.	Not Applicable (N/A)	Not Started (N/S) 0	In Progress 1-2	In Place 3-5	Surpasses 6-8
1. An economic development plan is in place and implemented. It includes the direction for short- and long-term economic growth, and programs to improve the economy. It is regularly evaluated, measured, and/or reevaluated.					6
2. Communication of ordinances and policies pertaining to Community Vitality are easily accessible. Topics include, but are not limited to, culture, education, government, recreation, and technology. Examples of communication avenues include, but are not limited to, lectures, print, city website, city hall, library, and social media.					6
3. Master plan exists for current and/or future public green space. Growth, enhancements, and/or protection of undeveloped areas are included. It is reviewed and routinely updated.					6
4. Public parks and/or green spaces are available. Properties may include pocket, school, neighborhood, city, county, state, and national parks and green spaces. Parks and green spaces meet the needs of the community and are clean, maintained, welcoming, and utilized.					6
5. Active and/or passive recreation opportunities are available and meet the needs of the community. Examples include, but are not limited to, water sports, golf, baseball, pickleball, skiing, soccer, hiking, nature trails, bird watching, picnic areas, and fishing. Year-round programs are available.					7
6. Seating is available near walking, exercise, playground areas, and/or public transportation stops. The seating and area are clean and accessible.					6
7. Shade is provided for participants and/or spectators at cultural and sporting events. Structures include, but are not limited to, shade sails, dugouts, pergolas, arbors, and trees. Structures are maintained and inspected for safety.					6
8. Community gathering space is available. The space is accessible and used throughout the year for all ages and abilities. Examples include, but are not limited to, community center, senior center, YMCA, faith-based gathering places, libraries, and town hall.					7

9. Age- and ability-appropriate play areas are accessible. Equipment is ADA-compliant and/or inspected by a Certified Playground Safety Inspector.					6
10. Active outdoor community events are offered throughout the year. Examples include, but are not limited to, Bike-to-Work Day, Walk to School Day, and 5K events.					6
11. Community celebrations and/or cultural performances meet the needs of the community. Examples include, but are not limited to, festivals, art, dance, theatre, music, and cinema.					7
12. Secure food programs are available. Examples include, but are not limited to, hunger relief efforts, food pantries, garden plots, rooftop gardens, community gardens, farmers markets, and Community Supported Agriculture.					6
13. Alternative transportation programs are available. Transportation is available in all areas of the community. Examples include, but are not limited to, bicycle/scooter rental, car/van pools, public transportation, and/or ride sharing to all areas of the city.				5	
14. Safety policies, programs, and/or services are in place. Examples include, but are not limited to, police, fire, emergency medical services, community health, crime prevention, homeland security, gang prevention, traffic, homelessness, civil and human rights. Information is easily accessible and communicated.					8
15. Youth-focused programs are in place for multiple ages and/or abilities. Examples include, but are not limited to, sports, gardening, clubs, and lectures					6
16. Non-municipal volunteer boards are active and/or comprised of representatives from business and residents. Examples include, but are not limited to, In Bloom committee, Rotary, Veterans, Chamber of Commerce, Scouting, HOAs, and faith-based organizations.				5	
Totals:		Possible Points	Actual Points	Percent	
1. Community Vitality		128	99	77.34%	

Community Vitality Recommendations:



Bladensburg works hard to build strong community bonds by prioritizing inclusion, culture, health, and education – efforts that support Community Vitality for all age groups. A rich program of events raises awareness for Black History Month, Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and Mental Health Awareness Month. In September and December, the annual Senior Gala and Senior Holiday Gala celebrate the community's older residents.

This year's Juneteenth Paint and Unity event involved designing and painting benches, which have since been placed around town for residents to enjoy. We were delighted to see these brightly colored benches bringing community art to the streets. *We recommend protecting them during the winter months, as painted benches can deteriorate significantly in harsh weather.*



The amazing EcoCity Farm developed on the site of three old apartment blocks is an urban non-profit teaching and learning farm that grows vegetables, fruit, and herbs that are available for the local community at affordable prices. We saw herbs and vegetables used in the cooking by your multicultural residents. ECF runs youth programs showing kids how to farm and cook healthy meals. We loved seeing the smoothie bike in action. Newly acquired land next to ECF is to be used for community gardens so more residents can be involved in

growing their own food.

During our tour we discussed the land opposite the Town Hall that is currently not used and owned by a private individual. We had conversations regarding its potential use as a park. *If this is a future possibility, consider having community gardens in this location. We noticed many residents in the streets close to this land who are using their gardens as growing spaces for vegetables. We believe this would be a popular location.*

<https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/how-to-organize-a-community-garden>

The well used David C. Harrington Park named to celebrate Bladensburg's first Black mayor, sits behind the Town Hall, It is a fantastic example of an urban park – beautifully maintained with newly planted trees and shrubs that continue to enhance its tree canopy. Brightly colored flower beds provide a sense of calm and well-being. Both kids and adults enjoy the play equipment and outside gym equipment placed along the ADA walking path. Benches are situated under trees for shade, and a gazebo provides a covered picnic area. This park is a great community asset. We saw many people enjoying the facilities. Kudos to Purnell Hall and his team at Public Works for the care and maintenance of the park.



In contrast to David C. Harrington Park, we visited the Bladensburg Waterfront Park. This large park sitting along

the Anacostia Riverbanks should be a



jewel in your crown, but sadly it did not shine.

We offer you two pictures to the left. One is from the NPS website showing the park waterfront that visitors would expect to see. The second is the actual on the day we visited. We understand that the park is maintained by MNCPPC and a group of volunteers. This arrangement does not seem to be maintaining this park to the standards that we believe are core to your values

for your community. The impression created for the visitor is that this is not a safe area, although we know it is. The lack of maintenance encourages littering and discarded objects. *The waterfront should be beautiful with planters and hanging baskets full of flowers. This should be a beautiful area. See photo to the left for an example of an AIB community with river frontage.*



Waterfront Park has a series of information story boards recounting the Battle of Bladensburg. An e-bike station allows visitors to take the cycle trail along the Anacostia River.

Cyclists will not find the park as a desirable end point of the trail. We understand that the park is the site of the summer music series and July Fireworks, so this is a high-profile park with many visitors using the facilities. This year the first 'This Could Go Boom' event supporting gender diversity in music will be held at the park. We had a conversation with the head of the park who appeared not to be aware of the overgrown and unkempt waterfront area. We did notice the following day volunteers attempting to clean up the planters. *We recommend that Bladensburg Public Works oversee the care of this waterfront area. We believe it would be the most beneficial option to ensure it remains a beautiful area to visit.*



The new Bladensburg Library is a fantastic asset to the community and the surrounding Port Towns. Designed in the shape of a ship, it continues the nautical theme inside with little boat-shaped reading cubbies and windows shaped like port holes. During our visit we saw how much the community uses its facilities. The teenage and kid's areas were busy with reading groups and summer youth groups. Fun exhibits keep the building bright and interesting. The library has a full calendar of events from hands-on eating workshops to teach healthy eating habits to needlework evenings. The Teen Action Group meets here to help teens earn community service hours and get their voices heard. One of the projects they undertook was a study of safety on the streets of Bladensburg.

There are many potential projects that would enhance your community, but we understand that your administrative workforce is already under pressure and would be unable to facilitate all of them.

We encourage you to create a Bladensburg in Bloom group that can become involved in beautification projects and initiatives that would have community benefits. This would also allow you to track volunteer hours, which are

important when applying for grants. We suggest a shout out for volunteers via the Port e-blast calling for volunteers. Explain about AIB and always state expectations. We suggest creating a group that has members from the Aman Memorial Trust and Teen Action Group to encourage contributions from various groups.

FLORAL IMPACT: Strategic design, use, installation, and maintenance of floral displays and seasonal accents for beautification, including but not limited to annuals, perennials, bulbs, tropical plants, flowering topiaries, colorful foliage, and cultivated and native plants for season-round interest for displays in containers, hanging baskets, window boxes, raised planters, trellises, and in-ground plantings.	Not Applicable (N/A)	Not Started (N/S)	In Progress 1-2	In Place 3-5	Surpasses 6-8
1. Plant combinations are carefully selected for location and environmental conditions. The combinations create visual interest, provide dramatic effects, and appear coordinated. Routine maintenance is evident.				5	
2. In-ground flower displays are designed with mature plant heights, color, and texture in mind. Plants are healthy, robust, and floriferous. Routine maintenance is evident.				3	
3. Containers and/or hanging baskets are in use, scaled to their surroundings, and have suitable plants. Plantings are robust, floriferous, and provide a dramatic effect. Routine maintenance is evident.			2		
4. Floral displays are located throughout the community. Displays are well maintained and attractive. Examples include, but are not limited to, flowerbeds, raised beds, planters, hanging baskets, window boxes, carpet bedding, topiaries, and/or mosaics are located throughout the community.			2		
5. Regular pruning, deadheading, weeding, removal, and/or replacement of dead plants is conducted on public properties.			2		
6. Demonstration/display gardens are available. Plants are labeled. The garden is promoted to the public. Garden is available for events to residents and businesses.				3	
7. Efficient water-wise strategies are in use. Examples include, but are not limited to, drought-resistant plants, use of gray water, and timing of irrigation. Strategies are easily accessible and communicated. Examples of communication avenues include, but are not limited to, lectures, print, city website, city hall, library, and social media.		N/S			
8. Appropriate fertilization (chemical and/or non-chemical) procedures for municipal, parks, and/or school properties are implemented. The procedures produce effective results. Educational information about fertilization is communicated. Examples of communication avenues include, but are not limited to, lectures, print, city website, city hall, library, and social media.			2		

9. Training programs for proper floral displays care and maintenance are offered to seasonal staff and/or volunteers. Training is conducted by Master Gardeners, County Extension, local garden centers, state agencies, and/or contractors.				3	
10. Efforts are in place to educate and raise public awareness of the importance of flowers in the landscape. Educational information about the selection and care of flowers for beautification is available and communicated to the public. Examples of communication avenues include, but are not limited to, lectures, print, city website, city hall, library, and social media.			2		
11. Recognition programs are in place monthly, quarterly, and/or annually for attractive displays created by businesses and/or residents.				3	
12. Programs are in place to encourage, recruit, and/or engage volunteers of all ages and segments in the community's floral displays. Routine opportunities present themselves to residents and/or businesses to get involved.		N/S			
Totals:		Possible Points	Actual Points	Percent	
2. Floral Impact		96	27	28.12%	

Floral Impact Recommendations:



As only a second-year community, Bladensburg has already made progress on increasing their floral displays. The floral displays around the Town Hall are nicely done and appropriate given the coming of a new town hall.

Floral displays around the community are in process and in order to promote this effort, we suggest that Bladensburg select a city flower. Having a contest open to the community would be a great way to pique volunteer interest. Either pre-selecting the choices or asking the community for ideas would work. Consider not just

annuals, but also perennials and wildflowers. The selected flower could be initially planted during a holiday celebration by a community sponsor and featured on the town website. Note: Edmonston's flower is the marigold.

Bladensburg has a number of shopping centers. As was mentioned in last year's evaluation, these sites present great opportunities for adding floral displays. The addition of flowers not only visually and physically cools the area but also can modernize an established center. *We suggest that the owners be contacted and presented with 2 options to beautify their centers – floral containers on the sidewalks or hanging baskets. Both can be self-watering. The owner could make all floral displays consistent, or the individual stores could share the cost by customizing their container with their choice of plants. These containers should be changed seasonally.*



Nothing makes a community seem more inviting than flowers! Bladensburg has a Garden of the Month recognition. This is a great way to promote floral gardens. *We suggest that they also post this honor on their website and create a separate award for patio gardens or balconies at the many apartment/townhome complexes.*

Bladensburg has just recently become involved in the Bladensburg Waterfront Park which is cared for by the M-NCPPC. This national park is used by the public for many

reasons including fishing and boating tours on the Anacostia River as well as public events. Located at this site are wooden planters that had originally been planted with native plants which were labelled. *These planters have been overrun with weeds and are in general disrepair. This reflects poorly on the town of Bladensburg. We suggest that Bladensburg works with M-NCPPC to restore and maintain these planters as a native plant demonstration garden. There are also 2 demonstration gardens at the headquarters building that are overgrown and thus the labels are not visible. QR codes should be added to labels.*



LANDSCAPED AREAS: Strategic design, use, installation, and maintenance of the managed landscape. This includes hardscape features, cultivated and native trees, shrubs, ornamental grasses, vines, succulents, edibles, evergreen topiaries, turf, groundcovers, and pollinator-friendly plant material.	Not Applicable (N/A)	Not Started (N/S)	In Progress 1-2	In Place 3-5	Surpasses 6-8
1. Action plan developed and implemented for proper maintenance, pruning, removal, and/or replacement of dead and overgrown plants. Best practices are utilized.				5	
2. Plan developed each season for procurement, scheduling, planting, and/or maintenance of flowers and/or landscapes.			2		
3. Landscape ordinances and/or policies are in place. City landscape ordinance requires specifications for landscaping and maintenance for new and improved residential, commercial, and public development. Ordinances and/or policies are easily accessible.				4	
4. Landscaping is found throughout the community including public areas, parks, gateways, and/or key buildings. Landscape displays are selected for location, environmental conditions, and/or impact. Attractive designs are utilized and well maintained. Landscapes serve as focal areas in the community.				3	
5. Landscape displays enhance community entryways. The use of trees, shrubs, annuals, perennials, signage, hardscapes, and/or lighting create a welcome display. The displays are attractive and/or well maintained.				3	
6. Residential landscapes provide streetscape appeal and reflect community value in landscaping. They are neat, attractive, and well maintained.					6
7. Effective use of naturalization, xeriscaping, rain gardens, and/or suitable plant varieties to enhance such features as traffic calming, bank stabilization, and water management. Displays are well maintained.			2		
8. Lawn and turf areas display health and vigor. Procedures and practices, such as Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and/or permaculture, are used to manage lawn and turf areas, including mowing, edging, watering, and/or weeding.					6
9. Procedures in place to monitor and/or manage diseases and/or pests in the landscape. Pertinent information is available and/or communicated to the public. Examples of communication avenues include, but are not limited to, lectures, print, city website, city hall, library, and social media.			2		

10. Qualified landscape personnel and/or experienced contractors are available to design, install, source, and/or maintain public landscape floral and landscape sites. Additional support provided by growers, garden centers, County Extension, and/or city departments are utilized to create and implement municipal floral and landscape displays.			2	
11. Training programs for proper landscape display care and maintenance are available for seasonal staff and/or volunteers. Examples include, but are not limited to, Master Gardeners, County Extension, local garden centers, state agencies, and contractors.		2		
12. Programs are in place to encourage, recruit, and/or engage volunteers of all ages and segments of the community in the landscape displays. Volunteers from businesses, residents, schools, and/or organizations participate in the design, planting, and/or care of floral and landscape displays.			3	
Totals:		Possible Points	Actual Points	Percent
3. Landscaped Areas		96	40	41.66%

Landscaped Areas Recommendations:

The residential landscapes around Bladensburg are well maintained and very attractive. It is clear that residents value plants and enjoy planting and caring for them. This creates an opportunity for Bladensburg to leverage. *To increase community volunteers, particularly families, we suggest that Bladensburg increase their flower planters throughout the community by following the Port theme. As the first of the Port cities, planters that are canoes (Ryan's idea) or small row boats (see photo) could be placed selectively around the community. Designed by staff or landscapers to include the city flower, they could be planted by family members (or businesses) in the community. They could be planted into the boat or arranged in self-watering containers within and on the boat. This one-and-done activity would be recognized on the town website and rewarded with a small sign saying Planted By The Smith Family or X Bank. This may also spur other community members to get involved. Further the Smith Family/X bank could be approached to keep the planter weeded/watered throughout the season. Planters could be changed in Fall and Winter by the same family or business or adopted by another family or business. This activity also offers an opportunity to educate volunteers about creating and maintaining landscape displays. Consider getting help from county extension or the University of Maryland.*



Bladensburg has started planting community entryways as well as public areas. These areas are welcoming and are a very good start. *We suggest that Bladensburg take it up a notch by planting more perennials/flowering shrubs as well as annuals. Good examples are found around the Town Hall.*



Adding plant material via planters and in ground displays will take forethought and planning. *We suggest that a plan for purchasing and planting plant material be created. Working with a nursery in the Fall/Winter season will allow for more selection (and possibly better prices) come Spring.*

Businesses in the community that take the time and effort to keep lawn areas mowed and incorporate flowers and shrubs into their private landscape beautify the community. Plants make an unsightly space look nicer and more welcoming. *Consider starting a Best Business Landscape Award that places an appropriate sign on the property. This can/should be an award that businesses can receive annually.*



As Bladensburg's floral landscape grows, so will maintenance. Key landscaped areas that showcase Bladensburg such as the library can quickly become weedy or host dead plant material. We recognize that it is hard to tap into volunteer families that have such busy lives. *Therefore, for planned cleanups and/or maintenance, we suggest going with a theme to attract the community such as (and definitely not limited to) Date with Dad at the Library or Mother/Daughter Town Hall Time. Bladensburg water bottles or cups specifically for such events could show your appreciation.*

URBAN FORESTRY: Strategic design, use, installation, and maintenance of trees on public and private lands.	Not Applicable (N/A)	Not Started (N/S) 0	In Progress 1-2	In Place 3-5	Surpasses 6-8
1. The municipal plan addresses the role urban forest initiatives play in the green infrastructure of the community. Policy is enacted and enforced that includes performance requirements to meet the minimum crown canopy and/or succession planting.					6
2. Efforts are in place to educate and raise the public awareness of the importance of urban forestry. Examples include, but are not limited to, the use of print, videos, websites, apps, and social media.				4	
3. Municipal ordinance enacted and enforced for tree planting and/or preservation. Ordinance addresses the handling and removal of damaged, dying, or dead trees. Ordinance includes public property, private property, and new construction projects. Communication of ordinances and policies are easily accessible.		N/S			
4. Tree board and/or department is available, active, and/or interact with the community. Examples include, but are not limited to, tree planting events, addressing safety concerns, education, and making recommendations to municipality.				4	
5. Certified municipal personnel, trained arborist, urban forester, and/or Department of Natural Resources (DNR) entity actively manages the urban forest. Businesses and residents are updated routinely on urban forestry matters. Information delivered via city website, paper, and social media.				4	
6. Trees are healthy and contribute to public health and wellness. Procedures are in place for the appropriate selection, diversity of tree species, proper spacing, planting depth, and/or monitoring and managing diseases and pests. Pertinent information is available and/or communicated to the public.				3	
7. Policies are implemented for the protection of historic trees located on public and private properties. Tree programs exist that spotlight and honor historic trees. Trees are labeled and/or indexed. Historic trees are highlighted in a brochure and/or tree walk.		N/S			
8. Programs in place to increase, support, promote, and/or protect trees. Examples include, but are not limited to, civic native tree nursery, repurposing fallen trees, managing destructive pests, and urban orchards.			2		

9. Trees are identified in public sites such as arboretums, parks, and/or cemeteries. Examples include, but are not limited to, identification labels, descriptive signage, QR codes, kiosks, maps, apps, and brochures.		N/S		
10. Policies are implemented, and education is available for the safe participation by volunteers and staff in planting trees on public properties. Ongoing urban forest tree care training and educational information and/or seminars available for residents and/or businesses.			3	
11. Effective communication of recommended trees is available to the public. Topics include "Right Tree in the Right Place," mulching, placement, spacing, and/or maintenance. Examples of communication include, but are not limited to, lectures, print, city website, library, City Hall, and social media.		N/S		
12. The municipality is a member of urban forestry organizations, participates in programs, and/or earns designations and awards. Examples include but are not limited to Tree City USA, Arbor Day Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, and regional or state agencies.			5	
13. Programs are in place to encourage, recruit, and/or engage volunteers of all ages and segments of the community's urban forestry. Volunteers from businesses, residents, schools, and/or organizations participate in the design, planting, and/or care of the urban forest.			2	

Urban Forestry Recommendations:

Bladensburg has made considerable progress in tree planting on a number of sites including city roads and shopping centers. As a result, they are now a Tree City USA. Congratulations! *Please highlight this information on your website as well as other social media so you can leverage for future tree planting activities!*

Trees alter climate by providing shade, filtering the air and releasing oxygen. Trees provide habitat for birds and insects and create a relaxing environment. Bladensburg hired out the planting of these new trees and as a result there were issues such as planting too deep and planting the trees crooked! Additionally, mulch was applied too close to the trunks. Kudos to your crews for attempting to correct as many of these plantings as possible. *We strongly suggest that you continue planting trees, but that you formally educate any company employees or volunteers (and post on soil media) as to correct tree planting methods. See [How to Plant a Tree: 14 Steps \(with Pictures\) - wikiHow](#) for ideas.*

As your tree planting activities continue, you will, again, need more volunteers. *We suggest creating an Adopt-a-tree program. Individuals, families or family members, select a tree, learn how to plant it, plant it, and put a permanent identification label on it as to common name, genus and species with a QR code that links to information about that specific tree. There are many companies that make these labels such as, but not limited to, A. M Leonard <https://www.amleo.com/c/display-signs>.*

On a separate label – indicate Planted and cared for by family or individual's name. They will then visit it, weed around it, and take notes on its progress at least 4 times a year (every season). They should let the Town Hall know if there are bugs or other issues. To do this planting activity you will again need to formally educate volunteers about tree planting safety as well as how to plant the tree.



Bladensburg is surrounded by beautiful, correctly pruned crape myrtle. However, overplanting of any species creates a 'banquet situation for pests. *We suggest you visit the link (below) from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources – Forest Service entitled Marylanders Plant Trees. This site identifies and describes many flowering trees and shrubs such as Fringe Tree and Dogwood that will diversify and enhance the forest experience in Bladensburg.*

<https://dnr.maryland.gov/forests/Pages/MarylandersPlantTrees/Recommended-Tree-List.aspx>

On the Bostwick House property there are at least 2 very old trees – a beautiful gingko by the house and an oak (picture). We suggest that these two trees and any others that may qualify be identified and preserved according to the Guidelines for historic tree preservation found at the following link.

<https://ncph.org/history-at-work/guidelines-for-historic-tree-preservation/>



ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES: Environmental and sustainable leadership, policies, plans, and programs for water, resource conservation; pollution control; trash, recycling, and reuse; climate change issues, green Infrastructure, and alternative energy resources.	Not Applicable (N/A)	Not Started (N/S) 0	In Progress 1-2	In Place 3-5	Surpasses 6-8
1. Comprehensive plan to identify, protect, restore, and/or maintain natural areas. Examples include, but are not limited to, removal of invasives, no-mow areas planted with native grasses and wildflowers, and succession tree plantings.				5	
2. A municipal environmental plan is accessible and reviewed annually. The plan promotes water conservation, alternative energy use, food security and sustainability, carbon reduction, and/or responsible land management.				5	
3. Environmental board and/or Green Team are available, active, and/or interact with the community. Examples include, but are not limited to, sustainability initiatives, events, education, and making recommendations to the municipality.				5	
4. Public awareness strategies regarding environmental issues are implemented and effective, such as the 3 Rs (reduce/recycle/reuse), Earth Day events, pollution prevention, "leave no trace," landfill reduction, and community clean-up days. Municipal employees and/or volunteers receive training on environmental initiatives and participate in events.				5	
5. Communication of environmental plan and ordinances is easily accessible. Topics include sustainability, water quality, recycling, composting, reducing pesticide use, and light pollution. Examples of communication avenues include, but are not limited to, lectures, print, city website, city hall, library, and social media.					6
6. Programs to educate, encourage, and/or expand the understanding of the role and importance of pollinators and ecological habitats are available for all ages. Programs are held routinely.					6
7. Green infrastructure policies and/or techniques are used throughout the community. Examples include, but are not limited to, naturalization, xeriscaping, rain gardens, suitable plant varieties to enhance such features as traffic calming, bank stabilization, stormwater run-off, and water management.				3	

8. Green infrastructure and natural asset inventory mapping are implemented. The inventory is regularly updated and includes climate, vegetation, soils, topography, wetlands, air, and/or water quality.			2	
9. Home and business energy audits are available and promoted. Incentives are available and communicated for items such as solar energy, water conservation, home appliance replacement, weatherization.		N/S		
10. Water conservation measures are used throughout the community. Examples include, but are not limited to, water-saving shower heads, full loads for dishwashers and washing machines, sink and toilet leaks, and lawn irrigation. Methods of water conservation are shared with the community through lectures, print, city website, library, City Hall, and/or social media.			4	
11. Management strategies implemented for the effective reuse/repurpose of buildings, structures, and/or land. The municipality has a reuse plan in place.				6
12. Collection is available for trash, recyclables, compostables, and food waste. Events and/or sites are offered for drop-off of hazardous, household, electronics, shredding and/or difficult-to-recycle items. Sites are available for year-round recycling.				7
13. Recycling and trash containers are available in public areas. Containers to address both recyclables and trash present themselves together. Labeling is consistent. Routine trash and recycle pickup are scheduled. Additional containers are available during special events. Events promote zero waste.				7
14. Reuse opportunities are offered. Clothing, books, household goods, resale shops, tool lending, durable medical equipment, and/or equipment repair initiatives are available for donations and/or purchase.				7
15. The municipality uses energy-efficient vehicles in its fleet for police, fire, public transit, and/or city employees. Options may include electric, fuel cell electric, plug in electric hybrid, compressed natural gas, and/or hybrid electric vehicles.			4	
16. Electric vehicle charging stations are located throughout the community. Charging stations are available to city, residential, and/or visitor vehicles. 240-volt home charging outlet installation incentive is available and promoted.				7
17. Mulch from renewable and/or sustainable sources is appropriately used by the municipality. Mulch is available for residential use.			1	

18. Educational programs for all ages are available and promote environmental initiatives such as rain barrels, backyard habitats, rain gardens, solitary bee hotels, xeriscaping, chemical reduction, water conservation, and green business practices.			5	
19. Youth organizations such as Scouts, Green Teams, schools, and 4H encourage involvement in environmental initiatives. Participants are recognized for their efforts and/or achievements. Efforts are communicated to the public through social media, newsletters, city website, and other methods.			3	
20. Programs are in place to encourage, recruit, and/or engage volunteers of all ages and segments of the community's environmental initiatives. Volunteers from businesses, residents, schools, and/or organizations participate in events, programs, boards, and promotions.				6
Totals:	Possible Points	Actual Points	Percent	
5. Environmental Initiatives	160	94	58.75%	

Environmental Initiatives Recommendations:

The town of Bladensburg has both a comprehensive plan and environment plan in place. Accordingly, a new bus shelter with a green roof is soon to be established. This is a great idea as many of the bus shelters or benches are located in sunny spots. *We encourage you to continue to install new bus shelters with green roofs. The initial planting and/or maintenance of the green roof can be a volunteer activity as well as the responsibility of the town. Shade sails to cool the area around the bus stop may also be considered. However, they would probably be temporary.*



It is clear that Bladensburg is serious about alternative energy sources as there are solar trash compactors, solar cells on buildings and light posts. We found no litter throughout the streets of Bladensburg! The labels on the trash compactors are great! We

recommend that more trash containers be placed around areas where people gather such as bike paths, bus stations and particularly around the front of the library.



Issues with rainwater and storm runoff have always been a problem for the Port cities. Kudos to Bladensburg as they create another green pavement area. *We encourage Bladensburg to continue these and other environmental efforts. In the process of dealing with these issues, creating a green infrastructure and natural asset inventory will help show progress. The physical location changes such as green pavement, rain gardens etc.*

can also be recorded as an overlay on the map of Bladensburg. This will provide a visual account of how the town is responding to changes in climate. This link may help start the thought process <https://insite.ipwea.org/green-infrastructure-the-next-frontier-in-asset-management/>.

While the Town of Bladensburg is showing great initiative in creating green infrastructure, this has not yet been translated to residents. *Programs and/or information (via website, social media) encouraging residents to use home devices and appliances that conserve water and how to add solar panels or weatherize a home should be started.*

CELEBRATING HERITAGE: Recognition, designation, protection, commemoration, and celebration of historical, cultural, natural, agricultural, and industrial resources.	Not Applicable (N/A)	Not Started (N/S)	In Progress 1-2	In Place 3-5	Surpasses 6-8
1. Historic Preservation, Historic Society, and/or Architectural Review Board are available, active, and/or interact with the community. Activities/responsibilities include, but are not limited to, review proposals for construction and rehabilitation, promote historic preservation incentives, submit recommendations to National Register, and designate local historic landmarks.					6
2. Historic Preservation ordinances are enacted and enforced. Ordinances effectively provide commercial and/or residential designation, guidance, and/or protection. Ordinances, policies, and restoration resources are available, easily accessible, and communicated.				5	
3. Historic districts, neighborhoods, structures, landmarks and/or objects are identified and/or labeled. Designation by such organizations as the Department of Archives and History and/or National Register are in place and/or in progress.					7
4. Cemeteries and monuments are in place and well maintained. Historical plaques are used and well maintained. Examples of plaque locations include, but are not limited to, buildings, sites, residences, districts, historical events and people, and battle sites.					7
5. Historical museums and/or interpretive displays are available and maintained. Events and educational opportunities are held for all age groups to utilize historic assets.					6
6. Archives, artifacts, community records, and/or oral histories are collected, safely stored, preserved, and/or catalogued.				5	
7. Volunteers and/or staff are trained to maintain historical sites, archives, records, collections, artifacts, structures, and/or landscapes. Historic educators are trained to effectively communicate a community's history.					6
8. Historic preservation incentives are available and promoted. Incentives may include but are not limited to tax credits, waived permit fees, eased setbacks, and/or rebates.					6

9. Programs are in place for the purchase, installation, and/or long-term maintenance of memorial features. Examples include, but are not limited to, memorial benches, trees, brick pathways, and lamp posts.			5	
10. Natural and agricultural areas are identified and protected. Designation by such organizations as The Nature Conservancy, the National Park Service, Department of Natural Resources are in place and/or in progress.				6
11. Parades, festivals, events, and/or programs are held to commemorate the community's heritage, culture, and/or diversity. Participants represent all segments of the community.				7
12. Programs and/or events are available to bring history to life. Examples include, but are not limited to, theater dramas, reenactments, and historic characters at public events.				6
13. Community heritage and/or cultural diversity are supported and promoted to all ages. Educational opportunities such as websites, publications, tours, interpretive signage, mobile apps, and/or programs.				6
14. Youth of all ages and abilities participate in historical programs. Examples include, but are not limited to, lectures, tours, events, reenactments, research, and reader's theater. Participants are recognized for their efforts and/or achievements.			5	
15. Programs are in place to encourage, recruit, and/or engage volunteers of all ages and segments of the community's heritage preservation efforts. Volunteer representatives from businesses, residents, schools, and/or organizations participate in events, programs, boards, and promotions.			5	
Totals:	Possible Points	Actual Points	Percent	
6. Celebrating Heritage	120	88	73.33%	

Celebrating Heritage Recommendations:

Originally known as Garrison's Landing, Bladensburg was renamed in honor of Thomas Bladensburg, the governor of Maryland, 1742-1747. Bladensburg's location on the Anacostia River was relevant for its growth. As a designated tobacco grading port, The Market Masters House became the headquarters of the tobacco inspectors. Now in private ownership it remains on the National Historic Register.



The Port O' Bladensburg was a busy commercial center until 1840 with ships trading in goods as well as enslaved people. It later became a route on the Underground Railroad where volunteers provided food, shelter and transportation to fleeing slaves. The success of the tobacco industry that grew the port also played a part in its closure. Heavily tilled soil from the nearby tobacco and wheat farms washed into the Anacostia River causing it to silt up. Efforts to dredge failed, making it impassable for the large trading ships.



Christopher Lowndes Commissioner and merchant of Bladensburg built Bostwick House. The House sits below Bostwick Hill and was built in 1746. Bostwick House is the oldest surviving structure in Bladensburg. Bostwick was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1975 and on its list of threatened properties in 2012. Purchased by the Town of Bladensburg in 1997, it is now placed under a perpetual preservation easement to ensure its protection. Working alongside the Aman Memorial Trust, plans for its future are being considered. The AMT is commended for its work in preserving and maintaining the historic buildings and monuments in and around Bladensburg. Our visit to Bostwick House was both fascinating and informative. The current amount to make it a usable facility for the community is \$3million; raising this amount will require considerable fund raising and grant support.

1. Grant & Funding opportunities

- . Maryland Historic Preservation Capital Grant Program-
- . Historic Preservation Non -Capital Grants- supporting surveys, planning, etc.
- . <https://mht.maryland.gov/Pages/funding/grants.aspx>

Both the following links relate to Naval history and preservation of Naval history. Bostwick House as home to Benjamin Stoddert first Secretary of the U.S. Navy may be relevant. This may have some merit.

<https://www.navfac.navy.mil/Divisions/Environmental/Products-and-Services/Cultural-Resources/>

<https://www.history.navy.mil/our-collections/conservation-branch.html>

2. Partners

Since 2008, the University of Maryland's School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation (MAPP) has been using Bostwick as a living classroom, though we are unaware of any formal financial or documented agreement. We believe in the collaborative potential of universities serving as living classrooms, especially when formal agreements, including financial arrangements, are in place.

Bostwick House is unique, with original features such as paints, wallpapers, bricks, and mortar. This offers an exceptional opportunity for the study of interior conservation and architecture, which should be fully utilized. We recommend reaching out to universities with strong historic preservation and archaeology programs, including—but not limited to—Howard, Tulane, the University of Pennsylvania, Cornell, Pratt, and others.

To expand these opportunities, note that the grounds to the front and side of the property fall under its historical curtilage. Universities with historical landscape programs could play a vital role in recovering and discovering the layout and structure of the 18th-century gardens – another rare and valuable research opportunity.

3. Community

<https://historicorps.org/>

- . Reach out the wider volunteer community when needing to work on renovation projects. There are trained volunteers looking to become involved in renovation work.*
- . Place a large sign informing the community and wider public about the 'Bostwick House Project'*
- . Host "Bostwick Restoration Open Days" to allow the public tours of the ongoing conservation work, Including buttress and porch restoration already completed,*

4. Event Based Fund Raising

- . Community events with an entrance fee, Film Nights, Concerts and outdoor theatre, be clear that these are fund raising events for Bostwick House*

On our tour of Bostwick, we walked through the more than seven acres of grounds, which remain virtually untouched and, alongside the house, are protected. We saw deer with young fawns, monarch butterflies, and numerous dragonflies and other pollinators. This green space is a haven for wildlife and a truly unique area found in no other Port Town. Mature trees, some over 300 years old, stand undisturbed.

This parcel of natural space, set within your busy urban town, needs to be carefully preserved as a public space that supports both the wildlife it shelters and the community at large. *We urge you to thoughtfully consider how to utilize this largely unchanged land, given its value as an irreplaceable seven-acre asset. We recommend an approach that complements the historic period of Bostwick House – envisioning a natural park that remains relatively unchanged, with walking trails and a restored historic garden footprint.*

We also suggest consulting Galen Gates, an AIB advisor with extensive experience in master site planning. At the Chicago Botanic Garden, he transformed a degraded 100-acre oak woodland into a natural treasure and recently led efforts to environmentally restore an 81-acre, nine-island lake system. www.GalenGates.com

We were thrilled to experience this natural and environmentally sensitive area, and we are confident that, under the careful guidance of Michelle Bailey-Hedgepeth and the Aman Memorial Trust, wise and forward-thinking decisions will be made.



At Bladensburg Balloon Park and Historic Monuments, the Battle of Bladensburg Memorial sits inside the balloon-shaped park that references the first unmanned balloon ascension in America. *Again, The Aman Memorial Trusts care of this site and the Memorial Park is fantastic and deserves recognition here.*

We did notice some litter around the Memorial and would suggest a trash can here, along with a sign reinforcing the 'no littering please' message. There are trash cans around so maybe a 'Theres A Bin Put It In' campaign might have a more direct impact.



The Memorial Grove Park that is dedicated to honoring the memory of those who served in the military has monuments to 9/11, Korea, and Vietnam, along with the iconic Peace Cross and a newly dedicated monument to Pearl Harbor Memorial. We saw the anchor that symbolizes strength and sacrifice, a vision brought to fruition by Ethan Mendoza, a resident of Bladensburg who secured funding and community support to replace the old plaque with a more fitting tribute.



The George Washington House, located on busy Baltimore Avenue, is in a condition that does not reflect the quality of Bladensburg's other historic buildings. Privately owned by the Anacostia Watershed Trust, it appears run-down and overgrown. *Our concern is that, with limited funds and staff, the AWT may be unable to maintain this historic property, leading to continued deterioration under its ownership.*

We understand that you have codes in place regarding property maintenance; however, with hundreds of cars passing daily, the current state of the building does not reinforce your historic values. *We believe an approach to purchase the property back may be the best course of action. Acting now could prevent further dilapidation and the resulting high renovation costs.*

Looking ahead, this building holds strong potential to serve as a museum, preserving its history while providing a valuable cultural asset for the community.

Overall Impression: Adequate and effective amenities are provided and in good condition. The community is welcoming, attractive, and leaves a positive impression.	Not Applicable (N/A)	Not Started (N/S)	In Progress 1-2	In Place 3-5	Surpasses 6-8
1. Signage ordinances are enacted and enforced. Ordinances address temporary stake signs, billboards, and/or permanent signs. Enforcement helps to reduce visual clutter and/or helps to enhance the community's identity.				5	
2. Ordinances are enacted and enforced to address issues such as overgrown lots, abandoned vehicles, unscreened dumpsters, public nuisances, unregulated garage sales, building facades, and/or empty storefronts windows. Ordinances are routinely reviewed and updated as needed.					6
3. Code enforcement/compliance officer is available. Violations are detected, investigated, and/or resolved. Code enforcement includes, but is not limited to, public health, safety, consumer protection, building standards, and land use.					7
4. Communication of ordinances is easily accessible. Examples of communication include, but are not limited to, lectures, print, city website, library, City Hall, social media, and calendar of events.					6
5. First impressions are positive in residential, business, and/or municipal areas. Properties, buildings, structures, grounds, decks, patios, and yards are neat and in order. Examples include, but are not limited to, lack of vandalism, graffiti, broken windows, peeling or faded paint, and rust. Programs exist and are effective to minimize graffiti, litter, and nuisance areas.					7
6. Community infrastructure is in good condition. Examples include, but are not limited to, roadways, road shoulders, curbs, corner pads, medians, sidewalks, railroad crossings, sewers, transformers, and/or utility poles.					6
7. Community amenities are in good condition. Examples include, but are not limited to, signs, site furnishings, public restrooms, water features, lamp posts, benches, bicycle racks, drinking fountains, trash and recycling receptacles, safe parking, proper lighting, crosswalks/pavement markings, containers, planters, and/or cigarette receptacles.				5	
8. Community is accessible to people of all abilities. Examples include, but are not limited to, public buildings, parking, sidewalks, public transportation, playgrounds, parks, sports fields, and trails.					6

9. Wayfinding signage is visible, attractive, and in appropriate locations throughout the community. Signage adequately lists directional information and/or areas of interest.				3	
10. Public art is located throughout the community. Features such as banners, murals, and/or statues are used, attractive, and effective.				6	
11. Year-round seasonal decorations are used in key areas. The decorations are well maintained and attractive. Examples include, but are not limited to, lighting, ornamental displays, wreaths, planters, luminaries, and displays in government buildings, residential homes, and storefronts.				4	
12. Pet waste policies are posted and/or enforced. Pet clean-up stations are available throughout the community. Stations are monitored and stocked.				6	
13. Volunteers participate in community improvement initiatives. Examples include, but are not limited to, Habitat for Humanity, home repair programs, disaster relief, and clean-up days.				6	
14. Programs are in place to encourage, recruit, and/or engage volunteers of all ages and segments of the community's overall impression. Volunteers from businesses, residents, schools, and/or organizations participate in events, programs, boards, and promotions.				7	
Totals:	Possible Points		Actual Points	Percent	
7. Overall Impression	112		80	71.42%	

Overall Impression Recommendations:



Driving into Bladensburg via the 57th Avenue corridor, we saw a community that is staying ahead of its challenges. There was no litter outside the high school, thanks to a successful litter campaign and the use of Big Belly trash cans. Newly planted trees were visible throughout the area, a testament to the efforts of Purnell Hall and his excellent team at Public Works. Hanging baskets adorned the lampposts alongside modern banners, a project led by Ray Jefferies. New photo-enforced stoplights have also improved safety at intersections.

57th Avenue was a pleasure to see. *However, we noticed that banners advertising apartments have strayed onto the curbs. We recommend ensuring they are returned inside the property boundaries, as your code stipulates, to prevent visual clutter along the road. Consider working with property owners to develop a "Sponsor a Hanging Basket" or "Sponsor a Banner" campaign. All beautification efforts here have a positive impact on the rental market and benefit property owners directly.*



We were fortunate because of the compact nature of Bladensburg to be on foot for a lot of the tour. We passed beautifully maintained properties with gardens full of flowers and produce.

You have codes in place and are not cautious in issuing them. Currently it appears that code enforcement sits within the Police Department. *We wonder if it makes more sense for this enforcement department to sit with the town administration and Public Works.*

We learned about addition of new green roof bus shelters on the corner of Annapolis and Edmonston Rd opposite the library. This is a great project that creates a shaded area to sit and includes a recharging phone station. *We observed littering here even though you have trash cans. We recommend you reinforce the 'Don't Be Bitter' litter campaign here or try a more direct 'Here's The Bin Put It In' campaign.*

On our tour you were happy to show us your frustrations. One area is the public use trash can area from nearby apartments.





If this is a permanent area, we suggest removing the fencing and constructing a block area. Ernest Maier may be interested in becoming a partner here as a dedication for their centenary business celebration as a lasting project in the community. This could become a community project to paint for next year's Juneteenth Paint and Unity Event. This would make a great collaboration.



The mural "Bladensburg Alive: Building the Future" celebrating 100 years of the Ernest Maier company in Bladensburg, colorfully depicts the company's shared history and the town's rich diversity, commissioned by Ernest Maier Co it brings color and art to Bladensburg.

Public art done well enhances the community. We would love to see more murals around town. We would suggest a shout out via your Facebook page and The Port e-Blast asking your residents what they would like to see and where they identify a possible site.

<https://www.facebook.com/Bladensburgmd/>

We heard of the annual calendar of celebrations that happen for the residents of Bladensburg. We loved the idea of turning the Town Hall parking lot into a pumpkin field for Halloween. *With your busy streets it would be fun to create a safe area for Trick or Treat for the kids and grown-up kids of the community. We suggest turning David C. Harrington Park into a Halloween Fest. It is in a perfect location and would concentrate the community in one area for the festivities.*



During our tour around Bostwick House we saw a collection of dioramas that depict historical events that took place in Bladensburg's history. These are currently unable to be viewed by the public. *We think that the diorama collection should be placed on loan to the library for safe keeping until a permanent place is found for them. The library could have a permanent exhibition for the community to be able to view this special collection.*



EVALUATION TOUR PREPARATION AND ACTIONS: Community's readiness prior to and the action during the Evaluation Tour including an informative Community Profile, preparedness prior to Advisors' arrival, and effective content during the Evaluation Tour. Succession plans are evident.	Not Applicable (N/A)	Unmet (U/M) 0	Met 1
1. Community contact was available for pre-visit meeting for introductions and discussion of preparations.			1
2. Community Profile was provided to Advisors at least two weeks prior to the first official tour date.			1
3. Community Profile includes contacts with emails and positions.			1
4. Community Profile from a returning community includes what is new and implemented from previous Advisors' recommendations (scored as Not Applicable for a new community).			1
5. Community Profile includes a map with tour boundaries and a daily itinerary.			1
6. Evaluation Tour provided a representative cross-section of the community.			1
7. Advisors met with elected/appointed municipal leaders and staff.			1
8. Advisors met with the business and non-profit community.			1
9. Advisors met with volunteers.		U/M	
10. Advisors met with the media (print, radio, tv, social media) and/or have been given media contact information.			1
11. Advisors were asked to give a presentation.		U/M	
12. A tour wrap-up session was conducted with a community representative.			1
13. Enough time was allotted for Advisors to work on the Evaluation Report in a quiet place with adequate Wi-Fi.			1
14. Succession plans are evident, and next year's chair is present and participating in the tour.			1
15. CN grant project(s) are reviewed (scored as Not Applicable for a community not receiving a CN grant).	N/A		
Totals:	Possible Points	Actual Points	Percent
8. Evaluation Tour Preparation and Actions	14	12	85.71%

Evaluation Tour Preparation and Actions Recommendations:

We had excellent communication with Bladensburg before our visit, and it felt as though we had already met you before we arrived. Thank you for ensuring we had everything we needed well in advance. Arrangements for our transportation and hotel reservations were clearly communicated. The patient and heavily pregnant Jessica Amaya waited for us despite our airport delays and whisked us to our hotel—thank you, Jessica. The welcome goodie bag filled with treats was also greatly appreciated.

We extend our thanks to Michelle Bailey-Hedgepeth for adapting our tour schedule and allowing us plenty of time to work. We enjoyed walking around the town to see all the progress achieved since last year's advisors' visit. The boat trip down the Anacostia River, with Chris from AWS as our guide, was fascinating. We also had the opportunity to meet with elected officials and administrative staff while enjoying the evening sunshine.

Although we didn't meet with the media, we encourage you to consider arranging interviews with local TV stations and newspapers when the advisors are in town. This is a valuable opportunity to highlight completed initiatives and upcoming projects, while also raising awareness and recruiting volunteers. We know Ray kept the community updated on social media throughout our visit, which was greatly appreciated.

We would also like to thank Deputy Chief Dickerson and his fellow police officers for a wonderful lunchtime conversation about the town's outstanding community policing policies and support programs. The E-bike demonstration was equally impressive.

Each year you participate in the AIB program offers an opportunity to expand your Community Profile document. *We recommend creating a master document with separate folders for each category. As the year progresses and projects are completed, add them to the appropriate folder.* This will make compiling next year's document much easier, as it can be challenging to recall every accomplishment from memory. *We also suggest asking AMT for assistance with the Celebrating Heritage section, as they have much of the information needed.* Sharing the workload in this way makes the process more efficient.

Special thanks go to Ray Jefferies for driving us and showing us so much of the town. We truly appreciate your efforts in arranging our transport, and your hard work on the Banner Program and the town's online presence is making a real difference.

Finally, we wish to thank Mayor Takisha James for hosting a wonderful wrap-up dinner with Michelle. We enjoyed sharing your hopes and ideas for the community. We believe that with Michelle's steady leadership and Mayor James' experience and insight, Bladensburg is in excellent hands.

Thank you again for showing us your community and everything that makes Bladensburg a great place to live and work.

DISCLAIMERS:

1. Communities are responsible for addressing the metrics in the Community Profile, Evaluation Tour Itinerary, and during the Evaluation Tour. Please note that the metric calculations contained herein are final, and each community is encouraged to focus on any changes during the following year's entry in the America in Bloom Level 3 program.
2. All information is given to the best of America in Bloom's knowledge and is believed to be accurate. Your conditions of use and application of recommendations and/or suggested products are beyond our control. There is no warranty expressed or implied regarding the accuracy of any given data or statements. America in Bloom specifically disclaims any responsibility or liability relating to the use of the recommendations and/or suggested products and shall under no circumstances whatsoever, be liable for any special, incidental, or consequential damages which may arise from such use.
3. Reference herein to any specific commercial products, processes, or service by trade named trademark manufacturer or otherwise does not necessarily constitute or imply its endorsement, recommendation or favoring by America in Bloom. The views and opinions of authors expressed herein shall not be used for advertising or product endorsement purposes.

2025 Community Recognitions

Community name/state: Bladensburg, Maryland

Recognized Criterion: Community Vitality

Hanging baskets and banners adorn lampposts, and newly planted trees and shrubs grow in parks and along streets adding to the urban canopy. The serene Memorial Park celebrates those who served, while the towering Peace Cross ensures we never forget the sacrifices that were made. The impressive Battle of Bladensburg Memorial sits within a balloon-shaped park referencing America's first unmanned balloon flight. It reminds visitors of the battle that played a large part in the history of Bladensburg and America. Four historic buildings remain from the past, cleverly depicted on a brightly colored mural celebrating the community's rich diversity and proud multicultural heritage. Vegetables flourish and bee hives hum at the EcoCity Farm neatly tucked alongside apartment blocks built where three blocks once stood. The ship-shaped library is a nod to the historic ships that brought trade to Bladensburg's once busy port on the Anacostia River. Full of books for all age, the library also has film screenings, cooking classes, and quiet rooms to use computers. Waterfront Park celebrates the community's history with story boards that recount the Battle of Bladensburg and the significance of the river. Grab an E-Bike ride a trail along the river or sit and listen to the summer concert series. For a one-mile square town there is so much that makes Bladensburg a community full of vitality and a great place to live and work.

Noteworthy Project or Initiative: Juneteenth Paint and Unity

To celebrate Juneteenth the community came together for a fun event to design and paint wooden benches that could be placed throughout the town where there was no other seating. Residents can find them under trees and on corners where they can rest and be reminded how these brightly colored benches celebrate unity and bring community art onto the streets of Bladensburg.