

# America in Bloom 2024 Evaluation Report



**Community:** Bladensburg, Maryland  
**Evaluation Dates:** June 3-4, 2024

**Lead Advisor:** Connie Baggett  
**Co-Advisor:**Carolynn Sears

*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	97.00	75.78%
Floral Impact	96.00	17.00	17.70%
Landscaped Areas	96.00	36.00	37.50%
Urban Forestry	104.00	12.00	11.53%
Environmental Initiatives	160.00	96.00	60.00%
Celebrating Heritage	120.00	75.00	62.50%
Overall Impression	112.00	72.00	64.28%
Evaluation Tour Preparation and Actions	12.00	11.00	91.66%
<b>Total Points and Percent</b>	<b>828.00</b>	<b>416.00</b>	<b>50.24%</b>
<b>Star Rating</b>	<b>6</b>		
<b>Community Involvement Total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>45.31%</b>

*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	Administrator	mbaileyhedgepeth@bladensburgmd.gov
Vito Tinelli	Treasurer	vtinelli@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):**

Welcome, Bladensburg, to America in Bloom! The first year is the hardest and you have laid the groundwork for your participation in the following years. Small and close to Washington, D.C., Bladensburg has easy access to the world and yet maintains the intimacy of a small town. Diversity defines the town of Bladensburg. According to the 2020 census, the population composition includes 53.49% Black or African American, 39.47% Hispanic or Latino, and 3.04% white. Its 9,657 residents live in one square mile located on the scenic Anacostia River blending traditions, languages, and experience. There are 3,819 housing units in Bladensburg. Of the occupied units, approximately 18% are owner occupied and 80% have renters in them.

[https://data.census.gov/profile/Bladensburg\\_town,\\_Maryland?g=160XX00US2407850](https://data.census.gov/profile/Bladensburg_town,_Maryland?g=160XX00US2407850)

Lying in the Atlantic coastal plain, characterized by gently rolling hills and valleys, and within Prince George's County, Bladensburg was formerly home to the highest population of enslaved Africans within the state of Maryland. During the Civil War hundreds of enslaved men joined the Union Army and fought for freedom against Confederate Forces. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century Prince George's County is the largest and highest-income black-majority county in the United States (Rowlands, D.W. (January 13, 2020). "[How the region's racial and ethnic demographics have changed since 1970](#)". D.C. Policy Center.). Understanding the local arc of history supports pride and confidence.

Niche.com, a company that analyzes ratings and reviews of neighborhoods, schools, and colleges, says this about Bladensburg: Living in Bladensburg offers residents an urban feel and most residents rent their homes. In Bladensburg there are a lot of parks. Many families live in Bladensburg and residents tend to be liberal. Niche evaluates Bladensburg with an overall C- grade saying its "rankings are calculated using dozens of public data sets and millions of reviews."

Among the vibrant communities across the country that make up America In Bloom and its movement to elevate cities, Bladensburg is certainly one of the most welcoming places. Bordered by the Anacostia River and a lush park on the riverside, your community has resources about which other towns can only dream. Local elected officials have a clear vision for growth and a top-notch staff well on the way to making a name for Bladensburg in the region.

The diversity and clear desire among residents and officials alike to make this community stand out in positive ways give Bladensburg an advantage in economic development efforts and in the ongoing challenge to improve quality of life. And given the assets of beauty, heritage and community spirit, Bladensburg is rich indeed. Congratulations on the decision to focus on the seven criteria outlined by America In Bloom. Your community is well on its way to achieving any goal set. Seldom does a community enjoy the heritage of fascinating history wound up in the birth of the United States, early history of Indigenous people, incredible natural resources in the Anacostia River and multiple park properties nearby and in Bladensburg itself.

America in Bloom asks the community to complete and submit its own community profile and sends advisors to the community to meet the people, see the community for themselves, and make recommendations. It was such a pleasure to visit your community, meet you and staff members, the Mayor and members of the council, the Chiefs of the Police and Fire Departments and other community members. The community spirit is palpable and so many good things—the new library, Waterfront Park—are in place or set to happen. Beautiful Bladensburg is heading in the right direction. We want to encourage your continued participation and look forward to seeing Bladensburg progress towards its goals. Thank you for participating in America in Bloom, for your generous and warm welcome to your community, and hospitality throughout our visit!

Bladensburg is focused on continuous improvement and has recently identified two major projects. The Town has created a solid foundation, and we anticipate it will surge forward in the coming years. Bladensburg is a busy community! Their calendar is packed with events. They have been able to distinguish themselves from surrounding communities and will continue to do so, focusing on the seven criteria of America in Bloom. Community cohesion is enhanced and fostered through communication, outreach, and community partnerships. Communication is achieved through an active Facebook page, website, newsletter, and banners. Strong community bonds within Bladensburg are palpable and almost guarantee success.

In general, we offer three specific recommendations:

1. *Begin now to revise the Community Profile as a living document. It is a useful, analytical tool for promoting your community and a reference for where you have been.*

*Add dates and details, such as quantities and locations of earlier and recently accomplished projects and improvements. Examples: number of window boxes and containers, when installed and where; number of solar panels, when installed, and where; number of rain gardens, when installed and where: etc. This information will help you and future advisors to objectively assess progress toward stated goals. Keep in mind that while it is helpful to know about future projects, only completed projects can be scored.*

*Ask what is missing from the Community Profile and work to include it in the profile.*

*Examples: Many events were found on the Bladensburg Facebook page that are not in the Community Profile, including recognitions of community workers and volunteers.*

*Each year you participate in AIB is an opportunity to work on your Community Profile. Add photos, awards received, future plans and comments made by residents and visitors. Use the Profile to attract new businesses, residents, and tourists to Bladensburg. Provide copies to City Council, real estate agents and post them to your website. It is a window to your community.*

2. *Focus on the two projects recently identified by the town: the project to restore and maintain Bostwick House and the campaign for a Beautiful Bladensburg. These projects will serve the community well.*

3. *Strengthen the floral and landscape displays throughout the community. From fostering social connections to promoting mental well-being, flower-based initiatives have been proven to create a positive impact on individuals and the communities. Pumping up your floral and landscape displays will significantly support the campaign for a Beautiful Bladensburg Historical Assets like the George Washington House, Bostwick House, Magruder House and Market Master House could be included on an annual tour that could help with fundraising for their restoration and preservation. Consider creating videos to highlight these places, signage, and maps to focus more attention on each. To have such assets in abundance is exceedingly rare, and promotion of these treasures can boost tourism and funding for the community in general. Consider creating social media sites for Historical Bladensburg so you can showcase these assets.*

4. *Create a Bladensburg In Bloom committee to address the seven criteria of Community Vitality, Floral Impact, Landscaped Areas, Urban Forestry, Environmental Initiatives, Celebrating Heritage, and Overall Impression. Dividing the duties makes the program much more successful in the long run.*

*5. The commitment to environmental initiatives is obvious and commendable. As plans progress to redesign stormwater infrastructure, add designed rain gardens for public areas and offer residents instructions on flood mitigation gardening techniques for residences. As more homes add rain gardens to their yards, stormwater impacts can be lessened. Earmark EPA funding opportunities at this website to include grants for ongoing environmental work: <https://www.epa.gov/green-infrastructure/green-infrastructure-funding-opportunities>.*

*6. Housing reflects charming cottage neighborhoods with varying styles of gardening to apartment complexes with multi-family units. Consider adding a seed/plant swap event for residents to help spark interest in floral and vegetable gardening.*

Creative approaches to policing, volunteer firefighter recruiting and partnerships in community gardening are only a few of the high points in your community. By reaching various groups in your community and knitting them together, your residents become a force to be reckoned with. Events in Bladensburg are expertly planned and promoted on social media. The activities are fun and well-supported-- further cementing those community ties and garnering support for projects. As you outline your plans, these are some of the foundational building blocks of a successful approach.

*7. As you set your budgets and agenda for coming years, be sure to include funding for training public works staff in various landscaping, forestry, and floral skills—perhaps join forces with master gardeners and your local Cooperative Extension Service. Many landscaping/gardening supply firms now include designers on staff to help provide a cohesive look throughout your community.*

*We offer additional recommendations in all seven America in Bloom areas in the following pages. It is suggested that the evaluation be circulated widely and discussed in small groups. Schedule a time to review specific recommendations with key staff members and groups and your America in Bloom committee.*

We were enchanted to get to know your town and hear all the lovely things people had to say about their hometown. Your journey with AIB is just beginning but the progress you are already making bodes well for your future success. Heartfelt thanks to Michelle Bailey Hedgepeth for her time, energy, and dedication to improving the community. We were honored to meet and talk with Bladensburg leadership, including Mayor Takisha James, Councilwomen Trina Brown, Kalisha Dixon, Marilyn Blount and Carrol McBryde and we expect to see tremendous growth in the coming years.

Connie Baggett and Carolynn Sears  
America In Bloom Advisors

<b>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.</b>	<b>Not Applicable (N/A)</b>	<b>Not Started (N/S) 0</b>	<b>In Progress 1-2</b>	<b>In Place 3-5</b>	<b>Surpasses 6-8</b>
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 is included. It is reviewed and routinely updated.				5	
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, churches, libraries, and town hall.					6

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.					7
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.					7
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	
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>Possible Points</b>		<b>Actual Points</b>		<b>Percent</b>
<b>1. Community Vitality</b>	128		97		75.78%

### **Community Vitality Recommendations:**

Community Vitality encompasses the policies, programs, facilities, and activities that lead to a vibrant community. We commend you on a remarkable list of events and programs available to your residents! With attention to civil rights history, walking audits and policies to address pedestrian hazards, social equity and racial healing, Bladensburg has tangible proof of impressive leadership.

Bladensburg has a variety of facilities contributing to passive and active forms of recreation and building community vitality. Located within blocks of one another are the Town House, Police Department and Fire Department with a complete ambulance service, a complement of fire apparatus, and live-in facilities for 15 to 24 members. Senior and Community Centers, parks, playgrounds, sports fields, and trails plus the Bladensburg Waterfront Park serve as places of activity and gathering.

Bladensburg knows how to have fun! This small community hosts a surprising number of events throughout the year. Town events engage residents of all ages and abilities, providing opportunities for social interaction, physical activity, and cultural enrichment. From January through December, vibrant is the word that describes Bladensburg as they celebrate MLK with a day of community service, Bladensburg Day, Juneteenth, July 4, and so much more. The Bladensburg Volunteer Fire Department hosts Bingo every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday to support the fire department.

The Bladensburg Police Department contributes significantly to the community by organizing several events monthly. A partner in the truest sense of the word, the BPD's commitment to community policing is evident. Community policing is a philosophy put into action. Organizational strategies support partnerships and problem solving to proactively address conditions that give rise to crime, social disorder, and fear of crime. The BPD's Community Action Team (CAT) focuses on community problem solving, building trust, and youth and seniors events such as National Night Out, Movies in the Park, Shop with a Cop, Ice Cream with a Cop, Coffee with a Cop, Back to School. Rock the Block and other programs.



During our visit, we attended the Citizens' Police Academy 2024 Graduation and witnessed the mutual respect and affection between the instructors, department, graduates, and other members of the audience.

Bladensburg, don't stop there! Here are a few recommendations:

*Borrow ideas from other communities for events, such as Rocky's (your PD's therapy dog) Bark in the Park day and encourage the Fire Department to offer free CPR and Stop-the-bleed training, to host an Open Firehouse day, or events like Touch a Fire Truck, or on a hot summer day, Cool off with a Firetruck. Consider remembering the first flight of a hot air balloon with free 'trips' on a tethered hot air balloon in the Bladensburg Balloon Park.*

*The Publick Playhouse, owned and operated by the Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation, is a cultural center offering a variety of music, dance, films, and other events, including theater camps and classes to the community. Located just outside of Bladensburg, the community should continue considerations to incorporate this asset. The Playhouse provides a variety of activities that nicely complement outdoor, recreational ones.*



Consider the installation of a Bike Repair Station in the Bladensburg Waterfront Park and Anacostia Trail System, near the trail head of the system linking Bladensburg to Washington, D.C. The addition of a bike repair center will be appreciated should a tire go flat or a repair be needed. Contact Rails to Trails <https://www.railstotrails.org> for possible grant funding.

Regarding the Community Profile, here are some recommendations:

Small communities rely on partnerships with other organizations and on a core of volunteers. In the Profile, be sure to acknowledge (1) any and all partnerships and (2) volunteer opportunities and (3) the many ways you already recognize what they contribute to community vitality. For example, your Facebook posts illustrate the Bladensburg Employee Awards Night, National Public Works Week and Council Meeting Recognition, National Police Week, and International Firefighters Day.

Highlight community volunteer opportunities, including the 100% volunteer Bladensburg Volunteer Fire Department, and develop programs focused on community improvement initiatives such as Habitat for Humanity and Repair Cafes (see Environmental Initiatives).

Your efforts at communication are admirable. Bladensburg keeps the community informed. In the Profile, include information about how you communicate with residents, e.g., webpage, Facebook, monthly newsletter, and anything else. The Facebook posts are lively and charming, especially when the post spotlights local residents.

For the Profile, review Bladensburg Facebook page and other sources for missing events such as MLK Day of Community Service, July 4, Growing Green with Pride, Caribbean Festival, Memorial Day, Cinco de Mayo, Waterfront Art Festival. Consider listing events by month. Feel free to omit a description of event when the name is fairly explanatory. Include a sampling of events, under separate headings, offered by the town's Parks and Recreation, the Police Department, and partners such as the Library, MNCPPC, and the Publick Playhouse.

In the Profile, indicate how many Community Centers are in Town. Consider making a new heading and breaking out Outdoor Spaces (with subheadings for 25 acres of active and 30 acres of passive recreational facilities, e.g. The David C. Harrington Community Park, Rosaina Baldi Park, 52<sup>nd</sup> Street Tot Lot, Bladensburg Balloon Park, and Bladensburg Community Center. Provide a full inventory of outdoor spaces available to the public: parks, playgrounds, fields, trails, and sites for water activities. Describe the facilities and activities available at Bladensburg Waterfront Park, including the Anacostia Trail System of miles of uninterrupted trails along the tributaries of the Anacostia river linking the Town to Washington, D.C.

Include activities for children and teens (e.g., BPD Explorer Program for 12-20 yr old; Eco-farm Beginning Farmer Training Program) and promote more.

With multiple agencies and events providing gatherings and goal-oriented projects, Bladensburg is off and running. Events cater to every segment of the population, with all age groups, ethnic groups, and a celebration of diversity in mind. Parks and playgrounds are maintained in good condition overall with ample opportunities for outdoor recreation.

Police have adopted the “not warriors—guardians” approach to policing and as a result the public has embraced

local law enforcement. The police chief and fire chief work together to address public safety issues with an outstanding attitude of true public servanthood.

*Consider capitalizing on the positive influence of officers through videos and posters promoting anti-litter campaigns. Add litter receptacles in areas where litter has become an issue—and include more public art wherever possible even if it is temporary chalk art. Get student groups involved, particularly any Girl or Boy Scout groups in your community.*

Kudos for all the hard work to provide these events and amenities to your residents! Of special note is the high-quality social media and public information/marketing for Bladensburg. Work on signage is evident and more improvements are in the works.

*Consider adding a splashpad at one of the central park areas. As one of the area's port towns, a water feature is a natural fit. A public gathering space that draws children throughout the summer is a sure-fire way to build consensus for future projects. Grant funding is available for these amenities, and maintenance and liability are low. Check for grant opportunities at: <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/lwcf/outdoor-recreation-legacy-partnership-grants-program.htm>.*

*Consider suggesting that partner organizations add shade sails to the outdoor seating area of the fantastic new library. This beautiful space would perfectly blend with the sailing ship theme with needed shade. A great fabric to try is Architec 400 fabric that offers a 12-year warranty.*

*Our final recommendation for Community Vitality is this: ask your residents and get buy-in for America In Bloom initiatives. Survey members of the community at least annually to see what their priorities are for Bladensburg, including events and amenities. Ideas and input will help drive your best projects forward and the hive mindset can often solve problems. Consider increasing the number of images published on social media of events as well as live videos. You will build attention and support for your priority projects quickly!*

<b>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.</b>	<b>Not Applicable (N/A)</b>	<b>Not Started (N/S) 0</b>	<b>In Progress 1-2</b>	<b>In Place 3-5</b>	<b>Surpasses 6-8</b>
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.			2		
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.			2		
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.			1		
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, dead-heading, 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.			2		
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.		N/S			
10. Efforts are in place to educate and raise public awareness of the importance of flowers in the landscape. Educational information about 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.			2		
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 for residents and/or businesses to get involved.		N/S			
<b>Totals:</b>		<b>Possible Points</b>	<b>Actual Points</b>	<b>Percent</b>	
<b>2. Floral Impact</b>		96	17	17.70%	

## Floral Impact Recommendations:

Flowers add beauty, joy, and serenity to our lives. Flowers can have a positive effect on individuals and transform a community. Use hanging baskets and containers of flowers as well as inground plantings to create inviting spaces for social interaction and connection and build a stronger, more resilient community. Flower power!



*A priority is to determine how many plantings and /or displays will need to be or can be watered. First consider the efficient use of the town's existing 500-gal tank and staff. Consider how much of the town can be watered with 500 gallons/ trip, how many trips a driver can make/day, etc. Alternatively, for each planting, evaluate the feasibility of different approaches, e.g., installation of irrigation lines, modifying a golf cart to hold a water tank, or contracting for services. A watering plan is critical for beautiful, blooming containers, hanging baskets, and landscaped areas.*

*When a plan for watering has been determined, plan and budget annual and perennial flowers for each season and in each location (procurement, scheduling, planting, and maintenance).*

*Use mass planting of bulbs for impact in the spring (daffodils in early spring, alliums in later spring). Organizing volunteers to plant bulbs in the fall requires little time, brings people of all ages together, and provides a time to share experiences and bond. Once planted, bulbs require a minimum amount of watering and care, and return year after year.*

*Bladensburg has many small shopping areas. Develop a planting plan for each small business area, one at a time, using large containers and/or hanging baskets. Consider how to create continuity within the business area and within the town. Perhaps a resident, cooperative extension, or nursery/ garden center would provide design services. With a drawing in hand, offer planted containers or baskets to the small businesses at cost plus a minimal planting fee. Be prepared with information about how flowers attract customers. To assure care throughout the growing season, request participants sign an agreement regarding the watering and weeding of the containers. To further motivate business owners throughout the growing season, post photos of participating businesses on the town's Facebook page.*

*Recruit the services of County extension, Master Gardeners, a local nursery/ garden center to provide training for public works staff regarding planting and care of plants. In general, the 2023 in-ground plantings were too sparse. For impact, the plants should be placed closer together.*

*Adopt-a-spot: For specific planted areas, review a summer management plan (watering, and weeding) and involve residents who agree to implement it in selecting and planting plants. Ask the County extension, Master Gardeners, and/or local nursery/ garden center to provide training for volunteers.*

*Approach the County Extension, Master Gardeners, local garden club, Library and Eco-farm to provide training and educational programs, workshops, and demonstrations about the importance of flowers in the landscape,*

*the selection and care of flowers for beautification and to support birds, butterflies, and other pollinators. Consider ways to bring programs into the community, to seasonal staff, volunteers, and residents.*

*Recruit and engage volunteers of all ages and segments of the community from businesses, residents, schools, and organizations in all phases of designing, planning, and care of floral and landscape displays. Enlist the help of the local library, Master Gardeners, County Extension, local garden center, state agencies, contractors, and Eco-farm.*

*If a group of volunteers seems particularly enthusiastic, encourage them to create pollinator garden(s) in public spaces and start a pollinator pathway initiative based upon the original work of Sarah Bergmann in Seattle, WA. Use Maryland native plants. For a full complement of resources, go to <https://www.pollinator-pathway.org/start-a-pathway>*

*In the Community Profile, be specific (#, location, installation date) about existing displays, containers, baskets, planters, window boxes, trellises, etc. and new installations. Add details about (1) town-organized clean-up days and (2) who is providing environmental education e.g., Eco-farm and Anacostia Watershed, etc.*



Flowers can change everything about the way people see their community and change the impression of people visiting. In study after study, the findings underline the positive impact of strategic plantings on retail sales, economic development project success, mental and physical health of residents and more. Bladensburg has already homed in on key areas: entry points and Town Hall. To be effective, displays must be large enough to draw attention with banks of color. Plantings that benefit pollinators are encouraged. Beautiful wildflower areas at the George Washington House could be a good guide for additional plantings for wildlife support at other area parks.

*Consider working with a floral landscape designer to come up with your signature displays annually. Spring and fall plantings (or décor) can be coordinated across your community so people begin to recognize the signature plantings for Bladensburg. Master gardeners, Cooperative Extension and some garden supply/nursery companies can work with you to find plantings that suit your budget and aesthetic with a good mix of annuals and perennials.*

*Consider adding a few fruit trees annually to the playground areas for residents to enjoy. Pears, figs, mulberries and pawpaws do well in Zone 7. Consult with Cooperative Extension on which varieties are best suited for your specific places with low maintenance in mind.*

*Consider implementing a medallion award for residents who consistently surpass expectations with their gardens and florals. It can be renewed annually and displayed at the front gate or mailbox inspiring others to reach for the recognition. These residents could be honored at a community event each year and on social media with a gift card to a local nursery supply store—perhaps one willing to sponsor the program.*

<b>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.</b>	<b>Not Applicable (N/A)</b>	<b>Not Started (N/S)</b> 0	<b>In Progress</b> 1-2	<b>In Place</b> 3-5	<b>Surpasses</b> 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 landscape provides streetscape appeal and reflects community value in landscaping. They are neat, attractive, and well maintained.				4	
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.					7
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.		N/S			
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>Possible Points</b>		<b>Actual Points</b>	<b>Percent</b>	
<b>3. Landscaped Areas</b>	96		36	37.50%	



### **Landscaped Areas Recommendations:**

Bladensburg has just begun to introduce landscape plantings into the community. In many ways, garden beds are easier to tend during the growing season than hanging baskets and containers. A substantial layer of mulch keeps weeding and watering to a minimum. Shrubs, perennials, and bulbs provide the framework with annuals adding blooms throughout the summer.

*Cultivate a team of volunteers for planning, planting, and maintaining landscaped areas. Perhaps invite them to a special tour of the Ecofarm and workshop on propagating native plants. Identify the leaders and recruit more volunteers to propagate plants for public spaces with the incentive of taking home a plant or two for themselves.*

*Start planning landscape plantings a few areas at a time. Establish a budget; ask your cooperative extension or a local nursery for complementary design services. If necessary, plant only a few areas at a time, but plant for impact. One advantage of in-ground plantings is that they require less watering than hanging baskets and containers. Plantings of annuals should be dense enough yet allow for growth.*

*Encourage the use of native plants.* Native plants are the indigenous terrestrial and aquatic species that have evolved and occur naturally in a particular region, ecosystem, and habitat. There are many benefits associated with gardening with native plants. For example, native plants require less water, fertilizer, and pesticides; provide habitat and food for local birds, insects, and other animals; are more resistant to local pests and diseases; are often more drought-tolerant than non-native species; promote healthy soil through natural processes; help maintain the genetic diversity of the region; and lower the risk of invasive plants taking over. For native plants of Maryland see <https://extension.umd.edu/resource/recommended-native-plants-maryland/>

*Several small native plant garden designs are available here [https://lgnc.org/pdfdocs/brandes\\_book.pdf](https://lgnc.org/pdfdocs/brandes_book.pdf). A large garden can be created by replicating small gardens several times.*

*Recruit volunteers living in the vicinity to adopt-a-garden. Potential sites would be the Bat Garden at VVV, the Edmonston swale, the Rain Garden at Town Hall, welcome gardens at entry points, etc. A garden requires regular weeding and a minimum of 1" of water a week. Plants in containers need more water, sometimes every day. The smaller the pot, the higher the water requirements. The addition of fertilizer will support more flowering.*

*At Town Hall, the Rain Garden needs additional plants appropriate to the task (see list below) and signage + QR code leading to a plant list.*

*At Edmonston Road, the site is too deep to be a rain garden and needs to be re-conceptualized. A typical rain garden is between four and eight inches deep. For now, Public Works should review plans for Edmundson Channel and discuss if creating a stone drainage swale parallel to the road would fit the plan. By filling the existing swale with 10-12" stone (rip rap) to within a foot of the break, the flow of water will be slowed and erosion prevented. Planting densely at the break in the slope will further control erosion and create an attractive feature. See list (below) of attractive plants suitable for the wet and dry conditions associated with rain gardens.*

## Rain Garden Plant List

<https://doee.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ddoe/publication/attachments/RaingardenHow2HomeownerUWExtension.pdf>

<https://ulstercountyny.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Rain%20Garden%20Plant%20List.pdf>

Consider a location for a “Pollinator Garden” or “Monarch Waystation.” Read about a pollinator pathway, connecting pollinator gardens and originally created by Sarah Bergmann in Seattle, WA. Research Monarch Waystation here <https://monarchwatch.org/waystations/>

*Discuss installing a Keyhole garden, perhaps in the 54<sup>th</sup> and Tawssig pocket park, with Eco-farm staff. The African keyhole garden was designed by CARE in Zimbabwe during the mid-1990s to encourage people to grow their own food. Traditionally the design relied on materials that were close at hand, such as bricks, stones, branches, hay, ashes, manure, and soil, to create an easy-care garden for disabled people. For a public park you will want to assemble materials aesthetically.*

*In the Profile, be specific (#, location, installation date) about existing Pet Stations, rain barrels and cisterns, etc. Add the Bat Garden at George Washington House which has an informative sign and QR code. Also, cross reference garden installations mentioned in environmental initiatives, e.g., rain gardens, pollinator garden(s) and pathway(s), Bat garden, Keyhole garden, and Monarch Waystations.*

*Approach the County Extension, Master Gardeners, local garden club, Library and Eco-farm to provide educational programs, workshops, and demonstrations regarding the planting and mulching of trees how to monitor and/or manage diseases and/or pests, Integrated Pest Management, creating bird-friendly and pollinator-friendly gardens, rain garden, using native plants, etc.*

Park areas in Bladensburg are well-kept and inviting with lush lawn areas and neatly trimmed shrubs. Kudos for accomplishing all you do with a very limited staff!

There are a few areas, however, where extra attention would get a lot of mileage. At the memorial area near the Peace Cross and other monuments, *consider setting some volunteer workdays to weed and mulch. With the high traffic volume, this could be your best marketing spot if it is well-maintained.*

Well-planned landscaping goals will transform your community rapidly!

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.				3	
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.			2		
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.		N/S			
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.			2		
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.			2		
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.		N/S			
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.			1		
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.		N/S			
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>Possible Points</b>	<b>Actual Points</b>	<b>Percent</b>		
<b>4. Urban Forestry</b>	104	12	11.53%		

## Urban Forestry Recommendations:

With the support of CKAR grant, 150 trees were planted in Bladensburg. With proper care, these trees will continue to grow and provide ecoservices to the community. Trees can slow down run-off and hold water. Trees help communities to stay cool and minimize heat islands. Properly sited trees can shade buildings and reduce energy use by up to 20%. In the summertime, trees reflect up to 70 to 90% of the sun's energy back into the atmosphere. On a hot day, the cool sheltering shade of a tree is noticeably and appreciated. Trees can reduce air temperatures by up to 10 degrees. Trees can improve air quality as well as capture and hold carbon dioxide, helping to address climate change.

*Writing and adopting a tree ordinance is time-consuming, but having one in place leads the way to other actions such as becoming a Tree City. The purpose of any tree ordinance is to establish a framework for the conservation and management of trees on public property, private property, or both. A tree ordinance reflects the values of a community and the worth of its urban forest. The ordinance encourages tree planting and the care of existing trees for beautification, air cooling and purification, noise abatement, property values, wildlife habitat and other benefits. As the following information about Key forestry issues in Maryland indicates, there will be opportunities for Bladensburg to increase its urban tree canopy in coming years.*

*Key issues in Maryland are growth and care of forests and habitats, managing forest health and fire, providing clean water, creating healthy, livable communities with trees and forests, and responding to climate change. Forest health and suppression efforts addressed spongy moth (formerly called gypsy moth), hemlock woolly adelgdi, and surveying for beech leaf disease, beech bark disease, walnut twig beetle, Phytophthora ramorum, elm zigzag sawfly, Sirex noctillio, southern pine beetle, and saltwater intrusion damage. The State is poised to provide tree equity to underserved communities through its partnership with Historically Black Colleges and Universities in Maryland, a new Maryland Urban and Community Forest Committee grant program, participation in tree equity training, and the new 5 Million Tree Initiative, which specifies that 500,000 trees are to be planted in urban, underserved areas by 2032.*

[https://apps.fs.usda.gov/nicportal/temp/pdf/sfs/naweb/md\\_brief.pdf](https://apps.fs.usda.gov/nicportal/temp/pdf/sfs/naweb/md_brief.pdf)

*Residents should be aware that [The Maryland Department of Natural Resources \(DNR\) Forest Service](#) protects trees along Maryland public road right of way through enforcement of the [Roadside Tree Law](#). Passed in 1914, this law and its regulations protect roadside trees by ensuring their proper care and protection adjacent to public utilities. Accordingly*

You may cut down or prune a roadside tree without a permit if the tree:

is uprooted or its branches are broken and are in contact with telephone, telegraph, electric power, or other wires carrying electricity, or if the tree (or its branches) is an immediate danger to person or property; or

stands within the right of way of a public road that has not been surfaced with stone, shell, gravel, concrete, brick, asphalt, or other improved surface material. You may do so only if the tree is cut down and removed by, or at the request of, the abutting landowner for the landowner's own use.

Except as provided above, a person shall obtain a permit to perform tree care to a roadside tree.

The person providing tree care under A (1) of this regulation must inform the [Maryland Department of Natural Resources Forest Service](#) by calling or writing within one week of the action taken. Inform the Forest Service of the place or general area where the action was taken, and, if necessary, propose a plan to upgrade the work to tree care standards. The Forest Service will approve, modify, or reject your proposed plan two weeks following an examination of the work.

### **Recommendations**

*Seek the assistance of your state forester, Donald Van Hassent, to develop a tree ordinance and apply to become a Tree City: [donald.vanhassent@maryland.gov](mailto:donald.vanhassent@maryland.gov)*

*Be alert to grant opportunities related to tree equity training, and the 5 Million Tree Initiative, which specifies that 500,000 trees are to be planted in urban, underserved areas by 2032.*

*Continue to participate in Urban Tree Canopy Project. Provide details about tree planting activities and workshops (dates, # participants, # of trees planted or given away, etc.)*

*Provide training for staff and volunteers on tree care from planting and watering new trees to mulching, pruning, and recognizing hazard trees which could cause harm to humans, cars, or buildings. Be advised that, in Maryland, anyone being paid to work on, evaluate, give advice about trees must be licensed through the [Maryland Department of Natural Resources Forest Service](#).*

*Approach the State Forester, County Extension, Library and Eco-farm to provide educational programs, workshops, and demonstrations on the benefits of urban trees and care of urban trees. Include information about the proper mulching of trees in an educational campaign.*

*Recruit help to organize a contest to identify heritage trees in Bladensburg, perhaps from the local library or a high school environmental studies class or club. Label the trees with brass QR codes. create a map, and/or a scavenger hunt using smart phone technology.*

<b>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.</b>	<b>Not Applicable (N/A)</b>	<b>Not Started (N/S) 0</b>	<b>In Progress 1-2</b>	<b>In Place 3-5</b>	<b>Surpasses 6-8</b>
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.					6
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.				4	
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.				5	
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.					7
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.				5	
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.			2		
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.		N/S			



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
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>Possible Points</b>	<b>Actual Points</b>	<b>Percent</b>	
<b>5. Environmental Initiatives</b>	160	96	60.00%	

## Environmental Initiatives Recommendations:

Bladensburg's efforts in regard to the environment are visible and commendable. On our first trip to the town, we travelled from the hotel to Town Hall in the town's hybrid van, parked in a parking lot paved with pervious blocks, beside several e/v charging stations including one high speed station, and under solar and wind powered lights! What an impressive introduction to the community!

It is important to prepare for the environmental impacts caused by climate change. "In the future, it is expected that climate change will affect Maryland in a variety of ways. More obvious impacts could include an increased risk for extreme events such as drought, storms, flooding, and forest fires; more heat-related stress; the spread of existing or new vector-borne disease; and increased erosion and inundation of low-lying areas along the State's shoreline and coast. Adaptation, together with mitigation, is necessary to address climate change." Read up at:



[http://climatechange.maryland.gov/site/assets/files/1454/chap8\\_adaptation\\_final\\_lowres.pdf](http://climatechange.maryland.gov/site/assets/files/1454/chap8_adaptation_final_lowres.pdf)

Recently how the depth and frequency of rainfall is increasing in Bladensburg was documented for the Residential Flood Barrier Initiative (2023 Prince George's County Department of Public Works & Transportation). A plan for flood barriers has been proposed for two locations in Bladensburg. *Cross reference Landscaped Areas for a swale at Edmonston Road.*

Small lifestyle changes we each can take accumulate significantly to reduce the causes of climate change and prepare for its impact. Simple things like conserving energy at home and work; carpooling, walking, or bicycling to work; and planting a tree or native plant make a real difference in our neighborhoods for both people and wildlife. Here are some recommendations:

Continue to participate in Growing Green with Pride, a county wide environmental initiative with beautification elements. For the Profile, track and provide details (dates of clean-up days & projects & # of participants, dates & # of participants at environmental education events).

Continue to participate in Sustainable Maryland and Partnership with U of Maryland's Environmental Finance Center

Keep stuff out of the waste stream. (1) Recruit leadership to set up an annual or semi-annual Repair Café. Repair Cafés operate by organizing volunteers to make free repairs of all kinds for fellow community members. Clothes, furniture, electrical appliances, bicycles, crockery, appliances, toys, jewelry—everyone has something that is broken and often can be repaired. A Repair Café is a temporary meeting place that “pops up” once or twice a year, where people bring together the tools and expertise and things to be fixed. Check out the website, visit a Repair Cafe in your area (and have a cup of coffee or tea) and start one yourself. It is an idea that grows, makes people happy, and keeps material goods out of the waste stream. The first one was held in Amsterdam in 2009 and now there is a network of over 2,500 Repair Cafes worldwide!

(2) Repair the Little Free Library/ Pantry at the corner of the 52<sup>nd</sup> Tot Lot and adding more Little Free Libraries/Pantries in different parts of the community.

(3) Consider establishing “a take it or leave it shed” for residents to informally swap useful items and/or (4) consider a town-wide tag sale to encourage residents to sell items that are still useful for a nominal amount rather than sending it to a landfill.

*Learn more about the native plants and wildlife of Bladensburg. Consider how to share and add information through the town’s webpage about the plants and wildlife in Bladensburg. Look into the Bioblitz conducted by Anacostia Watershed. A Bioblitz, also known as a biological inventory or biological census, attempts to capture an overall count of the plants, animals, fungi, and other organisms living in a place at a certain time. Species are identified and categorized into groups that have similar characteristics.*

*Encourage residents to join in citizen scientist efforts through (1) the use iNaturalist to take photos of birds, insects, other wildlife, and plants growing naturally in Bladensburg and post their observations, (2) organizing a community Christmas Bird Counts (Dec/Jan) <https://www.audubon.org/community-science/christmas-bird-count>, and (3) participating in Audubon’s Back yard Bird feeder count (Feb) <https://www.audubon.org/community-science/great-backyard-bird-count>.*

*Encourage Parks and Recreation, Anacostia Watershed, and other outdoor oriented organizations to organize bird walks or boating events, star-gazing events, etc. and post announcements to community web pages, Facebook, etc. The more people know about nature the more they will protect it.*

*Consider encouraging residents to install bluebird houses and create a bluebird trail through town. <https://www.sialis.org/startingatrail/>*

*Increase the educational programs that go to the people and strengthen the presence of youth groups and activities.*

*To the Profile, add a heading Environmental Resources and describe (1) Eco-farm (demonstration composting, vermicomposting, Young Farmer educational program, community gardens, etc. (2) Anacostia Watershed (volunteer opportunities, tree nursery, aquatic plant propagation, wetland restoration and cleanup, etc.)*

*Cross reference certain garden installations under landscape design and environmental initiatives, e.g., rain gardens, pollinator garden(s) and pathway(s), Bat garden, and Monarch Waystation*

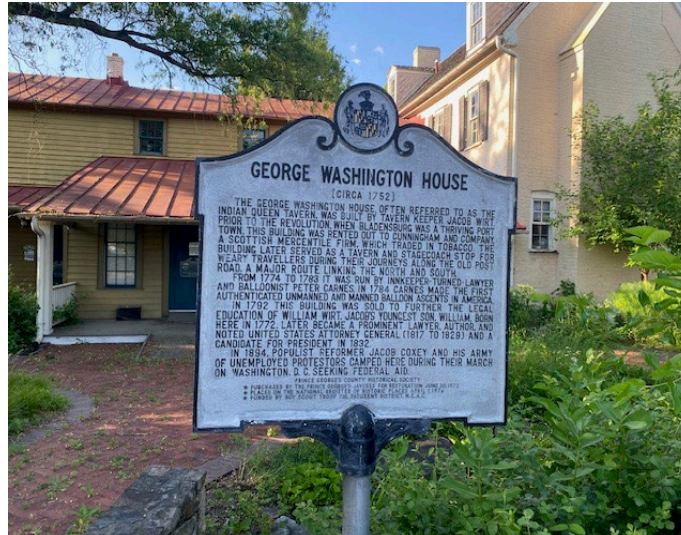
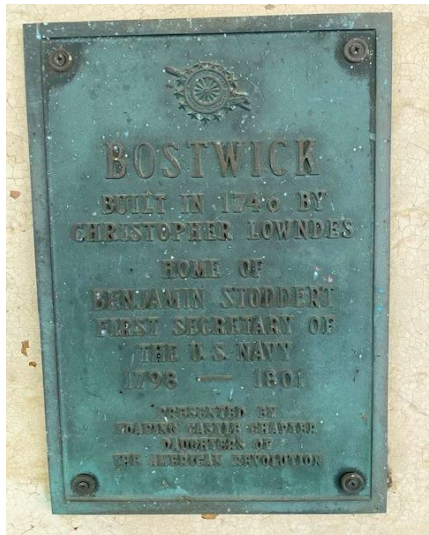
*In the Profile, provide examples of what Bladensburg has done to participate and remain in Maryland’s Port Towns Sustainable Community Program and provide details: how many solar panels, when and where; when and where 8 Big Belly trash cans installed; how many e/v stations and when/where they were installed. Provide more background information about the Town’s Green Team initiative.*

<b>CELEBRATING HERITAGE: Recognition, designation, protection, commemoration, and celebration of historical, cultural, natural, agricultural, and industrial resources.</b>	<b>Not Applicable (N/A)</b>	<b>Not Started (N/S) 0</b>	<b>In Progress 1-2</b>	<b>In Place 3-5</b>	<b>Surpasses 6-8</b>
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.				3	
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.				5	
6. Archives, artifacts, community records, and/or oral histories are collected, safely stored, preserved, and/or catalogued.			2		
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.				3	

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.			2		
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.				5	
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	
<b>Totals:</b>		<b>Possible Points</b>		<b>Actual Points</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>6. Celebrating Heritage</b>		120		75	62.50%

## Celebrating Heritage Recommendations:

Knowing local history is incredibly valuable because it allows individuals to develop a deeper understanding of the community they live in, its people, current issues, and challenges they face. Knowing local history can foster a sense of belonging and identity. Additionally, local history can provide practical benefits, such as informing decisions about preservation and development efforts.



The history of Bladensburg is long, includes trauma, and surely includes elements of the rarely told story about the fight of African Americans for freedom. The Town was established in 1742, after leading citizens saw the need for a port to cater to the tobacco growers of the Eastern Branch of the Potomac River. At the time, the mouth of the Anacostia was one mile wide and twenty to forty feet deep and Bladensburg one of the best protected ports in the region. As a bustling seaport, the Port O' Bladensburg was second only to Yorktown (Va) in the ocean tonnage handled for the colonies. In 1840, due to sedimentation from surrounding tobacco farms, the port had to close.

Many different kinds of commodities were shipped in and out of this port, including enslaved people, many of whom became forced labor on the area tobacco farms and plantations. Historical accounts and monuments often intentionally omit or downplay the horrors of the transatlantic slave trade and the life of African Americans on tobacco farms and plantations. By acknowledging and confronting this painful history, approaching the subject with empathy, respect, and a

commitment to accuracy, Bladensburg can address the effects of historical trauma with its residents and visitors and provide a model to the nation centered on healing and moving towards a more just and equitable society.

*Consider the role of public art in dealing with history, commemorative memorials, and historical trauma.*

*Intentional plantings along with public art can help to memorialize and honor Bladensburg history by acknowledging the deeply rooted inequities of tobacco farming and slavery. Art can make historic connections with the contemporary community to tell the full story of Bladensburg.*

For examples, look at [slaverymonuments.org](https://slaverymonuments.org), [slaveryandremembrance.org](https://slaveryandremembrance.org), <https://middlepassageproject.org/>, and a Md based project, from Absence to Presence <https://www.resite-studio.com/from-absence-to-presence>. Consider approaching artists for guidance such as Titus Kaphar, an “artist whose paintings, sculptures, and installations examine the history of representation by transforming its styles and mediums with formal innovations to emphasize the physicality and dimensionality of the canvas and materials themselves. His practice seeks to dislodge history from its status as the “past” in order to unearth its contemporary relevance.” from <https://www.kapharstudio.com> Norman Lee and Shane Albritton at RE:Site Studio explore notions of community, identity, and narrative in the context of public space. Drawing on a site’s cultural landscape, they create work that resonates with local or historical meaning, making unseen connections between themes and ideas. Their practice combines divergent aesthetics with interpretive design and fine art backgrounds. RE:site creates public art, memorials, and commemorative spaces that connect past and present by inviting the public to share in experiential moments, prompting collaborative viewership, curiosity, discovery, and dialogue. Another resource is Monument Lab based in Philadelphia <https://monumentlab.com/>.

[Via Partnership](https://www.viapartnership.com), a public art consulting practice, works with communities in the Washington metropolitan area including DC, Arlington, Alexandria and Frederick, MD to plan for and commission public art. Many of these projects have been focused on commemorating the histories of enslaved laborers and deep inequities in how our communities have developed. They would be happy to speak with you about how to consider and plan for commemorative projects. An example of their work is Queen City by Nekisha Durrett. <https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20240619-queen-city-the-lost-black-community-swallowed-up-by-the-pentagon>

Funds for these types of public art projects may be available through the Maryland State Arts Council or through an Our Town grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, among other grant opportunities.

*As the 250<sup>th</sup> Independence Day celebration approaches, prepare to include the story of those who have been marginalized throughout the history of the country and the documented story of the long struggle for freedom and rights for African Americans and how it has led the way for other human rights including women’s right, gay rights, immigrant, and disability rights.*

*Other recommendations are:*

*Request the ULI Technical Assistance Panel include amenities and aesthetics, floral designs under Site Integration for the Boswick house.*

*Feature a colonial kitchen garden at or in the vicinity of one of Bladensburg’s historic homes.*

*In the Profile, include other multicultural celebrations that have happened in Bladensburg; list and include other war memorials in town; Insert a heading for Aman Trust, background information, and the historic homes in their care.*

<b>OVERALL IMPRESSION: Adequate and effective amenities are provided and in good condition. The community is welcoming, attractive, and leaves a positive impression.</b>	<b>Not Applicable (N/A)</b>	<b>Not Started (N/S) 0</b>	<b>In Progress 1-2</b>	<b>In Place 3-5</b>	<b>Surpasses 6-8</b>
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, and social media.					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.				5	
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.			1		
10. Public art is located throughout the community. Features such as banners, murals, and/or statues are used, attractive, and effective.				3	
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.				3	
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
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>Possible Points</b>		<b>Actual Points</b>		<b>Percent</b>
<b>7. Overall Impression</b>	112		72		64.28%

Bladensburg is compact. Within one square mile are many small shopping areas, apartment building complexes, and charming, single-family homes. The streets are quiet and walkable. We enjoyed distributing AIB hang-tags to gardeners as we discovered a variety of gardens, some planted with an enthusiastic joie de viva and others with more order and control. Scattered throughout the community are historical buildings, monuments, and small parks, playgrounds.

Continue efforts with the Beautiful Bladensburg Campaign initiated in February 2024. Document outreach efforts regarding recycling, composting, and reducing waste (Facebook posts, newsletter articles, etc.). Track dates and # of participants at clean-up events. Refer to recommendations to reduce waste under Environmental Initiatives (Repair Café, Little Free Libraries, Take it or Leave it Shed, and/or Community-wide tag sales.)

Litter was identified as a concern and observed along Edmonston Road, a busy thoroughfare through town. Three potential sources of the observed litter were identified and *the reason for these recommendations:*  
*(1) Drivers passing through the area are a source of litter. Regarding this source of litter along Bladensburg's main thoroughfares, investigate how citizens can report littering in Maryland and post signs at the locations where most littering occurs. Perhaps citizens could use the Bladensburg App to report an offender.*



Knowing that someone might report a person a litterer might deter that person from pitching a piece of litter out a car window. For example, the following information was found in an internet search:

If you witness someone littering from a vehicle in Anne Arundel County, MD, you can report the incident by calling 911. If you wish to report

littering that has already occurred, or if you have information about littering which has already occurred call [\(410\) 222-8610](tel:4102228610)

(2) Litter seemed to accumulate at the bus stop. The addition of litter barrels at this stop and other bus stops might help prevent the accumulation of litter.

(3) Two halves of a broken chair were found on opposite sides of the street in the vicinity of the bus stop. The chair might have been placed at the bus stop to provide some comfort while waiting for a bus. Incorporating sturdy seating at the bus stop might provide seating, discourage random vandalism, and address litter, too.

(4) For busy thoroughfares, Bladensburg might also organize clean-up days, 'litter patrols' or adopt-a-block teams. Provide bright vests, gloves, and grabbers. Community grants are available at Keep America Beautiful <https://kab.org/apply-here/>

Litter did not appear to be a problem in the residential areas of town.



Consider the use of shade sails, particularly over the benches at the new library. Shade sails provide comfort while seeming particularly appropriate for a Port Town and the ship design of the library!

In the Profile, inventory community amenities listed under #7, e.g., public bathrooms, benches, bicycle racks, etc.

<b>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.</b>	<b>Not Applicable (N/A)</b>	<b>Unmet (U/M) 0</b>	<b>Met 1</b>
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.		U/M	
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).	N/A		
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.			1
10. Advisors met with the media.			1
11. Advisors were asked to give a presentation.			1
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
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>Possible Points</b>	<b>Actual Points</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>8. Evaluation Tour Preparation and Actions</b>	12	11	91.66%

**Evaluation Tour Preparation and Actions Recommendations:**

The two-day tour of Bladensburg was gracious, full, and informative. Our two main contacts, Shawn Rinehart, our driver who is responsible for Code Enforcement, and Michele Baily Hedgepeth, Town Administrator, were knowledgeable, enthusiastic, open, and honest about the community and able to answer all our questions. Our physical needs were carefully attended. The hotel was clean and comfortable (thank you for the swag bags we found there which were generous and filled with mementos of Bladensburg and region—hat, cup, water, cookies, and Old Bay spice seasoning!). Meals were thoughtfully provided to represent the traditions and diversity of the community. The work time allocated was valuable and the space in the new library very pleasant. The boat tour along the Anacostia was delightful and informative as was our visit to Bostwick House. The sum of the component parts of the itinerary gave us a very good picture of Bladensburg.

**Overall Impression Recommendations:**

*A few recommendations are: meet the deadline, provide a larger map, arrange for a meeting with representative business leaders, and arrange for a formal wrap-up.*

**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.

# 2024 Community Recognitions

**Community name/state:** Bladensburg, Maryland

## **Recognized Criterion: Community Vitality**

From the excellent marketing strategy, social media use, dozens of events and parks in each community, Bladensburg shines with welcoming hospitality. Diversity is a strength, and it is celebrated here just miles from our nation's capital. Through community outreach from public safety divisions, Bladensburg's residents find strength in each other and in their shared goals for the community. In their first year with America In Bloom, Bladensburg is already a force to be acknowledged!

**Noteworthy Project or Initiative:** Kudos to Bladensburg for recognizing the value of historic buildings in their community and working with non-profits to capitalize on the tourism these places can easily bring. The project to create a living history space at Bostwick House is commendable. Built in 1746 by English-born Christopher Lowndes, the house overlooked the port on the Anacostia River. Lowndes operated ship building and rope manufacturing businesses, but he also profited from the slave trade in Prince George's County. Bostwick House is a lasting reminder of the impact still resonating from centuries of enslaved people. It is commendable that Bladensburg is working to keep this home and the stories connected to it in the spotlight!

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