

Sustainable Community Application 2015

I. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name of Sustainable Community:

Smith Island, Somerset County, Maryland

Name of Applicant:

County Commissioners of Somerset County, Maryland

Applicant's Federal Identification Number: 52-6001-020

Applicant's Street Address: 11916 Somerset Avenue, Room 111

City: Princess Anne **County:** Somerset **State:** MD **Zip Code:** 21853

Phone Number: (410) 651-0320 **Fax Number:** (410) 651-0366 **Web Address:**
www.somersetmd.us

Sustainable Community Application Local Contact:

Name: Gary Pusey **Title:** Somerset County Planning Director

Address: 11916 Somerset Avenue, Room 211 **City:** Princess Anne **State:** MD **Zip Code:** 21853

Phone Number: (410) 651-1424 **Fax Number:** (410) 651-2597 **E-mail Address:**
gpusey@somersetmd.us

Sustainable Community Contact for Application Status:

Name: Gary Pusey **Title:** Somerset County Planning Director

Address: 11916 Somerset Avenue, Room 211 **City:** Princess Anne **State:** MD **Zip Code:** 21853

Phone Number: (410) 651-1424 **Fax Number:** (651) 2597 **E-mail Address:**
gpusey@somersetmd.us

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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 Communities Boundary for Smith Island was selected by identifying the historically developed residential, commercial, and institutional areas of the Island, all of which are located within a Priority Funding Area.

- (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.

- (3) Approximate number of acres within the SC Area: **112.47 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?

Smith Island was able to benefit from the HUD Disaster Recovery Funds that were awarded to the State of Maryland. As a result, damaged homes on the Island were eligible to receive monies for repairs, and CDBG/DR infrastructure funds have been set aside for repair/replacement of the Rhodes Point Dock (\$400,000), as well as for a shoreline protection project for Rhodes Point (\$4.7 million), which will benefit greater Smith Island.

Somerset County (Smith Island) was also awarded funds (\$90,000) from the Departments of Housing and Community Development and Natural Resources to hire a consultant to create a Vision Plan for Smith Island. The goals and objectives

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of that Plan serve as the basis for this Sustainable Communities application. Currently, the County is in the process of adopting the Vision Plan as an addendum to the County's Comprehensive Plan. This Vision Plan is an important step for the Islanders to start to chart the course for the Island's future.

Funding has also been allocated (approx. \$8 million) to decommission the Tylerton wastewater treatment plant and construct a new and improved plant at Ewell that will meet all of the wastewater needs for the three villages that comprise Smith Island.

Historically, Smith Island has not been the recipient of grants specific to revitalization and Smart Growth. Somerset County is not a wealthy County, and as such, finds it difficult to budget for the needs of the mainland, much less the needs of the Island. Due to the fact that Smith Island can only be accessed via boat, logistically, it makes it much more difficult and expensive to undertake projects on the Island. As such, years of disinvestment have had a negative impact on the Island's infrastructure.

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 staff of the Somerset County Department of Technical and Community Services (Planning Department) will be responsible for the implementation of the Sustainable Communities Plan. The Planning Department will partner and collaborate with the Somerset County Economic Development Commission, the Somerset County Sanitary District Commission, the Somerset County Department of Recreation and Parks, the Somerset County Roads Department, and Somerset County Emergency Services, as well as Smith Island United, a grassroots, 501(c)(3) organization. Smith Island United was heavily involved in the development of the Vision Plan, as well as this Sustainable Communities application. Smith Island United has formed a Vision Plan Implementation Committee, with an appointed Implementation Coordinator, to seek out funding opportunities to implement the goals and objectives outlined in the Vision Plan. The Committee is comprised of Island residents, County employees, and representatives from the Maryland Departments of Housing, Planning, and Natural Resources.

- (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?

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The staff of the Somerset County Planning Department (and the various County Departments, in general) has a long and effective history of grant implementation. More recently, the Planning Department has been responsible for administering almost 25 million dollars in CDBG/DR funds associated with the impacts of Hurricane Sandy.

Smith Island United has a volunteer professional planner that has agreed to serve as the Implementation Coordinator for the Smith Island Vision Plan. The Implementation Coordinator has already applied for several grants on behalf of Smith Island United and hopes to continue the momentum generated by the community visioning process.

The strengths of the various County Departments lie in the fact that Somerset County has had to rely on grant funds for many years to help supplement its' budget to achieve their plans for growth, development, redevelopment, and revitalization. The County has professional staff capable of implementing this Sustainable Communities Plan. In addition, Smith Island United is well respected and supported, not only in the community, but regionally and nationally for its' grassroots effort to have the Island recognized for its' future potential. Smith Island United is well organized and its Implementation Committee and Implementation Coordinator can only help to augment the successful implementation of this Sustainable Communities 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 Islanders, as well as their federal, State, and local government partners, had direct input into the Sustainable Communities Action Plan as a result of the almost yearlong community visioning process associated with the development of the Vision Plan. Many Town Hall meetings were held on Smith Island over a several month period to gain direct input from the Island residents about the future of Smith Island. The ideas presented at those many meetings have been translated into the goals, opportunities, strategies and implementation measures outlined in the Vision Plan. The Sustainable Communities Action Plan is based directly on the language contained in the Vision Plan.

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CHECKLIST AND TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPLICANT: Somerset County Commissioners

NAME OF SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY: Smith Island, Somerset County, Maryland

Please review the checklist of attachments and furnish all of the attachments that are applicable. Contents of the notebook should be tabbed and organized as follows:

- ✓ **Tab #1 Sustainable Community Applicant Information**
- ✓ **TAB #2 - Sustainable Community General Information:** In addition to the narrative about the baseline information included in the Sustainable Communities application, include a hard copy of the of the proposed Sustainable Communities map in Tab 2.
- ✓ **TAB #3 – Sustainable Community Action Plan/Matrix**
- ✓ **TAB #4 – Local Support Resolution: (sample resolution on page 11) In addition to the local support resolution, please include any letters of support that demonstrate partner commitments to the implementation and/or oversight of the Sustainable Community Plan.**
- ✓ **TAB #5 – Signed Sustainable Community Application Disclosure Authorization and Certification (sample form on page 13)**
- ✓ **TAB #6 – CD-ROM:** The CD-ROM should include the following contents:
 - Map in pdf format of the proposed Sustainable Community area
 - **GIS shapefile of the proposed Sustainable Community boundaries and other GIS related data**, e.g., spreadsheet of detailed listing of parcels that form the project boundary. (If you have additional comments or questions about the GIS mapping requirements, please contact Brad Wolters, Senior GIS Specialist, Department of Housing and Community Development, Brad.Wolters@maryland.gov)
 - Pictures (jpeg format) of your Sustainable Community as it relates to your application

Sustainable Community Action Plan

Smith Island, MD

Submitted by Somerset County, MD

2/5/2016

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"> Location of the Island in the middle of the Chesapeake Bay offers easy access to crab and oyster habitats. Existing trails for kayaking, canoeing, bird-watching, and walking. Series of water wells provide drinking water in each village. State funding allocated to decommission Tylerton sewage treatment plant and establish an upgraded plant on Ewell that combines service to Tylerton, Ewell, and Rhodes Point. Unique habitats for aquatic, air, and land wildlife and plant species, including all of Smith Island and specifically Glen Martin Wildlife Refuge. Living Shoreline project on northern region of Smith Island. Ample space for solar and/or wind power for “off the grid” living. Environmental, place-based, and service-learning educational opportunities with new distance learning technologies at Ewell School, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, and Smith Island’s Watermen’s Apprenticeship Program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Habitat of crabs and oysters are damaged by erosion and polluted from adjacent land use. Rising sea water levels, coastal flooding, lack of storm surge protection. Shoreline erosion. Poor drainage ditch maintenance, which contributes to localized flooding. Large debris (including recyclable materials) needs to be removed from docks, crab shanties, burn piles and throughout the Island. Existing conditions of water wells needs to be assessed, funding allocated, and repairs/upgrades made as needed. 		
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures</u></p> <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>Progress Measure: Identify how you will know that you have achieved your outcome.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Strategies</u></p> <p>Identify strategies that will help your community to achieve each identified outcome to the left. If applicable, break down each strategy into specific action items that outline different steps of the strategy. Specify how you are planning to achieve the desired outcomes.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Implementation Partners</u></p> <p>Which community stakeholders need to be involved to realize each action step and strategy? Name specific public and/or private sector partners.</p>	
<p>Outcome 1: Reduce pollution in the Chesapeake Bay to increase crab, oyster, and fish stocks.</p> <p>Progress Measure: Amount of pollution prevented</p>	<p>Strategy A: Proceed with decommissioning of Tylerton sewage treatment plant and construction of new, combined sewage treatment plant.</p> <p>Strategy B: Work on educational efforts to prevent pollution of the Bay.</p> <p>Strategy C: Secure funding and government agreements to remove and recycle large and small debris from docks, shanties, water, and throughout Smith Island</p>	<p>Maryland Department of the Environment, Maryland Department of Planning, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Somerset County Planning</p>	

<p>and increase of seafood stock. Work with the Somerset County Sanitary District Commission and local, State, and federal governments to determine how to accurately measure progress for pollution reduction.</p> <p>Progress Measure: New and better functioning sewage treatment plant.</p> <p>Progress Measure: Large and small debris removed on a regular basis and recycled.</p>		<p>Department, Somerset County Public Works Department, Somerset County Sanitary District Commission, and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.</p>
<p>Outcome 2: Improve stormwater management.</p> <p>Progress Measure: Reduce the volume and increase the quality of stormwater runoff.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Develop a stormwater management plan to address runoff volume and quality.</p> <p>Strategy B: Improve the conditions of roadways and drainage ditches, particularly via native plantings and other environmentally friendly flood mitigation techniques, where feasible.</p>	<p>Maryland Department of the Environment, Maryland Department of Planning, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Somerset County Planning Department, Somerset County Public Works Department, and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.</p>
<p>Outcome 3: Protect the Island from flooding.</p> <p>Progress Measure: Number of feet of shoreline stabilization improvements installed.</p> <p>Progress Measure: Number of flood reduction/prevention projects implemented on the Island and outcome of such projects.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Complete the Living Shoreline project at Glen Martin Wildlife Refuge, and finalize a shoreline protection project/plan for Rhodes Point that preserves its bayside coves and beaches.</p> <p>Strategy B: Work to secure funding for Rhodes Point shoreline protection plan and implementation of project.</p> <p>Strategy C: Assess the current conditions of the road between Ewell and Rhodes Point to determine the cause(s) of the chronic flooding in this area and seek funding and/or support from the County to install corrective measures to resolve this ongoing issue.</p>	<p>US Army Corps of Engineers, Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, Maryland Department of the Environment, Maryland Department of Planning, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Somerset County Planning Department, Somerset County Public Works Department, and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.</p>
<p>Outcome 4: Access to nature via enhanced trail system and new trails for kayaks, canoes, walking, birdwatching, etc.</p> <p>Progress Measure: Number, location, signage, length, and usage of new trails.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Enhance current kayak, canoe, walking and birdwatching trails and establish new ones.</p> <p>Strategy B: Develop and maintain open space network to enhance community resiliency for tidal and stormwater flooding and storm surge protection. (DNR addition)</p> <p>Strategy C: Recruit nature enthusiasts and boaters to enhance, establish, and utilize the trail system.</p>	<p>Maryland Heritage Areas Authority, Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Council, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Chesapeake Conservancy, and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.</p>

<p>Outcome 5: Progress toward energy self-sufficiency for residential, commercial, and public properties.</p> <p>Progress Measure: Percent or number of homes, businesses, and public properties powered by solar and/or wind energy at standard, subsidized, or pro bono rates.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Explore funding opportunities for green energy.</p> <p>Strategy B: Assess viable land, homes, and businesses to incorporate solar, wind, or other "off-the-grid" techniques to address the power needs of the Island.</p>	<p>Maryland Department of the Environment, Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Maryland Department of Planning, Somerset County Department of Planning, and the US Department of Energy.</p>
<h2 style="margin: 0;">Economy</h2> <p style="margin: 0;">(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)</p>		
<h3 style="margin: 0;">Strengths</h3>	<h3 style="margin: 0;">Weaknesses</h3>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Established set of kayak and canoe trails, and an annual birding event in April. ● Environment and ecology attract tourists interested in ecotourism; activities include birding, kayaking, canoeing, sailing, hunting, and fishing. ● One-of-a-kind experience, window into what it is like to live on a Chesapeake Bay island with a rich history and watermen's culture. ● Smith Island Cakes, the official Maryland State Dessert. ● Well established crabbing, oystering, eeling, and fishing industry with need for labor. ● Entrepreneurial opportunities for restaurants, small businesses (aquaculture, service, tourism, educational, etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Declining number of watermen to sustain and grow industry which has been Island's mainstay. ● Passenger boat service from Crisfield limited and sometimes unpredictable; no regularly scheduled public ferry service between Ewell and Tylerton. ● Limited attractions and activities for tourists to enjoy on Island. ● Lack of outdoor public space, such as a beach, park, or square; difficult for tourists to find a place to relax. ● Limited hours of local restaurants can make it difficult for tourists to find a place to eat in the mornings or evenings. ● Limited dockage for tourists who want to visit in their own boats and the dock and shanty system is in dire need of repair. ● Lack of advertising in Crisfield and on the mainland and need for tourism and wayfinding signage. ● Debris, unkempt grounds, and open ditches in some places can give an unfavorable impression to visitors; mosquitoes, flies, and bugs in warmer months. 	

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Help tourists access Smith Island's tourism opportunities.</p> <p>Progress Measure: Increased tourist traffic on Smith Island (greater demand for boat rides to and from Island, number of bookings of tours and packages, stays at B and B's and vacation house rentals, new signage, website views).</p>	<p>Strategy A: Conduct survey of existing services, businesses, and historical or cultural sites on the Island.</p> <p>Strategy B: Somerset County Office of Tourism or Maryland DNR (i.e. kayak/canoe trails) could compile and publish a "Guide to Tourist Opportunities on Smith Island," both available online and printed, and could include postings on social media.</p> <p>Strategy C: Create tour packages that bundle multiple, diverse activities and services (e.g. ferry service, lodging, walking tour, waterman tour, crab steaming and picking tutorial, etc.) to create "all inclusive" packages.</p> <p>Strategy D: Establish a robust online presence for tourism opportunities and advance on-line ticketing/booking; hire a professional to enhance the Island's online presence.</p> <p>Strategy E: Collaborate with other communities (i.e. Crisfield, Tangier, etc.) for marketing, event planning, fundraising, etc.</p>	<p>Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Maryland Office of Tourism Development, Somerset County Tourism Office, Somerset County Planning Department, Smith Island Cultural Center, Lower Eastern Shore, Heritage Council, Sultana Education Foundation, and other island and coastal communities.</p>
<p>Outcome 2: Increase services or amenities that support or "wrap around" the tourist experience on Smith Island.</p> <p>Progress Measure: Greater number of bed and breakfasts, extended opening hours of restaurants, installation of tourism signage (i.e. for public bathrooms, public docks, trails, historical sites, etc.).</p>	<p>Strategy A: Increase access to dining opportunities later in the day to encourage longer stays and greater local spending from visitors.</p> <p>Strategy B: Provide more visible access to basic amenities like restrooms, shaded areas with benches, and camping or cookout areas.</p> <p>Strategy C: Improve access to the Island by boat and the ability to move between villages.</p> <p>Strategy D: Improve coordination and communication among different service providers on the Island (e.g. the boat captains, lodging, tour operators, restaurants and stores, etc.).</p>	<p>Somerset County Tourism Office, Somerset County Planning Department, Smith Island Cultural Center, and the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Council.</p>
<p>Outcome 3: Create the best first impression of Smith Island for visitors.</p> <p>Progress Measure: Conduct surveys among tourists about visiting experience in order to determine customer satisfaction/recommendations.</p> <p>Progress Measure: Number and location of new tourism signs.</p> <p>Progress Measure: Volume of debris removed and recycled.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Develop a more formal maintenance plan for infrastructure to ensure the Island makes the best possible visible impression on visitors.</p> <p>Strategy B: Design improvements to the boardwalk, marsh area, and streetscape surrounding the Cultural Center in Ewell.</p> <p>Strategy C: Identify people, such as Cultural Center staff and other residents, who can serve as greeters for visitors.</p> <p>Strategy D: Develop a community-driven plan for addressing trash and debris clean-up and maintenance of untended properties.</p> <p>Strategy E: Increase amount of site-specific signs to inform tourists about the history of the Island and specific locations.</p>	<p>Somerset County Tourism Office, Somerset County Planning Department, Somerset County Public Works Department, Smith Island Cultural Center, and the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Council.</p>

<p>Outcome 4: Provide additional and easily accessible tourist opportunities that play to the Island's physical and cultural strengths.</p> <p>Progress Measure: Implementation of tourist experience directly connected to Smith Island culture and history (heritage tours, etc.).</p>	<p>Strategy A: Consider watermen heritage tours or similar opportunities. Expand tourism opportunities around unique cultural strengths, such as crab shedding operations, the crab picking co-op, and boat building and repairs.</p> <p>Strategy B: Expand access in public spaces to eco-tourism activities such as kayaking and bird watching, along with opportunities to access remote points (i.e., beaches, points).</p> <p>Strategy C: Collaborate with the Cultural Center to create a walking tour, including a map and/or audio guide that explains history of sights on Smith Island.</p> <p>Strategy D: Investigate boat repair internships to provide a paid-for experience to learn more about boat building and repair.</p>	<p>Somerset County Tourism Office, Smith Island Cultural Center and the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Council.</p>
<p>Outcome 5: Preserve, diversify and expand local watermen culture to sustain their livelihood on Smith Island.</p> <p>Progress Measure: Greater amount of Tidal Fishing Licenses (TFL) granted by the State of Maryland to Smith Island watermen, improvements to watermen facilities, and implementation of training program for Watermen's Heritage Tour Program.</p> <p>Progress Measure: Smith Island Watermen's Apprenticeship Program (SIWAP) business plan drafted, funding secured, and number of watermen and apprentices participating in inaugural and subsequent classes.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Expand opportunities for new watermen to enter the trade by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing recommendations for increasing licenses (TFL's), training, and support for new and current watermen. - Increasing flexibility in obtaining TFL's exclusively for Smith Island. - Tying a TFL to the purchase of an affordable home on the Island, with the provision that the TFL would stay with resident if they lived 5-10 years on Island. <p>- Drafting Smith Island Watermen's Apprenticeship Program Business Plan and recruit participants.</p> <p>- Providing on-site Captains Licensing classes and offer scholarships.</p> <p>Strategy B: Increase opportunities for current watermen to supplement and diversify their income, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investigating training and other support needed to start a viable Watermen's Heritage Tour Program leaving from Smith Island. - Investigating opportunities to expand aquaculture; learn more about costs and benefits from existing operations in the region. - Developing a plan for increased facilities for waterman, including dock space in Ewell and crab shanty cooperatives. - Develop one new event around the watermen culture to attract visitors (e.g. a Chesapeake Bay Watermen's Festival). - Expand machine services at the boat yard in Rhodes Point to allow more boat repairs locally. 	<p>Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Maryland Fisheries Advisory Committee, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Chesapeake Conservancy, Coastal Heritage Alliance, Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore, Maryland Watermen's Association, Maine Lobster Apprenticeship Program, Future Harvest Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture, Island Institute, 3B's Captains School, MARBIDCO, Rural Maryland Council, and the University of Maryland Extension Service.</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

- Low number of automobiles, invites cyclist and pedestrian experience.
- Mostly golf carts as local transport.
- Only 3 miles of roads to maintain.
- Two ferries and captains run daily (sometimes twice daily) round trips for Islanders and tourists from Crisfield to Ewell/Tylerton. There's also a daily mail boat, school boat, and various tour boats for day trippers.

Weaknesses

- Passenger boat service from Crisfield can be limited and sometimes unpredictable.
- Lack of public boat and ferry service between Ewell and Tylerton.
- Limited dockage for tourists who want to visit in their own boats and no public information about where to dock, fees, depth of water at docks, etc.
- Flooding of the road between Ewell and Rhodes Point.

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Increase access to the Island by boat and the ability to move between villages.</p> <p>Progress Measure: Consistent and reliable number of roundtrip rides daily from Crisfield to Ewell and Tylerton; and between Ewell and Tylerton.</p> <p>Progress Measure: Affordable, consistent and publicly posted fares for passengers (lower for residents), as well as for luggage and freight.</p> <p>Progress Measure: Advanced booking available via on-line and phone.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Create a rotational system among the ferry captains for supplemental service (i.e., evening runs).</p> <p>Strategy B: Explore creating a ferry cooperative to share the proceeds of all ticket sales.</p> <p>Strategy C: Explore/study the feasibility of the creation of a walking/biking bridge between Tylerton and Ewell.</p> <p>Strategy D: Develop a Community Benefits Agreement with Captains that addresses schedules, fares, signage, bookings, etc., that are consistent practices and fair to all.</p> <p>Strategy E: Submit a grant proposal to Maryland Transit Administration to conduct a Transportation Feasibility Study.</p> <p>Strategy F: Engage local, State, and federal Elected Officials and others on the Transportation Committee about investment in a Smith Island ferry system.</p>	<p>Maryland Transit Administration, Maryland Department of Transportation, Somerset County Tourism Office, Somerset County Planning Department, Maryland Department of Planning, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, and federal and State House and Senate leaders.</p>
<p>Outcome 2: Increase facilities for watermen.</p> <p>Progress Measure: Number of boat repairs locally.</p> <p>Progress Measure: Number of boats or ferry dockings.</p> <p>Progress measure: Increase and/or improve shanties, docks and piers for watermen.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Develop public dock space in Ewell, and Tylerton, clarifying fees, length of dock time, signage, contact information, etc.</p> <p>Strategy B: Expand machine services at the boat yard in Rhodes Point to allow more boat repairs locally.</p> <p>Strategy C: Seek funding sources to assist watermen in improving and/or expanding upon their operational facilities (shanties, docks, piers, etc.).</p>	<p>Maryland Transit Administration, Somerset County Tourism Office, Somerset County Planning Department, Maryland Department of Planning, Department of Natural Resources</p>

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"> • Uniqueness and charm is a strong selling point. • Strong full time homeownership occupancy (About 60%). • Historical architecture. • Waterfront locations, many with docks. • Affordability of housing (rental and homeownership) and land. • Substantial numbers of houses are available for purchase, rental, and/or renovation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer young adults are choosing to become waterman and living on the Island, creating potential housing vacancies. • Overall cost of living is higher due to remoteness. • Vacant housing and absentee landlords (10% on Tylerton and about 30% on Ewell and Rhodes Point). • No affordable housing options provided by Somerset County.

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Protect neighborhood housing stock and quality.</p> <p>Progress Measure: Number of code violations given and number of houses brought up to code and/or condemned.</p> <p>Progress Measure: Number of houses renovated for current owners/renters, or made available for sale/rent, if vacant.</p> <p>Outcome 2: Attract new full time residents to inhabit vacant housing.</p> <p>Progress Measure: Number of new full time residents relocated to Smith Island.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Ensure adequate exterior housing property maintenance. Work with the Somerset County Planning Department to issue code violations.</p> <p>Strategy B: Condemn, demolish, and repurpose land where blighted, dilapidated, and/or uninhabitable housing exists.</p> <p>Strategy C: Explore financing (grants, low-interest loans) for housing repairs/renovations.</p> <p>Strategy A: Provide tax incentives for relocating residents.</p> <p>Strategy B: Promote financing programs that enable residents to relocate.</p> <p>Strategy C: Work with Somerset County to provide affordable housing options</p>	<p>Somerset County Planning Department; Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Housing Assistance Council, and USDA (i.e. Rural Development Fund), and Habitat for Humanity.</p> <p>Somerset County Planning Department, Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Housing Assistance Council, and USDA (i.e. Rural Development Fund).</p>

<p>Outcome 3: Identify existing conditions of housing stock, such as ownership, tax arrears, repairs, plans for the home (keep, sell, renovate, etc.).</p> <p>Progress Measure: An Existing Conditions Report of the housing inventory has been conducted.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Explore and secure funding to conduct an Existing Conditions Report</p>	<p>Somerset County Planning Department, Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Housing Assistance Council, and USDA (i.e. Rural Development Fund).</p>
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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

- Non-profit exists (Smith Island United) to represent the Island's interests and provide capacity to move forward on the Smith Island Vision Plan.
- Special niche living environment, traditional village atmosphere.
- Tranquil, off the grid environment.
- Elementary school facility.
- Pocket parks, waterfront recreation, and boat docks.
- Fire departments in Ewell and Tylerton.
- Smith Island Cultural Center & Artifact Museum
- Beaches, coves, and marshland allow beachcombing for artifacts.
- Three historical churches & yearly "Camp Meeting".

Weaknesses

- Lack of outdoor public recreation space.
- Limited passenger boat service.
- Limited attractions, stores, and restaurants; existing establishments have limited hours.
- Unfavorable first impression to visitors.
- Limited cellular phone and internet access.

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures →	Strategies	→ Implementation Partners
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<p>Outcome 1: Provide universal broadband access.</p> <p>Progress Measure: 100% reliable internet access connection for all residents and businesses.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Work with current carrier (Verizon) to increase internet capacity.</p> <p>Strategy B: Work with State of Maryland and Federal Government Broadband programs to increase internet access, including Bloosurf rural broadband high speed internet.</p>	<p>State of Maryland, Verizon (or other internet providers), and the U.S. and State Departments of Commerce.</p>
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<p>Outcome 2: Public recreation open space.</p> <p>Progress Measure: Number of grants awarded and</p>	<p>Strategy A: Renovate or demolish old grocery store on Tylerton to create public open space.</p> <p>Strategy B: Apply for Community Legacy, Program Open Space and/or</p>	<p>Somerset County Department of Planning; Somerset County Department of Recreation and</p>
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<p>number of amenities added.</p>	<p>Community Parks and Playground Funds to provide grants for public space areas, such as, a community gathering building, open air pavilion, benches, tourist entrance, picnic /cookout areas with trash cans, lighting, , etc.... Strategy C: Provide more signage and historical markers (wayfinding techniques) and develop and maintain open space network to enhance community resiliency for tidal and stormwater flooding and storm surge protection. Strategy D: Provide public amenities at Ewell to increase harbor utilization. Strategy E: Create marked pedestrian and bicycle trails in Ewell, Tylerton and Rhodes Point.</p>	<p>Parks, Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development; and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.</p>
<p>Outcome 3: Distance Learning Technology at Ewell School for students and community members. Progress Measures: Amount of funding procured and number of technology equipment purchased.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Apply for funding for distance learning technology for use by students and residents.</p>	<p>Somerset County Board of Education, Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore, Island Institute, and the Ewell School.</p>
<p>Outcome 4: Telemedicine program is in place for seniors, at-risk, and vulnerable populations. Progress Measures: Necessary equipment procured, amount of space in each of 3 villages secured, and total amount of funding for staff received.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Explore funding, and secure and implement Telemedicine program in all three villages.</p>	<p>Crisfield Clinic (Dr. Kerry Palanakis), Dr. Neal Reynolds (U of M), Somerset County, and various Maryland State agencies.</p>
<p>Outcome 5: Smith Island United is established as a 501c3, develops an annual operating budget and hires staff to implement mission. Progress Measures: 501c3 is established, number of general operating and project-based grants secured, and number of projects funded and implemented.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Work with pro bono attorney for 501c3 status. Strategy B: Create a Development Prospects list for general operating and project-based funding opportunities from foundations, government agencies, elected officials, corporations, individual donors, elected officials, etc.</p>	<p>Smith Island United, Community Law Center, Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore, and the Rural Maryland Council.</p>

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"> Capable, professional Somerset County Planning Department staff to utilize as a resource for Sustainable Communities Plan implementation. The Island's 501(c)(3), Smith Island United, is organized, motivated, and committed to implementation of the Smith Island Vision Plan. Existing land uses are primarily residential and water-dependent/waterman uses, with a slight non-residential mix; comprising a complimentary blend of Island Village land uses. Future development opportunities are for primarily infill and redevelopment, rather than "new" development, which helps to accurately predict and plan for future development patterns. A myriad of opportunities exist for public recreation and recreational facility/land development, as well as potential opportunities for main street, business, and waterfront district designations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smith Island is not incorporated, so the Island has no authority to collect taxes and/or fees which could help the Island become more self-sufficient. Logistically, it is difficult and expensive to develop and/or repair homes and infrastructure on the Island because all supplies and labor have to be carried by boat. Years of disinvestment have left built environment in severe disrepair in many instances. The existing zoning on the Island may not be the most appropriate to accommodate the historically smaller lots sizes and reduced setbacks. No comprehensive and detailed inventory of existing conditions of housing and infrastructure (docks, shanties, roads, water wells, ditches, etc.)

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Existing conditions (housing and infrastructure) to be professionally inventoried.</p> <p>Progress Measures: A grant is secured to conduct an Existing Conditions Report, to include recommendations for future needs.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Explore and secure funding to initiate an Existing Conditions Assessment to produce a final report with recommendations for future needs.</p>	<p>Somerset County Planning Department, Maryland Department of Planning, and the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development.</p>
<p>Outcome 2: Somerset County Zoning Ordinance Update.</p> <p>Progress Measures: Secure funding to update the Somerset County Zoning Ordinance, which will include an analysis of the existing zoning on Smith Island to determine if a more appropriate zoning</p>	<p>Strategy A: Secure funding to update the Somerset County Zoning Ordinance, which will also include a specific analysis of the existing zoning on Smith Island.</p>	<p>Somerset County Planning Department, Maryland Department of Planning, and the Department of Natural Resources.</p>

<p>category should be established to allow more development flexibility to accommodate the Island's unique development pattern and small lot sizes.</p>		
<p>Outcome 3: Plan for future flood mitigation. Progress Measures: Adoption of a Flood Mitigation Plan.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Create workgroup to determine feasibility of creating a Small Area Flood Mitigation Plan. Seek funding to support the development of a Small Area Flood Mitigation Plan.</p>	<p>Somerset County Planning Department, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, and the Maryland Department of Planning.</p>