

# SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY APPLICATION

## I. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY APPLICANT INFORMATION

**Name of Sustainable Community:**

Mardela Springs Sustainable Community

**Name of Applicant:**

Town of Mardela Springs

**Applicant's Federal Identification Number:** 14-1850263

**Applicant's Street Address:** Town Hall, P.O. Box 81, 201 Station St., Mardela Springs, MD 21837 - 0081

**City:** Mardela Springs **County:** Wicomico **State:** MD **Zip Code:** 21837-0081

**Phone Number:** 410-546-9351 **Fax Number:** None **Web Address:** <http://mardelasprings.org/home>

### Sustainable Community Application Local Contact:

**Name:** E. Stanford Robinson **Title:** President, Town Commissioners

**Address:** Town Hall, P.O. Box 81, 201 Station St. City: Mardela Springs State: MD Zip Code: 21837

**Phone Number:** 410-546-9351 **Fax Number:** N/A **E-mail Address:** [deputymard@yahoo.com](mailto:deputymard@yahoo.com)

### Sustainable Community Contact for Application Status:

**Name:** Keith Lackie **Title:** Regional Planner

**Address:** Maryland Department of Planning, LES Regional Office, 201 Baptist Street, Suite 24

**City:** Salisbury **State:** MD **Zip Code:** 21801

**Phone Number:** 410-713-3464 **Fax Number:** 410-713-3470 **E-mail Address:**  
[keith.lackie@maryland.gov](mailto:keith.lackie@maryland.gov)

# SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY APPLICATION

## II. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY – General Information

### A. Proposed Sustainable Community Area(s):

- (1) Provide a description of SC Area boundaries. How did the applicant determine that these are the most appropriate boundaries for its target area? Describe the methodology for choosing this target area.

**The Sustainable community Boundary for the Town of Mardela Springs was selected by identifying the historically developed residential, commercial and institutional areas of the Town (Northwest of Barren Creek and excluding a large cemetery) all of which are located within a Municipal Priority Funding Area (Eligible for State Funds).**

- (2) Include the following in as an attachment: 1) PDF or JPEG of proposed Sustainable Communities map, 2) GIS shapefiles of proposed Sustainable Community boundary (mapped to the parcel boundary), 3) pictures of proposed Sustainable Community area. **Provided on CD-ROM**

- (3) Approximate number of acres within the SC Area: **132.1 Acres**

- (4) Existing federal, state or local designations: **None**

- Community Legacy Area  Designated Neighborhood Main Street Maple Street  
National Register Historic District Local Historic District  Arts & Entertainment District  
State Enterprise Zone Special Taxing District BRAC  State Designated TOD  
 Other(s):

- (5) Prior Revitalization Investments & Smart Growth:

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

**The Sustainable Community designation will facilitate a funding stream previously not available to the Town. The Town has recently submitted, to the Department of Natural Resources, a Waterway Improvement Grant application for major improvements to the Town boat launch facility. The overall costs for the boat ramp improvement is approximately \$260,000.00, with a total of \$99,000.00 available from the State, on an annual basis. Unused funds may be carried over to the following year. The reconstruction will encompass a new set of bulkheads, docks, and a new ramp at a more desirable angle to assist boat launching. In addition, a new fire hydrant will be installed to assist the Fire Department when responding to emergencies.**

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### B. Organizational Structure, Experience and Public Input:

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

**The Town Commissioners and Planning Commission will be responsible for the implementation of the Sustainable Community Action Plan. Town Staff will assist in the implementation, and the Maryland Department of Planning, Lower Eastern Shore Regional Staff will provide continuing technical assistance in furtherance of the Plan, including, but not limited to, assistance with drafting grant applications, grant management assistance, development of RFP's, assistance in the evaluation of consultant or contractor proposals, and assistance in program or project development and management. Other partners, as outlined within the Town of Mardela Springs Sustainable Community Action Plan may include Federal, State and Local Government Agencies, as well as NGO's and privately owned entities.**

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

**The Town Commissioners have overseen and implemented various projects involving the continued maintenance of the recreation fields, boat launching and fishing areas within the Town limits. Additionally, the Commissioners have worked with residents to further historic preservation and enhance community character. Through designation of a portion of the Town as a Sustainable Community, it is the Commissioners' intent to identify those areas that require focused efforts to sustain and improve the Town. More specifically, the Town desires to demolish several derelict/condemned buildings, which detract from the health, safety and general welfare of the Town, ultimately enabling reconstruction/redevelopment within the Sustainable Community. With respect to the Town's capacity to implement the SC Plan, gaining a Sustainable Community designation will provide for State funding opportunities previously not available to the Town, and the continued technical assistance of the Maryland Department of Planning, Lower Eastern Shore Regional Office will enable the Town to make reasonably paced, incremental steps, in furtherance of the SC Plan.**

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

**The Town Commissioners held two work sessions and one regularly scheduled Commissioners meeting, which were open to the public. In addition, the Commissioners held a Special Session Commission Meeting (with a detailed, topic specific, Public Notice), specifically to garner additional citizen input. Three (3) citizens, State Senator Eckardt and Delegate Adams attended this public meeting and provided supportive comments of the draft Action Plan.**

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**Finally, the Town Commissioners held a public meeting to approve the Sustainable Community Action. Three (3) citizens attended this Elected Official Meeting, and these residents expressed support of the Action Plan.**

**In addition to the Town Commissioners (with Town Staff and Maryland Department of Planning staff) State Senator Eckardt, Delegate Adams and Delegate Mautz actively participated in the Sustainable Community Action Plan development.**

**The Sustainable Community Action Plan is informed by the Town's 2011 Comprehensive Plan and the Town's 1998 Zoning Ordinance.**

# Sustainable Community Action Plan

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Town of Mardela Springs

Town of Mardela Springs, Wicomico County, MD

**Adopted on September 20, 2016**

# Environment

(Environmental strengths and weaknesses can include but are not limited to quality of land, water, air, watersheds, tree canopy, risk of sea level rise, carbon footprint, energy conservation, access to local foods, green infrastructure, stormwater infrastructure/management, parks, trails and recreation, recycling, water and sewer capacity, etc.)

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 34.3 acres of recreation and park opportunities</li> <li>● Barren Creek and navigable access to Nanticoke River                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Boat Ramp with relatively deep water (for small boats)</li> <li>○ Sufficient parking area for vehicles/trailers</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Mardela Springs' Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Program (All Critical Area classified as Limited Development Area)</li> <li>● Wetlands of Special State Concern along Barren Creek</li> <li>● Good recreational fishing opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Need better 'promotion' of canoe/kayak opportunities</li> <li>● While stormwater management system has 'adequate capacity' during storm events, however maintenance and repairs are problematic, due to budget constraints</li> </ul>

<u>Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures</u>	<u>Strategies</u>	<u>Implementation Partners</u>
<p>Based on the strengths and weaknesses identify the strengths on which you would like to build and the challenges you would like to address.</p> <p>What outcomes are you trying to achieve? Where/ in what area do you want those changes to happen?</p> <p><b>Progress Measure: Identify how you will know that you have achieved your outcome.</b></p>	<p>Identify strategies that will help your community to achieve each identified outcome to the left. If applicable, break down each strategy into specific action items that outline different steps of the strategy. Specify how you are planning to achieve the desired outcomes.</p>	<p>Which community stakeholders need to be involved to realize each action step and strategy? Name specific public and/or private sector partners.</p>
<p><u>Outcome 1:</u> Protect the quality of air, water, and land from adverse effects</p> <p>Progress Measures: Number of implementation measures started/completed; Number of trees planted</p>	<p><u>Strategy A:</u> Continue implementing Town's Critical Area Program to protect the aquatic habitat along Barren Creek and its tributaries</p> <p><u>Strategy B:</u> Preserve natural drainage ways and provide public access points for maintenance purposes.</p> <p><u>Strategy C:</u> Maintain open spaces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Plant and retain trees in open spaces</li> <li>- Obtain funding for improving open space and recreation opportunities</li> </ul>	<p>Maryland Department of Natural Resources - Fish, Heritage, and Wildlife Administration; Maryland Department of Planning</p>

# Economy

**(Economic strengths and weaknesses can include but are not limited to regional accessibility, business attraction/retention, health of the business district and commercial vacancies, workforce/employment and economic drivers, local policies/regulations, marketing, tourism, cultural and historic assets)**

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Newly established Dollar General within the proposed Sustainable Community boundary</li> <li>● Several 'locally owned and operated' small business within the proposed Sustainable Community boundary (e.g. Barren Creek Clocks, Pacific East Aquaculture (Coral), Antique Shops, Art Gallery, Adkins Historical Complex)</li> <li>● There are several businesses outside of the Municipality that provide economic benefit to the Town (e.g. Race Track, Scarborough Fair Country Store, Consignment Operations, Shore Paper Box)</li> <li>● Route 50 access provides economic stability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Town is in a fairly remote location</li> <li>● Weak market does not lend itself to new business establishment</li> <li>● Limited tax base weakens Town's ability to improve community conditions, thereby limits its effectiveness in attracting businesses</li> </ul>

<b>Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Implementation Partners</b>
<p><u>Outcome 1</u>: Encourage improved design of new commercial development as well as revitalizing existing commercial properties</p> <p>Progress Measures: Number of new parking spots; Location and square footage of new commercial development; proportion of mix-use in commercial areas</p>	<p><u>Strategy A</u>: Provide additional parking</p> <p><u>Strategy B</u>: Prohibit commercial strip development and focus on clustered economic development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Restrict retail development to primarily neighborhood-serving character</li> </ul> <p><u>Strategy C</u>: Size commercial development to ensure provision of appropriate public amenities as well as adequate parking</p> <p><u>Strategy D</u>: Allow limited residential use in commercial area</p>	<p>Maryland Department of Planning; Maryland Department of Housing</p>

# Transportation

(Transportation strengths and weaknesses can include access to transit corridors, pedestrian safety and accessibility/sidewalks, alternative modes of transportation, such as bikeways and trails, public transit, such as bus and rail, carpooling, proximity to transportation centers, parking, road conditions)

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Main routes provide access to other communities on Eastern Shore and beyond</li> <li>● Existing transportation system and amenities sufficient for residents</li> <li>● Relatively good public transit - provided by Maryland Upper Shore Transit (MUST)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Need for drainage improvements on local streets</li> <li>● Deteriorating curbs and gutters and incomplete sidewalk network</li> <li>● Existing sidewalks are not ADA compliant</li> <li>● Public Schools are out of municipality, and across U.S. Route 50 from Town (causing two significant issues)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ For Town residents that attend the schools, pedestrian access across U.S. Route 50 is problematic</li> <li>○ The official 'shelter' location for the school during emergency situations is located within the proposed Sustainable Community (at the Fire Hall). Emergency access to shelter for the faculty and students is problematic as it requires crossing U.S. Route 50 during emergencies</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies	Implementation Partners
<p><u>Outcome 1:</u> Maintain and enhance the safe and efficient movement of people and goods throughout Town and surrounding area</p> <p>Progress Measures: Number of repaired streets/ sidewalks/curb and gutter; New streets created; Implementation of sidewalk connecting policy</p>	<p><u>Strategy A:</u> Improve existing streetscape as well as regulating new development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Seek out funding programs to improve deteriorating curbs, streets</li> <li>- Maintain existing grid system within Town by requiring streets to connect with other streets whenever practical</li> <li>- All developments incorporate access and circulation for public service, actual paved street sections should maintain a human scale</li> <li>- New streets and sidewalks designed to fit with existing neighborhoods and facilitate circulation</li> </ul>	<p>State Highway Administration; Wicomico County Department of Public Works; Maryland Department of Planning; Maryland Department of Transportation; Maryland Upper Shore Transit (MUST); Delmarva Power (regarding relocation of power poles during sidewalk improvements, for ADA</p>

	<p><u>Strategy B:</u> Coordinate Town, County, State, and Federal efforts in providing an efficient transportation system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase participation in region-wide transit service programs</li> <li>- Implement transportation plan that considers applicable modes of transportation and land use/ transportation plans for areas outside Town</li> <li>- Plan for adequate rights-of-way taking into account existing and future development</li> </ul>	accessibly).
<p><u>Outcome 2:</u> Place an emphasis on facilitating pedestrian/ bicycle travel</p> <p>Progress Measures: Amount of new bike routes; Additional sidewalks within Community; Monitoring sidewalk maintenance</p>	<p><u>Strategy A:</u> Improve existing streets with sidewalks to better accommodate pedestrian/ bicycle movement and create new sidewalks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adoption of sidewalk ordinance that identifies responsible parties for sidewalk creation and repair</li> <li>- Require new development to include sidewalk creation</li> <li>- Establish improved linkages to County’s existing bikeways system</li> <li>- Create ADA compliant intersection improvements and sidewalks</li> </ul> <p><u>Strategy B:</u> Support bicyclists and pedestrians by providing safe and inviting routes and walkways between activity centers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accessibility of sidewalks to pedestrians by preventing overgrowth of vegetation or blockage by parked vehicles</li> </ul>	State Highway Administration; Wicomico County Department of Public Works; Maryland Planning Department; Maryland Department of Transportation

# Housing

(Housing strengths and weaknesses can include affordability, homeownership vs rental, housing stock diversity, housing condition and value, housing programs, foreclosures, residential vacancies, property values, home sale values)

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Rural, family-oriented residential community</li> <li>● Affordable housing opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Most significant issue is abandoned/condemned residential buildings               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ There are 11 structures that are abandoned/condemned which are beyond repair (structurally, or because of environmental health issues)</li> </ul> </li> <li>● There are several residential buildings that are structurally sound which are vacant (on market, but not being bought)</li> <li>● There are many residential structures that are in poor repair, and while not 'unsafe structures' are unsightly thereby affecting the character of the Town and value of adjacent/nearby properties</li> <li>● Residential properties are trending away from home ownership to absentee-landlord rental properties</li> </ul>

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies	Implementation Partners
<p><u>Outcome 1</u>: Protect residential areas from encroachment of incompatible uses</p>	<p><u>Strategy A</u>: Preserve the predominant single-family character of the Town</p>	<p>Town of Mardela Springs</p>
<p><u>Outcome 2</u>: Maintain the integrity of existing residential neighborhoods</p> <p>Progress Measure: New zoning code adopted</p>	<p><u>Strategy A</u>: Support safe and affordable housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adopt health and safety housing code for all housing units</li> </ul>	<p>Maryland Department of Housing; Maryland Department of Planning</p>
<p><u>Outcome 3</u>: Maintain and repair current housing stock</p> <p>Progress Measure: Number of facades repaired</p>	<p><u>Strategy A</u>: Create list of houses in state of disrepair</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Apply for residential facade improvement programs</li> <li>- Apply for demolition funding and promote redevelopment of newly vacant properties, post-demolition</li> </ul>	<p>Department of Planning; Department of Housing</p>

# Quality of Life

**(Strengths and weaknesses can include crime, socio-economic demographics, educational opportunities, museums, libraries, historic and cultural assets, civic amenities, faith-based organizations, economic health of households, sense of place, etc.)**

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Historical heritage of the Town                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Town located within Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area</li> <li>○ Town has a local Heritage Foundation</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Cherished quality of life, small town village character, pedestrian scale</li> <li>● Safe, close-knit community</li> <li>● Mardela Springs boat ramp and picnic area, ball park and recreation area, and basketball court</li> <li>● Volunteer Fire Department, including EMS (Town has 24/7 Coverage)</li> <li>● Barren Creek Heritage Museum</li> <li>● Post Office</li> <li>● Churches: The Wesleyan Church of Mardela Springs, First Baptist, Emmanuel United Methodist Church, and Barren Creek Presbyterian</li> <li>● Civic organizations: Westside Historical Society, Adkins Historical Museum Complex, Mardela Springs Volunteer Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary, and Masonic Lodge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● No public or private schools within corporate boundary                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ See Transportation Section of Action Plan for detail of Town concern relative to schools</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Lacking own police force (consider need for substation)                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ As with all communities on the Shore, the Town is experiencing issues related to crime (e.g. breaking and entering, drug use, vandalism, etc.) which may be mitigated by a more active police presence</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Lack of medical facilities (Closest emergency facilities in Salisbury)</li> </ul>

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies	Implementation Partners
<p><u>Outcome 1:</u> Preserve and protect the Town’s historic and cultural resources, and rural heritage</p> <p>Progress Measures: Adopted guiding principles; Amount of funds secured for staff and tourism opportunities</p>	<p><u>Strategy A:</u> Establish guiding principles to promote, protect, and enhance the historic and cultural resources that uniquely define the community.</p> <p><u>Strategy B:</u> Endorse and promote heritage and historical tourism opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pursue heritage tourism opportunities</li> <li>- Consider establishment of a Historic Preservation Program</li> <li>- Identify significant historic structures and sites</li> <li>- Seek grant funding and other incentives to maintain historic properties, buildings, and sites</li> </ul>	<p>Maryland Historical Trust; Maryland Department of Housing</p>

	<p><u>Strategy C:</u> Enhance Town gateway with appropriate signage and landscaping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Apply for Community Legacy funding for gateway and wayfinding signage</li> </ul>	
<p><u>Outcome 2:</u> Increase utilization of facilities</p> <p>Progress Measures: Number of new events held at facilities; Amount of funding received</p>	<p><u>Strategy A:</u> Renovation, or adaptive reuse, of older structures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Apply for grant and loan programs to improve existing facilities</li> </ul> <p><u>Strategy B:</u> Encourage use of public lands and buildings for a variety of public uses</p>	Town of Mardela Springs
<p><u>Outcome 3:</u> Provide access to health care opportunities</p> <p>Progress Measure: Scheduled visits of physician/health services in Mardela Springs</p>	<p><u>Strategy A:</u> Work with area physicians and/or County Health Department to schedule periodic clinics to provide health services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consider establishing a community health center for Mardela Springs/Sharptown/Hebron</li> <li>- Consider partnership with Peninsula Regional Medical Center to provide local periodic (quarterly?) wellness check services for Mardela Springs/Sharptown/Hebron</li> </ul>	Wicomico County Health Department; Peninsula Regional Medical Center

# Local Planning and Land Use

(Strengths and weaknesses in the local planning and land use subject area include but are not limited to zoning, land use, policies, taxes and fees, historical patterns of development, lot sizes and shapes, etc.)

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sufficient land area is within the proposed Sustainable Community boundary to provide excellent opportunities for Town revitalization.</li> <li>● The Town has a fairly current Comprehensive Plan (Adopted February 15, 2010)</li> <li>● Direct access to the proposed Sustainable Community from a major transportation system (U.S. Route 50)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Town Zoning Ordinance is fairly dated (Adopted October 20, 1998)</li> </ul>

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies	Implementation Partners
<p><u>Outcome 1:</u> Provide variety of open space areas, recreational facilities, protection of undevelopable natural areas of the Town</p>	<p><u>Strategy A:</u> Protection of areas from encroachment of incompatible uses and intensive development through land development regulations</p> <p><u>Strategy B:</u> New development should avoid sensitive areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Preservation of water quality</li> <li>- Prohibit residential development in areas with natural constraint</li> </ul> <p><u>Strategy C:</u> Designate open space areas and locations for recreational facilities</p>	<p>Outcome 3: Provide variety of open space areas, recreational facilities, protection of undevelopable natural areas of the Town</p>
<p><u>Outcome 2:</u> Preserve rural image and small town atmosphere</p> <p>Progress Measures: Implementation of land use regulations; Preservation of growth boundaries</p>	<p><u>Strategy A:</u> Update Zoning Ordinance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Town is in the process of updating the Zoning Ordinance, and commits to finishing the process in the near future.</li> </ul> <p><u>Strategy B:</u> Prevent sprawl development and instead encourage efficient use of land</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Only permit new development that is consistent with current level of services and compatible with existing character of the Town</li> <li>- New residential development shall not obstruct vehicular or pedestrian movements</li> </ul>	<p>Maryland Department of Planning; Town of Mardela Springs</p>

	<p><u>Strategy C</u>: Protection and maintenance of existing structures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Locate new residential development near services and amenities</li> <li>- Base residential density on availability of amenities and Services</li> </ul> <p><u>Strategy D</u>: Focus on infill development (medium density residential) as well as redevelopment</p>	
<p><u>Outcome 3</u>: Utilize town’s locational advantage at Route 50 for development to facilitate job growth</p> <p>Progress Measure: Number and location of new businesses</p>	<p><u>Strategy A</u>: Focus development on highway commercial areas directly adjacent to Route 50, direct access points to Route 50 should be discouraged</p> <p><u>Strategy B</u>: Clustered economic development instead of commercial strip development</p> <p><u>Strategy C</u>: Size commercial development to ensure provision of appropriate public amenities as well as adequate parking</p>	<p>Maryland Department of Planning</p>