<mark>Section II. Sustainable Community Baseline Information</mark>

Through this section, applicants will demonstrate that trends and conditions in homeownership, property values, employment, commercial and residential vacancy, community facilities and infrastructure, natural resources, the local business and residential districts show a need for new or continued revitalization reinvestment. Demographic data and trends provided by Applicants should support the choice of the proposed Sustainable Community Area boundary and help form a basis for needs and opportunities to be addressed through the initiatives and projects described in the Sustainable Community Action Plan (Section IV).

POINTS IN THIS SECTION WILL BE AWARDED BASED ON THE SC AREA'S NEED FOR REINVESTMENT AS EVIDENCED BY THOROUGH DESCRIPTIONS OF CURRENT CONDITIONS OR TRENDS (and will not be based upon current or planned revitalization activities which will be covered in Section IV).

A. Proposed Sustainable Community Area:

County: Worcester
Name of Sustainable Community: Town of Ocean City

Include boundary descriptions and a map of the Sustainable Community. In addition to hard copies of the of the project location map, a detailed listing of parcels (i.e. Parcel ID Numbers) that form the project boundary should be included. If possible, maps should also be submitted in electronic GIS form (shape file). If you have additional comments or questions, please contact Brad Wolters, Senior GIS Specialist, DHCD, Wolters@MdHousing.org

See enclosed disk and attached map, *Sustainable Communities District of Ocean City*

Section II. Sustainable Community Baseline Information

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?

Although the Town of Ocean City has discussed several revitalization strategies since the 1970's it was the formulation of the Ocean City Development Corporation in 2000 that started the current efforts in the downtown area. Local government funding has been the impetus to the OCDC for maintaining its program. The OCDC and Town of Ocean City have utilized a number of State programs to fund its revitalization projects. Foremost has been the Maryland Community Legacy Program. Other State programs that have been tapped by the OCDC include the Neighborhood Business Works Program and the Community Investment Tax Credit Program.

It is worthy to note that OCDC receives local jurisdiction funding annually from Worcester County and the Town of Ocean City to assist with operating funds and provide seed money for matching grants. The completed, ongoing and future projects funded by OCDC strive to improve the community and encourage re-investment. OCDC, in coordination with the Town of Ocean City, throughout its history has planned for, applied and managed grant and other funding to accomplish these needed projects. However, while these projects improve the community and raise the tax assessment on the properties, Worcester County receives an increased benefit without further engagement of resources. This sets up a tax differential where Worcester County reaps increased financial benefits and has yet to increase their participation in OCDC projects.

The investments, as a result of these programs and other funded programs have had a tremendous impact on the downtown area. Often the funds have resulted in significant leveraging ratios by the private sector. Below is a listing of projects completed by the OCDC and Town of Ocean City since 2000 in the downtown area (south of 17th Street):

- Completed the design standards for the Downtown area. Such standards were approved and codified by the Mayor and City Council in November 2002.
- Completed the design standards for the Upper Downtown Area (3rd to 17th Streets). These standards were approved in 2006.
- Completed a Community Legacy Plan for the Downtown area that has been approved by the Town of Ocean City and State of Maryland for future grant opportunities.
- 134 façade projects have been completed to date. Through the OCDC façade program, over $4.7 million has been invested into the older buildings of the Downtown area.
- Construction of Somerset Plaza, a semi-pedestrian walkway in 2002. This street is used for special event activities. Construction costs were $200,000.
- Construction of S. 1st Street, into a pedestrian walkway in 2006 at a cost of $225,000.
- Construction of Sunset Park, a linear public park located along S. Division Street and Bay in 2006. This park is used for special event activities. Construction costs were about $1.3 million.
- The OCDC's Public Art Program has raised private contributions for 9 art projects in the Downtown area: White Marlin Sculpture, Ocean City library sculpture (being completed), Seahawk Sculpture, Dorchester Street wall mural, Caroline Street enlarged postcards, OC Beach Birds, paver art on west side of Philadelphia Avenue, and utility box painting project with the Art League of Ocean City, local area high schools and private sponsors. Over $300,000 has been expended on this program.
- Creation of a historic plaque program. This OCDC program provided bronze plaques to 20 older buildings to recognize the age and importance of such structures.
- Restoration of the Tarry A While Guest House project at 108 Dorchester Street, a building constructed in 1897 and now used as first floor office space for the OCDC and upper floor seasonal rentals.
- Renovation of the building at 110 Somerset Street to provide seasonal housing.

- Renovation of two buildings at 105 Dorchester Street to provide seasonal housing.
- A Green Building Initiatives Program to provide energy efficient enhancements to downtown buildings. To date 18 buildings have been improved using this program. About $240,000 of private investment has occurred so far.
- The creation of a Business Assistance Program to provide financial assistance to new and expanding downtown businesses to decrease the upfront costs of such new business starts.
- Other Town of Ocean City capital projects include the construction the tram building for $200,000, Worcester Street restrooms/ Police Department station for $700,000, and the Boardwalk improvements for $6 million.

Section II. Sustainable Community Baseline Information

(b) Describe any existing barriers to Smart Growth that may affect your jurisdiction or the proposed SC Area. For instance, does your area have higher development fees than outer "cornfields"?

There are several barriers to Smart Growth that may affect the Sustainable Community Area; generally the seasonal nature of activity and that the designated area is the most aged development portion of the Town of Ocean City jurisdiction. The seasonal nature of activity in and visitors to the Sustainable Community Area means that year round population varies widely with different levels and categories of needs.

Traffic and Transportation:
The Sustainable Community Area includes many Summer Tourism season destinations, i.e. Amusement Parks, Boardwalk Commercial Activity, Accommodations, Landmarks, etc., that draw a high demand for vehicle movement and parking and general pedestrian movements. Smart Growth and Complete Street principles are not fully incorporated in the existing development pattern. During the season there exists recurring traffic congestion lower than acceptable levels of service and pedestrian movements are likewise constrained.

Tax Differential:
The intent of the Sustainable Community Plan supports Smart Growth development with increased re-investment in the established Sustainable Community Area. The Tax Differential issue between the Town of Ocean City and Worcester County tends to promote development in unincorporated Worcester County just outside of the municipal Town of Ocean City boundary, in other words, promoting urban sprawl. Property in areas immediately adjacent to the Town of Ocean City contribute County and State of Maryland taxes only; while businesses and residences within the Town of Ocean City pay full City, County and State taxes. Relieved of the full tax burden of being within the municipal boundary, development is encouraged in unincorporated Worcester County; particularly 'Greenfield' development which is the antithesis of Smart Growth.

Regulations:
Redevelopment and infill development of the Sustainable Community Area is a primary goal of this Action Plan. Development proposals in this area typically need to address a wide range of regulatory issues that can be barriers to redevelopment and infill, such as Flood Zone/ Elevation implications, zoning design and performance standards, non-conforming land use and structure issues, and simple compatibility issues. Especially when compared to adjacent non-conforming structures, new redevelopment and infill project face a burden to avoid exacerbating non-conforming situations. Currently, methods are in place to seek regulatory relief through variance or special exception processes, however, simple by-right redevelopment and infill projects would improve the revitalization and investment in the Sustainable Community Area.

Section II. Sustainable Community Baseline Information

B. Community Conditions: Strengths and Weaknesses
(1) Describe the strengths and weaknesses in the proposed Area's existing built environment. For example, what is the condition of housing? Are there underutilized historic buildings and cultural places? What is the condition and availability of community parks and recreational assets? Are there transportation assets? What is the current condition of community infrastructure such as roads and lighting?

STRENGTHS:

Community Amenities and Assets
Ocean City today offers visitors and local residents activities that most cities would love to have: clean and free beaches, popular boardwalk, and quality accommodations. Providing an atmosphere that compliments the already successful attractions with new and exciting activities and places to see is the next level for the city to reach.

The most popular amenity in this downtown district is the beach and Boardwalk, both of which extend the full length of the Sustainable Communities Area district. These assets are the main reason eight million people visit Ocean City each year, making it one of the largest attractions in the mid-Atlantic region. The Boardwalk area contains some of the oldest businesses in Ocean City, which continue to provide that traditional Ocean City experience for generations of families. Such retail businesses include Dolle's Candy and Popcorn, Candy Kitchen, Fischer's Popcorn, Thrasher Fries, Dumser's Ice Cream, and the Alaska Stand. The Town of Ocean City spends much time and effort to ensure the Boardwalk and beaches are well maintained.

Two prime destination points for visitors to Ocean City are the downtown amusements and arcades. Trimper Amusements and the Pier Rides provide a real excitement and adventure to be experienced in the southern end of Ocean City. In addition, the Ripley's Believe it or Not Museum located at the Pier on the Boardwalk is a great amenity to add to one's vacation trip. The Ocean City Lifesaving Station Museum is a popular stop at the southend of the Boardwalk for local history buffs and families.

The bayside area of downtown also provides attractive views to the water and various water related activities including fishing, boating, jet ski rentals, parasailing, and several noted restaurants.   These activities and popular restaurants make the bayside a destination point for many visitors and locals.

The downtown area consists of the oldest section of Ocean City. There are several buildings from the nineteenth century still existing. These are located south of North Division Street. Between North Division Street and 17th Street, particularly along Baltimore Avenue, there are many buildings dating back to the 1920's and 1930's and in good condition.

The 3rd/4th Street ball fields provide a large open space for recreation uses. In addition, Sunset Park, located at South Division Street and the Bay provide another special event forum in addition to a passive recreational area. Two public facilities that are important traffic generators for downtown; City Hall at Baltimore Avenue and 3rd Street and the U.S. Post Office at Philadelphia Avenue and 5th Street. The primary fire station serving the southern end of Ocean City is located at Philadelphia Avenue and 15th Street, although a smaller facility is located on Dorchester Street. Another City facility includes a water treatment plant along St. Louis and 14th Street. The Ocean City Beach Patrol has its main office on Dorchester Street, too. The Ocean City Police Department has two of its facilities in the downtown area – Boardwalk at Worcester Street and on Dorchester Street.

A primary asset to downtown Ocean City is the mass transit system. The South Division Street bus facility serves as the southern terminus of the extensive Ocean City bus system and is an important source of transportation for millions of visitors, locals, and employees during the summer months. A private trolley system with its southern terminus at Somerset Street in downtown Ocean City provides a smaller and

attractive means of transport for many other visitors. In addition, the Boardwalk tram runs from South 1st Street to 27th Street provides another fun way to get around Ocean City.

The Town of Ocean City spends substantial funds to enhance and maintain their infrastructure. As a tourist destination serving millions of visitors each year such infrastructure must be in excellent working condition. Such infrastructure includes streets, sewer, water, drainage and lighting.

Another defining amenity to this area is the system of alleyways. These interior alleys cover most of the district above N. Division Street and provide a very good method of limited travel as well as screening of vehicle deliveries and trash pickup. Whenever possible, these alleyways should be expanded and sometimes improved. They also represent an opportunity to use green building techniques as applied in other areas of the country.

Downtown Ocean City has a number of organizations interested in the area. A group, called the Partners was created to improve networking and coordinating of various issues, particularly related to business and economic development. The Partners Group consists of the following organizations: Ocean City Development Corporation, Ocean City Chamber of Commerce, Hotel Motel Restaurant Association, Downtown Association, and the Economic Development Committee. These groups meet as needed to address specific issues several times. The OCDC has requested previous support from Partner members in terms of its downtown design standards and requests for grant assistance.

WEAKNESSES:

The downtown district is still in a transitional stage of revitalization. While there has been some previous new construction there has been substantial renovation. However, there are also areas that are still are in need of redevelopment. A number of buildings are in fair to poor condition. Several are examples of "demolition by neglect" buildings.

Historic buildings - This area does not contain a historic district as many of the older buildings have been either modified or demolished. There are a handful of individual buildings that may qualify for this historic status; however, the many of these owners tend not to be interested in pursuing this designation. The only designated historic structure in Ocean City is the St. Paul's By-The-Sea Episcopal Church located at Baltimore Avenue and 3rd Street.

Short business season – Ocean City as a tourist destination has a relatively short business season. Although the business season has been lengthened with other activities most businesses still close during the off-seasons. This seasonal nature of employment provides challenges for many employees and year round residents.

Lack of Downtown Attractions - Other than the beach, the boardwalk is Ocean City's number one destination. The downtown core offers very little else in support of the boardwalk and beach attractions. It was noted by the International Waterfront Group (IWG) 1999 report the Downtown Ocean City has become a parking lot and circulation mode of transportation for the boardwalk and beach. No other anchor exists to attract visitors to the downtown core especially during the off peak season.

Traffic Congestion - Congested downtown interior roadways discourage pedestrian interaction with downtown core businesses. People want to "get away" from vehicular traffic and go to the beach or boardwalk.

City Codes – As noted by the IWG report that many business owners feel that the city has not done enough to enforce codes that relate to the upkeep of structures. Because of this, there is unwillingness by business owners to invest capital into facility improvements. There is a lack of confidence from prospective investors because of the uncertainty in knowing what kind of neighbor will exist. However, many others feel that the existing codes are too restrictive and should be relaxed to encourage a more "pro" business climate. Some have suggested fewer regulations, citing that private sector investment will flow in areas "where there exists little resistance."

In 1999, IWG found many local residents were skeptical that any aggressive downtown initiative would not have the necessary political and economic support needed to realize the area's full potential. International Waterfront Group (IWG) was retained in 1999 by the Town of Ocean City to develop a comprehensive master plan for Ocean City's downtown area which recognized the importance of the boardwalk and bay front and to formulate a plan that motivated pedestrian interaction between these anchors. Additional projects have been added to this master plan. The 1999 project boundaries were defined between 4thStreet to the north, the inlet to the south, boardwalk to the east, and the bay to the west. In addition to circulation issues, private sector investment issues, particularly how to encourage private sector investment in the downtown core were considered. However, over the past few years these boundaries were expanded to 17th Street, which this additional area often referred to as the upper downtown area.

In 1999 many local residents made it well known to the IWG team that cynicism was in abundance considering the number of planning studies that have been completed through the years. IWG believed this local skepticism could be overcome with a series of small accomplishments, for which the Ocean City Development Corporation, a nonprofit organization set up in 2000, has been implementing. As mentioned in the IWG report, there were several phases necessary to bring about revitalization activities to downtown Ocean city. It was noted that each phase will be challenging, however, as each phase is accomplished, a healthier vibrant downtown core will be achieved. The challenge given was to tie the recommended boardwalk improvements to the rest of the downtown core area and continue these concepts to the bay front district thus creating a transition zone concept and make specific recommendations towards implementing a plan of action. A major theme was to improve and bring about a series of capital projects that would spur private investment. This Plan of Action has been generally followed by the Ocean City Development Corporation in its pursuit of a revitalized downtown Ocean City.

Section II. Sustainable Community Baseline Information

(2) Describe the Area's land use/zoning make-up (residential, commercial, industrial, and mixed-use). Is the current land use or zoning conducive to revitalization investment?

The SC area has some limited recreational overlays allowing for public use. The Business zoning along the boardwalk and the Downtown Mixed Use zoning elsewhere in the lower downtown area are adequate to permit future expansion of business uses. Marinas along the bayside have existed for decades. The town encourages their expansion and renovation to accommodate larger numbers of vessels as the town's populace increases.

Residential zoning has many older homes and apartments that could be improved upon or replaced with new dwellings. We are seeing demolition occur more often as dwellings age. Original structures were not built to code and are unsafe and uncomfortable due to the lack of insulation and lower quality components. The town encourages commercial and residential mixed use projects to help bring needed services into the SC area. Year-round commercial services are lacking in the SC area.

Residential zoning replaces Business zoning at the northern end of the SC area, along the boardwalk. Local Commercial zoning replaces Residential zoning on Philadelphia Avenue as this road becomes wider (known as Coastal Highway) at 15th Street in the Upper Downtown SC area. This is significant in that small businesses offering the services that visitors need become more common. As trends change, so too do the types of businesses that locate along Coastal Highway.

Our viewpoint is that the proposed Sustainable Community area, as a whole, can be revitalized with enough participation from local developers, property owners, and businesses. The infrastructure improvements, as explained later in this application, have been completed to allow for future redevelopment efforts. The task at hand is finding ways to enhance and create interesting places within the older downtown core, within the SC area. Interesting places serve as the magnetic medium through which individuals, residents, and visitors are motivated and interact within commercial areas or their communities. Identifying the strengths of the SC area and cultivating those strengths is the first step.

Section II. Sustainable Community Baseline Information

3) Describe strengths and weaknesses in basic features of community quality-of-life. For instance, is crime an issue for this SC Area? What is the condition and quality of educational choices available to the community? Are artistic, cultural, or community resources, events or facilities within or accessible to residents in the proposed SC Area?

Strengths

Efforts to improve the appearance of utilities and building facades have been successful. Community pride is rising. Consistent code enforcement ensures that restrictions are followed. A strong police presence shows how serious the town feels about providing a safe community.

The Ocean City Art League promotes Art and culture with its many members and volunteers. The town has many events that are either free or at low cost where local art is sold, charitable activities are offered, classes are taught, and a library where art lovers can appreciate and admire crafts and works created in this area. The Art League occupies a new facility on 94th Street that houses a gallery, a pottery studio, classrooms, an art library, and five working artist's studios. This year marks the 50th year for the Ocean City Center for the Arts.

The town's rich history is preserved in the Life Saving Museum at the inlet parking lot. Visitors can learn about the "surfmen" who rescued stranded fishermen from the ocean.

Worcester County, Maryland has a branch of the county library on 100th Street where anyone is free to explore its many resources.

Our Convention Center is host to many major attractions. A current expansion of the facility promises to attract even larger entertainers and shows to provide entertainment for our visitors and residents, alike.

An annual air show and skateboarding event takes place each summer on the beach which attracts those seeking a thrill in aerial aerobatics and the newest tricks and products on the market for biking and skateboarding.

Our mass transit system transports millions of visitors each summer to destinations within town, thereby decreasing the number of personal vehicles on the roads. Similarly, the alleyways permit limited movement as a alternative route to congested roads.

Weaknesses

As with most places, there exists some crime within the SC area due to its small, compacted size and the older neighborhoods where lower rents prevail. The town's police force handles the small amount of petty crimes in this area.

The lack of a school in Ocean City means school-age students are bused to schools in West Ocean City and Berlin, Maryland. Worcester County provides the bus service needed for this transfer.

Fragmented land ownership presents challenges when considering redevelopment projects in the interior. Conversely, there are opportunities for beneficial, small-scale redevelopment.

Congested downtown interior roadways discourage pedestrian interaction with downtown core businesses. A "main attraction" or anchor business is being sought to occupy a location within the SC area. The Ocean City beach and boardwalk are our main attractions. Off the boardwalk, though, the town needs an attraction on the bayside or western side of the island. A bayside boardwalk connected to the

Oceanside boardwalk has been one priority for several years. Acquiring or encouraging contiguous land to build such a project has stifled efforts, to date.

Additional employee housing is needed to house the influx of foreign workers in the summer months.

Section II. Sustainable Community Baseline Information

C. Natural Resources and Environmental Impact: Strengths and Weaknesses

(1) Describe the strengths and weaknesses of the community's "natural environment." in or near the Sustainable Community Area. What is the current condition of key natural resources - lands, air, water, watersheds, tree canopy, other? If the community is located in a coastal zone, what risks might the community be subject to associated with climate induced sea level rise?

Land: The SC area is completely developed in an ultra-urban environment. Property use is in a mixture of services and commercial uses, single and multi-family residential, hotel and motel, marinas, parking lots, public works facilities, restaurants, and amusement parks. Each type of land use has its own specific impact on the environment. A pollution prevention plan needs to be developed for each of these types of uses.

Air: The air quality of Ocean City is relatively good. On average, the air quality index is below 50. The air quality is generally in the good range from September through May with a few days in the moderate range. During the summer months (June, July, August) a majority of days are in the Moderate range and occasional days that are unhealthy for those with sensitivities. The SC area on Delmarva is located east of major industrial centers, where deposition or fall-out of pollution originates. There are also local sources of pollution that contribute to our air quality. Motor vehicle exhausts, engine fumes from jet skis, scooters, boats, gas pumps, and ammonia from local poultry farms are all sources originating within short distances of the SC area.

Water – Nutrient deposition is a concern for water quality when it runs off into the Coastal Bays. Natural concentration of nitrogen from power plants , vehicles, and industry contribute up to 30% of the nitrogen inputs. The Coastal Bay water is listed on the 303-d list for being impaired by nutrients.

Stormwater is a non-point source of pollutant for the Coastal Bays. Nutrients come from a variety of sources including the atmosphere, fertilizers, pesticides, pet waste, and groundwater. Bacteria, trash-gross solids, hydrocarbons, and heavy metals are a local concern. Tourism is our primary industry. Keeping our waters clean and productive is essential to maintaining our economy.

Drinking water is obtained from the underground aquifers of which the town uses 25 wells to extract from. This ensures that there is equal distribution from the aquifers to avoid salt water intrusion. The town maintains adequate capacity for our peak seasonal population.

Watersheds: The Coastal Bays Watershed is made up of 4 bays with approximately 175 square miles of drainage area. Ocean City has less than 2.5 square miles of land area draining to the Sinepuxent, Isle of Wight, and Assawoman Bays. We are almost completely developed with nearly all new construction coming in the form of redevelopment. Drainage from the town is through a storm drain system or sheet flow. The ocean beach is protected from high bacteria resulting from our drainage to the western bays.

Tree Canopy: The ultra-urban environment is counter-productive to the tree canopy. We have a Critical Area ordinance that requires that redevelopment must provide 15% plantable area. This is over-ridden by grandfathering and non-conformity in the zoning code. They are required to pay a fee-in-lieu to offset the requirement. This money collected must be spent on work within the SC area. There are also mini grant programs to offer private property owners plant materials for BayScape gardens or rain gardens. Street trees were planted while utilities were being placed underground. Some vacant spaces where trees have died should be filled using the fee-in-lieu money.

Sea Level Rise: The effects of global warming, sea level rise, and land subsidence over the next century will potentially exacerbate the severity of coastal storms and flooding. Sea level has risen about one foot in the past century. Another rise of 2-3 feet is expected for the coming century. There will be more shoreline erosion and loss of coastal wetlands, if this occurs. The town is considering measures to reduce the effects which include raising the level of streets, improving bulkheads, and constructing buildings at higher elevations. Coastal storm surge from hurricanes could become higher and more intense rainfall could raise the potential from flooding from land runoff. An acceleration of sea level rise may increase the cost of current shore protection practices.

<u>**Section II. Sustainable Community Baseline Information**</u>

(2) Describe the strenths and weaknesses of any current efforts to reduce the community's "carbon footprint" or impact on the environment. Is recycling (commercial or residential) available to minimize waste? Are there current efforts to encourage the purchase and availability of fresh local food and other local products and services to the community? Describe any current energy or water conservation efforts that may be underway. If the community has not implemented one of the above initiatives, has the community identified a need or interest to pursue these or other efforts to reduce environmental impact, for instance through the new Sustainable Maryland Certified initiative?

Recycling: The town has a bulk collection program where we recycle large appliances to keep them from entering the waste system. During construction or demolition projects, we recycle the piping. The town ships its waste to a company in Pennsylvania for recycling. It becomes an alternative fuel source for creating electricity.

Local foods: The town has a farmer's market located outside the SC area. Efforts should seek another market within the SC area where foot traffic is heavy and visitors would benefit by not having to travel across the bridge to buy food.

Energy and water conservation: The town requires low flow fixtures on all redevelopment projects. We also enforce the International Energy Conservation Code to have more insulation, better windows, and more efficient HVAC.

As far as conservation efforts within the SC area, the town enforces the energy conservation code, the new (IECC) International Energy Conservation Code. Some of the residential energy efficiency codes that we are now inspecting are: A) All hot water circulation systems shall be insulated with a readily accessible manual switch to turn off the hot water circulation pump when not in use, (B) All hot water pipes larger then 3/4 inch shall be insulated, (C) All piping from water heaters to the kitchen sink outlet, (D) Hot water lines to bathrooms and utility rooms shall be insulated per Table R403.4.2 minimum thermal resistance (R-Value) of R-3. The Maryland State Plumbing Code requires low flow plumbing fixtures including toilets, faucet aerators and shower heads. All new or replacement insulation of toilets use no more than 1.6 gallons per flush compared with about 3.5 gallons of water used with older standard toilets. Low flow shower heads use about 2.5 gallons of water per minute compared to between 4 and 5 gallons per minute used by conventional heads and low -flow faucets aerators can cut water usage of faucets by as much as 40% from 4 gallons per minute to 2.5.

Buildings will be 15% more energy efficient than the 2009 IECC. Increased fenestration requirements mean better windows, increased insulation values for walls, floors, ceilings & roofs improve conservation measures. There are more efficient mechanical system checks. There are many other more stringent energy efficiency requirements both residential & commercial.

Section II. Sustainable Community Baseline Information

(3) Describe the strengths and weaknesses of the jurisdiction's current stormwater management practices and how these may affect the proposed SC Area. Is redevelopment and retrofitting of infrastructure an issue or opportunity in this SC Area? Stormwater runoff is a significant source of pollution to Maryland's streams and the Chesapeake Bay. Buildings constructed before 1985 have little or no stormwater controls, and development between 1985 and 2010 have some controls. Updated stormwater regulations passed by Maryland's General Assembly in 2010 require that development and redevelopment projects utilize stringent stormwater controls. Sustainable Community Areas may have opportunities for redevelopment practices that can reduce stormwater flows.

The Town of Ocean City has adopted the State's stormwater ordinance which gives a waiver for quantity control to projects that discharge directly into tidal waters. Since the town is surrounded by tidal waters, the water quantity requirements are not applicable. On redevelopment projects, builders must meet water quality requirements.This requirement is the reduction of impervious surface by 50% or treating 50% of the existing imperviousness and 100% of the increased imperviousness. The grandfathering and non-conformity allowed by the zoning code limits areas where environmentally sensitive designs can be performed. There are many lots that have no setbacks on them, allowing for building to the property line. The Ocean City Development Corporation has guidelines to maintain the heritage of the Historical nautical marine atmosphere. They request wider porches and sidewalks that encroach on the landscaped areas. Landscaping can be used as both a bio-retention area for infiltration and for filtering purposes. Adding more landscaping can help meet the reduction of impervious surfaces.
Opportunities for alternative paving surfaces are applicable. The SC area should require more alternative surfaces for all parking. Surface storage of stormwater and alternative surfaces are the only feasible options for stormwater treatment.
The groundwater in the SC area is very high, usually, within 2 feet of the surface. The tidal influence backs up the storm drains and floods the streets at spring tides and during Northeaster events. A fee-in-lieu policy has been used but is not a standard operating procedure. Storm drain and outfall retrofits could use the funds collected. Street cleaning is a viable BMP and is currently being done by the Department of Public Works. As a pilot project, we have installed catch basin inserts to collect trash, debris, oil, and other loose substances. So far, the effort has been successful. We need a long-term maintenance agreement before we can expand on this effort any further.

Section II. Sustainable Community Baseline Information

D. Economic Conditions & Access to Opportunity: Strengths and Weaknesses

(1) Describe the jurisdiction's current economic strengths and weaknesses. For example, are there distinct economic drivers in the area or region that will affect access to job opportunities and the progress of the SC Plan? What are the main barriers to the Area's economic competitiveness? What is the current level of broadband access available to serve residents, businesses and public facilities? What efforts are currently in place to increase worker skills and employment? Describe trends in employment rates and business formation.

Strengths

Business Tenure - The downtown area of Ocean City contains a number of businesses that have been in Ocean City for a long time. For example, the Trimper Amusement rides have been in Ocean City over 100 years. Dolle's Candy celebrated its 100th anniversary as an Ocean City business in 2011. The Atlantic Hotel was first built in 1875, destroyed by fire in 1924 and rebuilt by one of the original families, the Purnell's who still manage the property today. The Alaska Stand eatery, owned by the Givarz family, celebrates its 80th birthday in 2013. These are just several of the many businesses that are still owned and managed by the same families in Ocean City. It is this consistency of name and quality of service that has served the generations of tourists who continue to visit these same businesses in the downtown district.

Boardwalk as an economic engine - For generations the Ocean City Boardwalk has been as important an attraction for visitors to Ocean City as the beach. This lively and well maintained public boardwalk extends 2.7 miles in length, is probably one of the best pedestrian experiences one will find. And it may be one of the most successful pedestrian malls in America! There are a multitude of businesses; most of them are small businesses, found along the Boardwalk. The primary commercial district along the Boardwalk is generally south of 15th Street and is located in the proposed Sustainable Communities district. The section north of 15th Street is commonly referred to as Hotel/Motel Row in Ocean City.

Tourism as a stable economic source – Tourism is the sole industry of Ocean City. This industry has served Ocean City well over the past 100 years and is expected to be the primary industry for many years to come. It has been stated that tourism to Ocean City is almost "recession proof." In poor economic times residents of the Mid-Atlantic States may find a vacation to Ocean City less expensive due to its close proximity. In good economic times such residents may find a vacation of more than one week as possible to Ocean City.

Oldest section of Ocean City – Downtown Ocean City is the proposed location for the Sustainable Communities Area. The area is the oldest section of Ocean City and is the traditional downtown district for the island. It contains a variety of buildings that have been adapted for new uses.

Maryland Main Street Program and access to State funding programs – In April 2012 Ocean City was named one of Maryland's newest Main Street Maryland Communities. With this new designation as well as prior excellent dealings with the State of Maryland, the Town and OCDC intend to apply for future State funds.

Investment in public infrastructure–The Town of Ocean City has invested heavily into its public infrastructure. Due to the seasonal nature of Ocean City, the town's infrastructure must handle much more than its 8,000 year round residential base. On peak weekends in the summer, the town's population will exceed 300,000. This drastic population change from off-season to in-season may be one of the biggest changes found in the United States. And each year the Town is prepared for such change and demands on its infrastructure.

Weaknesses

Short tourism season – The prime Ocean City season runs only during the summer season. In fact as the school season starts in August for most of Maryland and surrounding states, the number of peak weeks has diminished to the month of July and first 2 weeks of August. The tourists continue to travel to Ocean City for weekends before and after these prime weeks. However, this seasonal nature of Ocean City tourism can make for a very challenging economic environment. Such seasons are very dependent on weather.

Small year round resident population base – The small year round population base of Ocean City and the large number of tourists coming to Ocean City makes for a challenging task in terms of providing the number of employees necessary to accommodate the tourism industry. The Town of Ocean City is dependent on the labor supply of other areas of the mid-Atlantic region and foreign worker labor. It is estimated that 3,000 foreign workers travel to Ocean City each summer to provide this labor. There are many American residents also traveling and living in Ocean City each summer to meet the tourism demands. In addition to this high seasonal demand the opposite occurs in the off-season. The small population base makes it difficult to support local small businesses in Ocean City. The nature of such tourism businesses such as retail and restaurant uses also results in many lower wage positions being needed. Such a low wage base makes it difficult for families to live in Ocean City, particularly when work is very limited in the off-season months to support a family.

The issue of Tax Differential between the Town of Ocean City and Worcester County creates an economic weakness for the Sustainable Community Area. Properties in unincorporated Worcester County and immediately adjacent to the Town of Ocean City do not share the same tax burden as those properties in the Sustainable Community Area. The businesses and residences in unincorporated Worcester County therefore are more capable of retaining capital for reinvestment and revitalization efforts thus placing businesses and residences in the Sustainable community area at a marked disadvantage to economically compete or improve property value.

Lack of business variety and competition from outside Ocean City–The tourism base makes for a limited type of business in Ocean City. Often the chain stores locating in west Ocean City are providing many of the goods and merchandise found in more traditional downtown areas. The bulk of Ocean City stores are aimed at the tourism market and not the year round market.

Distinct Economic Drivers:

It is expected that tourism will remain the primary industry for the Town of Ocean City and its Sustainable Communities Area in the downtown district. A number of outside influences, such as weather and the labor market, will affect the industry. Broadband access is not yet available in Ocean City but has been discussed as a future item on the eastern shore of Maryland.

In terms of work increasing skills and employment, there are a number of activities currently in place. There are a number of training facilities in the eastern shore that have partnered with Ocean City businesses. For example, the University of Maryland Eastern Shore and the local Wor-Wic Community College each have a hotel management courses and culinary schools well suited to address the need for skilled workers in Ocean City hotels and restaurants. Salisbury University is only 30 miles from Ocean City and many if its students and graduates find work in Ocean City. The Ocean City Chamber of Commerce holds its spring Job Fair which has become a major hiring source for local Ocean City businesses.

Ocean City has historically had very high unemployment rates in the winter seasons, but such rates improve with the summer tourism season. The Ocean City economy has expanded over the past years as the shoulder season has grown. Much of this growth in the shoulder seasons is a result of the OC Convention Center business and large increase in the area's golf industry. It is expected the stronger should season business to expand which will help reduce the high level of unemployment in the off-season periods.

Section II. Sustainable Community Baseline Information

(2) Describe the jurisdiction's housing market and access to affordable workforce housing. What are the trends in residential construction (rental and homeownership), homeownership rate, foreclosure rate and, property values. Describe how and whether your jurisdiction's prevailing housing costs - both homeownership and rental - are affordable to households below 120% AMI, 80% AMI and 50% AMI. What efforts are in place currently to house individuals, families and the disabled at or below the AMI levels described above?

Ocean City has a variety of housing types such as single family, townhouse, condominium, and even manufactured housing. Such housing caters to various income levels. There have been several Ocean City employers who have realized the need to find affordable housing for their employees and have either constructed such housing or purchased housing.

Over the past few years the housing market has been depressed and has resulted in little new construction. However, at the same time there has been substantial building renovation going on – both exterior and interior improvements. The downtown area contains a concentration of housing for the thousands of foreign workers and American workers who work for the summer season. This area has some of the oldest residential units.

In many municipalities in Maryland, the downtown areas often contain upper floors that are either vacant or used for storage. In Ocean City the upper floors are often used as seasonal housing – an important need for the seasonal workers as well as a valuable income source for the property owners. A number of residential buildings that used to cater to weekly visitors have been converted into housing for seasonal workers.

As the economy strengthens it is expected that new development will occur more often. The housing absorption rate and housing prices have stabilized. The recent recession did result in less construction activity, lower property values, and more foreclosures. However, there were also some good elements that came from this slower economy. In many sections of the downtown area homeowners did invest funding in the renovation of their older structures. The OCDC has assisted over 130 property owners in renovating their buildings. Almost five million dollars has been invested into such structures over the past 10 years, but most of it in the past 4 years. The lower property values and low interest rates have resulted in more affordable housing opportunities.

Some examples of the increased housing include the four building the OCDC manages for the Town of Ocean City's seasonal workers. To date 43 beds are provided by the OCDC. Another example was the unfinished condominium project at 2nd Street and St. Louis Avenue. Due to the poor condo market this 11 unit project sat idle for two years. A new owner purchased the units via auction and invested the necessary funds resulting in a new 11 unit housing project that caters to seasonal workers. There are 120 seasonal workers living at the facility.

Pertaining to disabled households, new construction standards in Ocean City require such housing to accommodate disabled households. Whereas the older buildings cannot accommodate such individuals, new housing often contains elevators and other features to increase their mobility. In addition, the Town of Ocean City operates a transit van to transport such individuals to various needs.

It is expected that Ocean City will continue to see a blend of housing types.

Section II. Sustainable Community Baseline Information

(3) Describe the SC Area's demographic trends (with respect to age, race, household size, household income, educational attainment, or other relevant factors).

The SC area is a small, distinct district that does not follow established Census Bureau boundaries. The area contains about 255 acres of land or about .4 square miles. According to the Maryland Department of Planning, there were 1,199 year round residents counted during the 2010 census in the SC area.

Age: Of the approximately 1,199 residents in the SC area, 85% are over 21 years of age. The average age is 46 years. Females comprise about 46% of the Sc area population.
Race: Whites are 92% of the SC area. Blacks are 3%. Asians are 2.7%.
Households: There were 591 households in 2011. That number is projected to be 611 by 2016. There are 253 family households and 338 non-family households. The estimated average household income was $63,782 in 2011. The 2011 estimated household size was 1.85 persons. There were 484 one and two person households in 2011 in the SC area. There were 16 households with 5-7 persons each.
Education: Of the 904 people with education in the SC area, 40% had earned a high school diploma or less. Those with college degrees totaled over 37%.
Income: Of the 591 people who reported incomes, about 13% earned less than $15,000 per year. Those earning less than $100,000 totaled 83%. Those earning $200,000 or more were 3.39% of the total SC area. There were 11 families living below the poverty level in 2011. Seven of those families had children.
Employment: In 2011, civilian employed workers totaled 425 of the 603 people age 16 or over who were eligible to work. Those not in the labor force was 314 of the total 603. The highest employment types were sales (95 of 603), management (92 of 603), and food preparation and serving (70 of 603).

The above information explains the 2010 Census data; however, demographic issues relating to the Sustainable Community Area have much more impact in regards to the seasonal influx of weekly and daily tourists visiting the area. Ocean City becomes one of the most densely populated communities in the world during its peak season from Memorial Day to Labor Day holidays. An average peak season weekend experiences approximately 250,000 people enjoying the entire community and its amenities; however, adjusted to the 0.4 square miles of the Sustainable Community Area, that equates to approximately 56,600 +/- people per square mile living in the community. High peak events or circumstances such as the 4th of July holiday have seen that number rise to 350,000 people (354,000 in 2011 and 332,000 in 2012) equating to between 75,000 and 80,000 people per square mile. Obviously, the Sustainable Community Area experiences quite a seasonal shift in the population and the level of service needed to support that population. Compare this influx of population to popular resort communities such as Vail, Colorado (999 people per square mile) and Hilton Head Island, South Carolina (586 people per square mile). Perhaps a better comparison is to well known world-class cities. Los Angeles, California has a density of 8,092 people per square mile; Beijing, China has a density of 3,200 people per square mile.

Section III. Local Capacity to Implement Plans & Projects

A. Organizational Structure:

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 director and several members of the Ocean City Development Corporation's Downtown Design Committee are the lead people for the Sustainable Community Program. The director and planner of the Ocean City department of Planning, Zoning, and Community Development are members. There is also a local banker, several local business owners, a realtor, and a county commissioner. Discussions with the town's Planning and Zoning Commission, together with the public, will allow for transparency of the program with ample opportunities for input and feedback.

Section III. Local Capacity to Implement Plans & Projects

B.Organizational Experience:

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 Ocean City Development Corporation (OCDC), established by the Town of Ocean City in 2000, will serve as the Work Group to implement the Sustainable Communities Plan. The OCDC has established a Work Group Planning Committee to formulate this Sustainable Communities Plan. The OCDC has been implementing its approved Community Legacy Plan since 2001. The OCDC Executive Director will oversee this project. He has been working with the OCDC nearly since its creation in 2000. Financial matters and specific facade applications are approved by the OCDC Board of Directors. The OCDC Board consists of 15 volunteers who meet monthly. The OCDC also employs a part-time administrative assistant and bookkeeper to assist the Executive Director with operational items. The OCDC has an excellent working relationship with City staff to process these facade projects. The OCDC Executive Director will be responsible for submitting all quarterly reports and payment requests for this project. He has been responsible for these same tasks on all other CL funded projects.

The Town of Ocean City has been an active participant with the OCDC in implementing many of the downtown projects, particularly the capital improvement projects. These include the development of Sunset Park, S. 1st Street, Somerset Plaza, and a number of street improvement projects. The Town is also active in the Boardwalk improvements and beach maintenance, both of which are extremely important elements in the revitalization of downtown Ocean City.

Section III. Local Capacity to Implement Plans & Projects

C. Public Input:

How did residents and other stakeholders in the community provide input to Action Plan described below in Section IV?

The Work Group Planning Committee reviewed the draft Sustainable Community Application and Action Plan to establish the public review document.

The Town of Ocean City and Ocean City Development Corporation staff conducted a public meeting on April 24, 2013 to provide an overview of the then proposed Action Plan and received input to incorporate in the adopted Action Plan. This public meeting was advertised on the Town's website, local access TV channel, and thru a press release reported by local newspaper and TV media.

Subsequent to the public meeting; the Work Group Planning Committee reviewed and recommended approval of the Action Plan to the Ocean City Planning Commission. The Planning Commission in turn reviewed and recommended that the Town of Ocean City Mayor & City Council approve the Action Plan via resolution.

<mark>Section IV. Sustainable Community Action Plan</mark>

A. Supporting existing communities & reducing environmental impacts.

(1) A community's approach to Smart Growth generally includes two inter-related areas of focus: encouraging reinvestment and growth in existing communities; and, discouraging growth that degrades natural resources, and farms and rural landscapes. *Broadly describe your jurisdiction's Smart Growth approach and any significant accomplishments made over the last decade or so*.

The Town of Ocean City has been a strong follower of Smart Growth in both its policies and practices. The OCDC recognizes the importance of Smart Growth in its efforts to redevelop the downtown area, too. All of the OCDC's recommended projects in its redevelopment plans promote Smart Growth standards in various ways. Some of the practices of the Town that promote Smart Growth are listed below:

Mass Transit:
The Town of Ocean City has actively promoted its mass transit system, which now carries 4 million passengers per year. The Town only charges $3 per day for unlimited bus use. The Town operates over 60 buses and plans to expand this service even more. The Town's bus system has evolved in a major means of transportation for residents, tourists, and employees throughout Ocean City.

Zoning codes:
In terms of zoning, the Town of Ocean City has several items that promote Smart Growth Initiatives. First, the Town has a transfer of development rights program that directs development from an environmentally sensitive area (the Atlantic Ocean beach) to areas designated in the Town's Comprehensive Plan as its highest density areas. Secondly, the Town encourages mixed-use development by allowing shared parking by complementary uses. The Town codes also encourage on-site employee housing by not counting such units against a property's density limits and reducing parking requirements. Thirdly, the Town working with the OCDC has approved design standards for the downtown area of the City and is familiar with improving the character and appearance of new development. This reflects the traditional development patterns downtown and makes the buildings more pedestrian friendly. Fourthly, the Town's Comprehensive Plan reflects the Smart Growth Visions as stated in the Maryland Economic Growth, Resource Protection and Planning Act of 1992, and includes all appropriate elements required by the State's Planning Act.

Tax Differential:
Properties in unincorporated Worcester County and immediately adjacent to the Town of Ocean City do not share the same tax burden as those properties in the Sustainable Community Area. This relief of the tax burden encourages growth in 'Greenfield' areas of unincorporated Worcester County that potentially degrades natural resources, farms and rural landscapes. The Town of Ocean City actively promotes redevelopment effort to encourage re-investment and revitalization in the existing built environment of the Sustainable Community Area.

Redevelopment:
The Town of Ocean City has continued to support the OCDC in its efforts to revitalize the downtown area of Ocean City. Besides co-sponsoring several grant applications for redevelopment with the OCDC, the Town has also established the Inlet Parking Lot Fund that sets aside a specific amount of funds from the Inlet Parking lot for revitalization projects, including land acquisition.
In regards to the Maryland Rehabilitation Code, the Town was involved with its development through its Chief Building Official who served on the advisory committee that developed the code. The Town has adopted this code, which is an important tool for assisting older buildings in renovation.
The Town facilitated the establishment of the OCDC and has provided funding for its redevelopment efforts since its creation in 2000. The Town also received the Maryland Smart Growth Award in 2000 for the redevelopment of Baltimore Avenue from 15th Street to 33rd Street. These improvements encouraged private sector development in the area.

To date the OCDC has received several redevelopment awards for its many projects. Such project awards include the OCDC Façade Program; South 1st Street Redevelopment; Sunset Park design and project; St. Louis Avenue Revitalization; and, the OCDC marketing video.

Section IV. Sustainable Community Action Plan

(2) Describe any major investments in community infrastructure -water, stormwater, sewer, sidewalk, lighting, etc. -- that must be undertaken in order to improve the readiness or competitiveness of the proposed SC Area for private investment and compliance (if applicable) with TMDL regulations. Addressing the stormwater during redevelopment can reduce the pollution entering our streams and contribution to the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay. Investments in infrastructure, generally, can be an important catalyst for new private investment in the community.

New 8-inch underground water lines were installed under Baltimore Avenue in 1988 from North Division Street to 9th Street, to provide excellent water pressure. In 1991, the town ran a new 8" waste water main from the inlet to South 2nd Street, up to North Division Street. in 1994, the town ran a new 8' water main up Baltimore Avenue from 9th Street to 15th Street. To improve heavy traffic volumes during summer months, the town has paved local streets, placed all overhead utilities underground, and replaced all sidewalks with wider ones.

In 1995, Baltimore Avenue from 9th Street to 15th Street was repaved. New storm drains and sidewalks were installed. In 1996, St. Louis Avenue from Caroline Street to Somerset Street, within the SC area, had new water mains, new underground utilities, new storm drains, new sidewalks, and the street was paved. I 1997, we rebuilt the infrastructure on St. Louis Avenue south of the Route 50 bridge, including all side streets from the bay to Philadelphia Avenue. In 2004, from North Division Street to South 1st Street, work was performed on Philadelphia Avenue that included new underground utilities, new water mains, new sewer mains, new sidewalks, and the street was paved.

Presently, we are rebuilding St. Louis Avenue, in phases, from 17th Street to North Division Street. A new 8" water main is being installed for the full length of St. Louis Avenue to improve water capacity to all of the SC downtown area. This new line, together with a 12" main pipe running down Philadelphia Avenue from 10th Street to the Worcester Street lot, will provide sufficient water supply to the entire downtown area.

The SC area sidewalks that are 8 feet wide are only a small proportion of the total sidewalks. This would be found in the area of South 1st Street to North Division Street. There is a pedestrian study done earlier that mentions the widening of all east to west sidewalks for better pedestrian flow at a future time. As streets are rebuilt, their sidewalks will be widened to 8 feet at that time.

Section IV. Sustainable Community Action Plan

(3) Describe policies, initiatives or projects that the community will undertake or expand in order to reduce the SC Area's impact on the environment. Examples include but are not limited to: conservation or management of stormwater through retrofitting of streets and by-ways (Green Streets, rain gardens, etc.); retrofitting of facilities and homes for energy conservation; implementation of "green" building codes and mixed-use zoning; recycling of waste; clean-ups of watersheds; and, encouragement of "Buy Local" approaches that benefit local suppliers and food producers. A comprehensive menu of such actions may be found through the nonprofit Sustainable Maryland Certified initiative.

The Town of Ocean City is not classified as a NPDES Phase II community, meaning we are not required to file an NOI to be included in the national permit. We are proactive in addressing six measures. These include public education, public involvement, illicit discharge detection, construction site and post construction site runoff and pollution prevention. We have developed a Pollution Prevention and Habitat Enhancement Plan for the SC area. The plan lists the target audiences, common pollutants and their sources, and suggests the best management practices that can be used for various land uses. The town has proposed some projects to remove gross solids and trash from the storm drainage system, mini grants for BayScape and rain gardens, rain barrels, and storm water retrofit cost share program. We will be doing a water quality audit on single family homeowners and give them recommendations on ways they can reduce the impact they have on the environment.

Littering enforcement will slow the discarding of waste by visitors. Our streets and the boardwalk are swept manually and mechanically each day during the summer season. The beach is also cleaned daily with specially-designed machinery. Catch basin inserts will lessen the waste entering local drains. Trees and shrubs obtained through the TreeMendous program will be planted on public lands to help clean the air and provide needed shade.

The State is going to establish a TMDL for the coastal bay and will be assigning a load allocation to the non-point source runoff. This should be happening within the year. The town has developed a database and a GIS data layer for all stormwater management systems installed in the town. This GIS layer has the drainage area to each system and the removal efficiency of the type of BMP. We will be able to calculate a load removed to document our contribution to the load allocation. These systems must be maintained and inspected every 3 years and the date is noted in the database.

The town should continue to include energy and water conservation in all redevelopment projects. The plumbing code requires water saving fixtures.

There are clean-up events each year in town where volunteers spend a day collecting trash from the beach. Another such event focuses on the dunes.

The Maryland Coastal Bays Program uses it's Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan to target water conservation. They have worked with the Hotel-Motel industry to requests that guests reuse their towels and linens to reduce the water demand.

The town has a requirement that any tree removed or large shrub has to be replaced at a ratio of 1:1. A tree about to be removed agrees in an application to replace it by a certain date. The current landscaping ordinance requires 15% of the parcel be planted. A new program may begin this year that will reimburse residents when they plant native species.

Section IV. Sustainable Community Action Plan

(4) Which community groups or stakeholders will be key to the implementation of the initiatives and projects noted in this section?

Maryland Coastal Bays Program, OCDC, Area Merchants, Town of Ocean City Departments (i.e. Public Works, Building, Plumbing, Engineering)

Section IV. Sustainable Community Action Plan

B. Valuing communities and neighborhoods -- building upon assets and building in amenities:

(1) What are the key assets that exist in the community upon which the Plan's projects and initiatives will build? Assets may include physical assets such as parks and historic structures and also civic and economic assets such as employers, educational institutions, and cultural organizations and activities.

Access:
There is an existing street grid system throughout the Sustainable Community Area. Vehicular movement is fairly intuitive and pedestrian movement is facilitated throughout the area for access to the Boardwalk and Beach plus movement to the Bay side of area.

Transit:
An existing bus transit system operates throughout the Sustainable Community Area. Transit movement is primarily, if not exclusively, North/South along the axis of the area.

Parks:
Two major parks within the Sustainable Community are the Sunset Park and Skateboard Park. Sunset Park generally operates as a passive park, yet the location and programming make it ideal for Summer Concerts that are open to the public. Skateboard Park is a skateboard facility owned by Worcester County and operated by the Town of Ocean City. Skateboard Park experiences use throughout the year, although still when the weather is conducive to skateboard activity.

Events:
Throughout the Summer Season, the Town of Ocean City, Ocean City Development Corporation and private entities conduct special events that attract visitors to the Sustainable Community Area. Examples include The Ocean City Air Show, Summerfest, Free Concerts and more.

Section IV. Sustainable Community Action Plan

(2) What policies, initiatives or projects will reuse or enhance the historical assets, traditional business districts/Main Streets and cultural resources of the community? What actions will reinforce your community's authentic "sense of place" and historic character?

The Sustainable Community Area includes the Main Street Program area and is a significant way considered the 'traditional' and historic portion of Ocean City. The Ocean City Boardwalk aligns along the Eastern edge of the Sustainable Community Area where the majority of retail commercial and amusement district exists. Also within this area is the Ocean City Lifesaver Station Museum which functions as a historical society as well.

Implementing the Main Street Program along with updating the Design Guidelines as part of the Action Plan intends to increase the sense of place that exists in the sustainable community Area. Consideration is being given to creating an Historic District with walking tours and plaques to identify the historic elements in the area. Finally, a way finding system for pedestrians is contemplated as a method to further define the cultural, historic and economic resources in the community.

<mark>Section IV. Sustainable Community Action Plan</mark>

(3) Describe policies, initiatives or projects that will increase community access to green spaces, parks and other amenities? A community can gain social and physical benefits from access to a healthy natural environment. The inclusion of complete streets, trails, green space, parks and trees contribute to the character and health of a community. Examples might include improvements to the tree canopy by planting street trees, improving local neighborhood streams, or reusing a vacant lot for a new community park or playground.

Town codes have mandatory setbacks to maintain some open space on each parcel. There are mandatory landscape requirements as part of site plan reviews. Stormwater management requires the planting of native plant species.

The beach allows for access to open space. The beach varies in width. The town routinely cleans the beach using specifically-designed machinery for the purpose. All foreign objects are removed from the sand and discarded.

Sunset Park on the bayside at South Philadelphia Avenue is a small facility with live bands, a stage, exhibits, crabbing, and fishing. It is only a few hundred feet from a bus depot and the boardwalk.
The Downtown Recreation Complex on the bayside between 3rd Street and 4th Street has several activities and open fields for activities. There is a skateboard facility, a playground, baseball fields, a basketball court, and space to go crabbing or fishing.

Somerset Plaza is a converted town street with trees, shops, and free Wi-Fi. It is closed to vehicular traffic. The Inlet jetty provides opportunity for fishing, sightseeing, and bird watching. Deep sea fishing vessels pass by on their way to the nearby harbor.

Landscaping practices focus on the use of native species of plants to assure that they reach maturity.

Section IV. Sustainable Community Action Plan

(4) Which community groups or stakeholders will be key to the implementation of the initiatives and projects noted in this section?

Area Merchants, OCDC Main Street Program, Town of Ocean City Departments (i.e. Recreation, Public Works, Building, Plumbing, Engineering), Downtown residents and property owners, Historic Society.

Section IV. Sustainable Community Action Plan

C. Enhancing economic competitiveness

(1) What economic development policies, initiatives or projects will improve the economy through investments in small businesses and other key employment sectors? What economic development and business incentives will you build upon or implement as part of the SC Plan? Examples could include but are not limited to: green-taping for expedited project application review; permitting and inspection; job training; business tax credits; and, revolving loan funds.

Job training seminars, low interest loans, OCDC grants for commercial improvements, similar to what they do now. The OCDC façade program and Green Building Initiatives program assist businesses and homeowners with improving their properties.

Section IV. Sustainable Community Action Plan

(2) What workforce development policies, initiatives or projects will increase access to jobs and economic opportunity for residents in the SC Area? Do you have a goal for job creation? Are green jobs an opportunity in the jurisdiction or SC Area?

Worcester County/State of Maryland could assist in providing transportation to the job market office. Many of the businesses in Ocean City need labor only during the summer months as this is a coastal resort community that thrives off tourism. The goal of everyone involved in improving our market is to fill every job opening and find housing to keep employees in or near their jobs. A goal of ours is to increase the amount of quality employee housing. Unfortunately, the enforcement of housing standards by town staff determines that many employee housing situations are sub-standard and need upgrades before they can continue to be occupied. This can only be done through private investments, assisted by loans or grants from the local area and funded through the State agencies. Job assistance and training should be provided within the SC area by the State if local, potential employees are to compete for jobs.

MD. Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation - (http://www.dllr.state.md.us/employment/)

Veterans: The Maryland Employment Service administers the Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) to provide services to veterans and eligible persons in the One-Stop Career Centers. Veterans are given priority when referred to job orders placed on Maryland Workforce Exchange. In addition to helping veterans find employment and training opportunities, DVOP/LVER staff provides vocational guidance, referral to supportive services and case management services to veterans with significant barriers to employment.

Maryland's One-Stop Career Centers:

The One-Stop Job Market in Salisbury, Maryland serves Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester counties. The **Job Market** features an array of employment and training services for job seekers and businesses, providing a broad range of workforce development resources and information in one location. We strive to make every customer's experience productive and rewarding by focusing on their needs and providing the right blend of services to ensure success.

Foreign Workers:

Foreign labor could be assisted with finding job openings by asking employers to list their jobs at City Hall and other town facilities, as well as at OCDC and on our website. The Worcester County Economic Development Department can provide access to jobs through offering job placement seminars where applicants can search openings in the local area, much like the jobs fair Ocean City has each year at the Convention Center.

The Social Security Administration provides their services to issue social security numbers to non-resident foreign workers each summer through a cooperative effort with the Ocean City government whereby Social Security staff set-up office in City Hall on 3rd Street, within the SC area, to allow these workers to apply for and obtain numbers that are a requirement for receiving a paycheck from American employers. The small number of hours that the Social Security Administration has allowed for their Ocean City operation has proven to be insufficient (Friday mornings from 8:00 A.M. – 11:00 A.M.). This service needs to be expanded to more than one day per week. Potential foreign workers continually arrive at City Hall expecting to apply for their social security numbers, only to be turned away and told to return the following Friday.

<mark>Section IV. Sustainable Community Action Plan</mark>

(3) Describe whether the Sustainable Community will be impacted by the Base Re-alignment and Closure (BRAC) activities in Maryland. If impacted, how do the initiatives and projects in your Plan complement BRAC-related growth?

There may be an impact by the expected increase in personnel at Wallops Island. At this time the potential impact is not quantified or understood in regards to this Action Plan. Current BRAC activities do not identify facilities located within the municipal limits of Ocean City.

Section IV. Sustainable Community Action Plan

(4) Which community groups or stakeholders will be key to the implementation of the initiatives and projects noted in this section?

Ocean City Chamber of Commerce, Ocean City Development Corporation, Downtown Association, MD. DLLR, Worcester County, MD Business and Economic Development Department, MD Departmetn of Labor and Licensing, Hotel Motel Restaurant Association, Town of Ocean City Departments.

Section IV. Sustainable Community Action Plan

D. Promoting access to quality affordable housing.

(1) What housing policies, initiatives or projects will expand housing choices - rental and homeownership – for people of a range of ages, incomes, and also for disabled individuals? How will these actions address the current housing conditions and needs noted in Section II?

The Town of Ocean City and OCDC shall strive to improve the existing building stock within the Community Legacy Area and to increase the availability of affordable housing opportunities.

POLICY 1: The Town of Ocean City and OCDC shall provide support for various selected public and private building improvement programs, which are aimed at rehabilitation and the provision of additional affordable housing.

POLICY2: The OCDC shall work with the Town in the preparation of neighborhood and redevelopment plans. The Sustainable Communities Area may provide funding or utilize its powers for implementation of appropriate provisions of these plans.

POLICY3: The Town of Ocean City and OCDC shall increase housing opportunities in the area and to demonstrate the type of infill housing, which could be built on available vacant lots within the Sustainable Communities Area.

Section IV. Sustainable Community Action Plan

(2) Will these housing initiatives or projects increase access to transit or community walkability and/or decrease transportation costs? In other words, will the housing investments result in more people living near work or town centers, or able to more conveniently reach work, school, shopping and/or recreation?

Transit - The Town of Ocean City is a linear city which extends 10 miles from north to south and generally only one quarter to one half mile east to west. Almost any new housing projects will be in close proximity to this bus service. The Town's bus system operates year round and covers this whole 10 mile length of island. An all-day bus pass is only $3 making it affordable to residents and visitors. Special discount bus passes are also available. The Town provides a bus to those incapable of using the general bus. This is a free service.

Walkability – For the most part the Town's streets have sidewalks on both sides of the rights of way. The Town has placed a priority on safe walking for residents and visitors. The Town attempts to work with private property owners to widen downtown sidewalks whenever possible. Such wider sidewalks allow for more pedestrians to use the walkways and also to have the option of walking further from the street and vehicles when on street parking is not present. The downtown area has ample on street parking. Such on street parking can be classified as a traffic calming device to assist in more safe walkways. The 2.7 mile long Boardwalk is one of the best and fun walking experiences one will find.

Section IV. Sustainable Community Action Plan

(3) What is your goal for the number of units to be created of affordable workforce housing, rental and homeownership? What populations (by income or special needs) will benefit from this increased access to affordable housing?

Since most of Ocean City is currently developed, an important housing goal is to ensure that a variety of housing types are available to allow for workforce housing, rental and homeownership opportunities. Currently the downtown area contains a concentration of the workforce housing for seasonal summer employees. In several cases, new workforce housing units have been provided, but this is not the norm. Most of these units are in the older buildings and often found on the upper floors above commercial first floors. Proper code enforcement of these older buildings can help ensure that such properties are in good condition and not overcrowded.

Rental housing is quite affordable in Ocean City during the off-season. However, during the peak summer season the market rate structure presents challenges for many.

Home ownership is also challenging for year round residents, however, the current low interest rates and relatively soft real estate market makes for an ideal time for renters to purchase housing.

The Town of Ocean City has a variety of housing such as single-family homes, townhouses, condominiums, and mobile homes.

<mark>Section IV. Sustainable Community Action Plan</mark>

(4) Which community groups or stakeholders will be key to the implementation of the initiatives and projects noted in this section?

Community Partners

The Town of Ocean City is the important player in the downtown revitalization efforts. The Town provides funding to the OCDC for its operations. It also has committed the important revenue stream of the Inlet Parking Lot Fund to be used for revitalization projects such as land acquisition. Its departments work closely with the OCDC staff and Board.

Worcester County is another important partner in the revitalization efforts for downtown Ocean City. The County provides an annual grant to the OCDC for its operations. The County Commissioner for Ocean City serves on the OCDC Board of Directors.

Within Ocean City there is a unique networking of organizations that make up the Partners Group. This loosely set up organization was established seven years ago and is a means of communicating on various issues affecting Ocean City. The OCDC is the newest member of this organization and works very closely with each of the other five Partner organizations. The Partners Group consists of the following organizations:

    Ocean City Development Corporation
    Hotel Motel Restaurant Association, Inc.
    Ocean City Chamber of Commerce
    Downtown Association
    Economic Development Council

The OCDC also has one ex-officio member of each of these organizations. Such members are permitted pursuant to the OCDC by-laws. The OCDC receives valuable input on its redevelopment program from each of these members. The OCDC has provided at least one presentation on its redevelopment program to these organizations and keeps in touch with each organization on a regular basis. The Economic Development Council sponsors meetings on a regular basis whereby the organizations provide an update to each other, too. The Partners Group will play an integral part in our redevelopment program in terms of policy formulation as well as support of our strategies.

The OCDC will need to partner with the Town of Ocean City on the redevelopment program for this area. The OCDC will also require the financial assistance of the City on specific projects, too. Since the creation of the OCDC, this organization has had a strong relationship with the Town of Ocean City. The City's Planning and Community Development Director is the appointed contact between the City and OCDC and he attends our Board meetings. He also works closely with the OCDC Executive Director on several projects. The OCDC provides various information to the City on a regular basis as well as provides an annual report of its activities to the Mayor and City Council.

The most important partnership for the OCDC is to work with the area business owners, property owners, and residents. It is this group that has allowed for the success of the OCDC programs and projects particularly those required a match from the private sector applicants such as the Façade Improvement Program.

Many of the OCDC members are from these groups. Almost the entire OCDC Board is a resident, business owner, or property owner in the downtown area. Other important organizations which the OCDC has partnered with include the UMES/Rural Development Center, Salisbury University, the Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore, the Art League of Ocean City, Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Council, Patrick Bennett Foundation, and Worcester County Arts Council.

The OCDC will also be partnering with area business and property owners to continue its façade improvement program, Green Building Initiatives Program, Business Assistance Program and other OCDC programs. As previously mentioned, the OCDC recognizes the need to partner with the private sector to bring about successful redevelopment. And it also realizes that such actions will require the OCDC to take an aggressive role in promoting this form of redevelopment.

<mark>Section IV. Sustainable Community Action Plan</mark>

E. Support transportation efficiency and access.

(1) What policies, strategies and projects are envisioned to strengthen the transportation network that affects the proposed SC Area? How will these initiatives support transportation choices (including walking, bicycling, bus or rail transit, and carpooling) or otherwise promote an efficient transportation network that integrates housing and transportation land uses?

There is currently a bus transfer station on South Division Street that gives access to public transportation options for visitors. From there, riders have access to any part of town via the buses for a minimal fee. Adjacent to this depot is a large public parking lot. Future plans have this location slated for a public parking garage. Taxi cabs are regulated by the town through a medallion system, charging annual fees for mandatory licenses for each taxi cab on the town's streets.

In West Ocean City the town owns a large parking facility where visitors park and ride the bus into town. The streets, themselves, have been repaved. Utilities have been moved underground. New sidewalks replaced older ones which allow for safer use. There are many bicycle and scooter rental businesses in the SC area. Visitors have several options, once they have parked their personal vehicles, to move about the town.

The town operates several electronic signs that are located where they are most effective. These signs give motorists current information on road conditions, weather, and parking issues to help them avoid congested areas. A grant has just been approved by FEMA to help us purchase another such digital, solar-powered sign later in 2013.

Boardwalk Trams are energy-efficient mini-trains that move tourists up and down the boardwalk. They offer riders a scenic trip along the beachfront where the oceanview can be enjoyed.

Section IV. Sustainable Community Action Plan

(2) If applicable, describe the SC Area's connection or proximity to transportation centers (e.g. Metro, MARC, and light rail stations) and describe opportunities for Transit - Oriented Development (TOD). Will Plan strategies and projects contribute to jobs/housing balance or otherwise provide a mix of land uses that can be expected to reduce reliance on single-occupancy automobiles? (If transit or TOD is not applicable in your community, all points in this section will be based on questions 1 and 3)

The SC area has direct access to major transportation routes and links with air transit facilities including Salisbury Airport and Baltimore Washington International Airport. U.S. Route 50 enters town at Division Street, within the SC area, delivering traffic into the heart of the lower downtown area. The SC area is about a half mile from the West Ocean City Park and Ride facility where visitors can park their vehicles to enter town on one of our buses. There are no rail stations in this area. With the present lack of attractions downtown, visitors can continue to use the bus system and walk between destinations. The 1,200 space Inlet parking lot provides substantial parking relief to the SC area. Another option is for motorists to park further north and walk south along the boardwalk to reach entertainment destinations at the southern end of the SC area.

Section IV. Sustainable Community Action Plan

(3) Which community groups or stakeholders will be key to the implementation of the initiatives and projects noted in this section?

Maryland State Highway Department; Maryland Department of Transportation; Town of Ocean City Public Works (Transportation); and OCDC

Section IV. Sustainable Community Action Plan

F. Coordinating and leveraging (federal, state, local) policies and investment.

(1) What specific steps will the Sustainable Community Workgroup take to coordinate policies and funding streams to remove barriers to investment and maximize and increase funding in the proposed Sustainable Community Area?

The Sustainable Community Workgroup will continue some of the work already underway based on the Community Legacy Plan and explore other options to expand their role as facilitators of resources being employed by the community. Examples of existing programs meant to continue include Façade and Private Business Reinvestment Initiatives supported by funds from Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. Another example of a continuing program is the use of a portion of the funds from the Inlet (Beach) Parking Lot owned and operated by the Town of Ocean City; these funds have been used as matching funds for grants to improve streets, create public parking areas and more.

To expand their current role, the Sustainable Community Workgroup will explore Tax Increment Financing as a funding option; previous attempts were unsuccessful though this option is worthy of pursuit. Another expansion of their role will be actively pursuing Federal and Maryland grants, while using matching local funds to implement priority projects. Being a clearing house and providing increased and active pursuit of Federal and Maryland funding sources that support private business.

Properties in unincorporated Worcester County and immediately adjacent to the Town of Ocean City do not share the same tax burden as those properties in the Sustainable Community Area. Addressing this tax differential would level the playing field of tax burden paid by the properties and encourage investment in the Sustainable Community Area.

Section IV. Sustainable Community Action Plan

(2) How is the proposed Sustainable Community Plan consistent with other existing community or comprehensive plans?

The Sustainable Community plan is consistent with the Ocean City Comprehensive Plan. The following are several of the consistencies:

1) The Sustainable Community area consists of about 255 of the 3,000 acres of land that make up the town. Within those 255 acres are some of the highest density residential occupancies in the town. This area also has the oldest structures in town, dating back to the late 1880s. Our population density far exceeds that of Baltimore City or Annapolis, Maryland. We are challenged to help create new jobs and additional employee housing within a small area that is only active, commercially, about 5 months each year. Having the state programs assisting us in that endeavor is absolutely imperative to our success. This is why we seek financial resources that will help keep money flowing through Ocean City and back to the state.

2) A Sustainable Community must stay ahead of economic competitors by showing outright support and having the resources it needs to attract business and promote its unique opportunities that are indicators of whether this distinct area has infrastructure in place, transportation established, and can protect its natural resources. Our Plan focuses on these exact points, as well.

3) A Sustainable Community needs the transportation infrastructure in place before asking investors to develop. Our Plan recommends improved transportation, a good road system, good transit ridership, and a pedestrian connection between attractions and other points within the SC area. As noted in previous answers, the Ocean City Public Works Department has already made huge road improvements, created wider sidewalks, installed new water pipes, and replaced much of our boardwalk. This shows that the town is serious about competing with other resort destinations for tourism dollars.

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Section IV. Sustainable Community Action Plan

(3) How will the Plan help leverage and/or sustain more private sector investments?

Based on experience the Sustainable Community Action Plan is attainable and realistic. Ocean City witnessed a trend of private investment following public infrastructure improvements. A prime example is the redevelopment just north of the Sustainable Community Area along Baltimore Avenue from 15th Street to 27th Street (the ocean side portion of the town that fronts along the Boardwalk) where Complete Street concepts such as wider sidewalks, under grounding power lines, bike lanes and traffic calming measures were installed. This area received a series of private property reinvestment along those ocean front properties to redevelop mixed use projects and updated accommodations. Another method employed by the Working Group utilizes matching funds to promote Green Building, Façade Improvements, and Business Assistance programs to encourage reinvestment.

Initiatives in the Action Plan anticipate private investment. St. Louis Avenue has a design for a phased streetscape project. Continuing the maintenance of the Boardwalk, increasing the number of comfort stations and even simply repaving existing streets will rejuvenate the area. Implementing Design Guidelines raise the standard of the redevelopment and encourage further redevelopment of adjacent properties.

Addressing the Tax Differential issue encourages investment with a surety that properties within the Sustainable Community Area are taxed fairly for their location as opposed to being disadvantaged by simply being within the municipal boundary. Currently, the Tax Differential encourages growth in the Greenfield area of unincorporated Worcester County. Private sector investments are encouraged to seek new opportunities for growth outside of the area. Reinvestment promoted by this plan sustains the Sustainable Community Area as a major destination in an existing development pattern.

Section V. Progress Measures

For the Plan parts of section IV (A through F):

See attached map, OCDC Future Initiatives

(1) List the specific outcomes that the Plan seeks to produce.

Initial Planning & Organizational Initiatives

As with any long-term aggressive endeavor, planning and organization become ever so important before proceeding with a project. The Downtown Village concept that IWG proposed includes three planned phases. Before the phased work begins, several critical components need to be in place that will assure long-term success and continuity. Several of these initiatives have been completed since the original 1999 IWG Plan of Action and are described below:

Creation of a Downtown Village Association – The Town of Ocean City set up the framework for a new community development corporation as recommended by IWG in 1999. This initial group of 34 people elected a Board of Directors of 15 individuals, which later became incorporated as a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization and was designated the Ocean City Development Corporation. In 2000 the OCDC hired its Executive Director and has its office at 108 Dorchester Street in the center of downtown. The OCDC has been tasked with the charge of revitalizing downtown Ocean City.

Design Standards – A "sense of place" is a difficult product to achieve in a downtown environment. The IWG Plan recommended the creation of urban design characteristics that would help guide new development and renovation in downtown Ocean City.

The OCDC has created two sets of mandatory design standards for downtown Ocean City. These design standards have been instrumental in promoting attractive and better designed projects than would have occurred without such standards. The design standards require new development and renovation to provide the architectural elements found in a seaside vernacular. Such elements generally consist of light colored buildings, pitched roofs, and buildings with ample porches.

Land Assemblage - The 1999 IWG plan state this concept is to address the issues of land assemblage to consolidate several smaller properties and attract a developer. As previously mentioned, the downtown area contains a number of smaller parcels that may be difficult to develop by them. Since developers prefer not to expend ample time to assemble these isolated properties in certain areas, it can be the role of the OCDC to do so. To date, the OCDC and The Town of Ocean City have purchased several parcels for a future assembled project.

Marketing – The IWG report stated redeveloping the downtown interior of Ocean City requires more than physical improvements. The Town of Ocean City has provided significant increases in advertising funds and a marketing campaign to attract tourists to Ocean City. The OCDC has created a marketing video to highlight its organization and downtown Ocean City. Various press releases and newsletters are regularly produced by the OCDC to showcase various redevelopment successes to the general public and development community. In addition, the OCDC partners with a local newspaper to provide a weekly insert of downtown happenings and advertising of local businesses.

Affordable Housing – The IWG report referenced a continuing problem in Ocean City; that ere is a lack of affordable housing for employees. Steps should be undertaken to address this important issue. Although employee housing issue is a City wide issue, the Town of Ocean City and OCDC have recently teamed up to provide four downtown buildings to house some of the City's seasonal workers. An 1897 building at 108 Dorchester Street, 110 Somerset Street, and two buildings at 105 Dorchester Street were renovated and provide affordable housing for Ocean City Beach Patrol employees. The City owns the properties while the OCDC manages and maintains these units.

Funding – The IWG reported the need for the City and OCDC to create development incentives and partnerships to provide the transformation of the physical look of downtown. Such incentives are necessary to attract the type of "high profile" anchors into the downtown core area. Land assemblage, tax abatements, business improvement districts, and tax increment financing are several incentive types IWG

recommended to look at. The Town of Ocean City and OCDC have researched various incentives. Due to the magnitude of this cost this issue will need further time.

<u>**PHASING PLAN**</u>
Realizing the complexities in implementing any Plan of Action, IWG divided the overall Downtown Village into three phases. All the recommendations proposed in this visioning document interconnect, thus implementing them in a sequential manner is critical to the overall success of a revitalized downtown. Refer to attached map labeled OCDC Future Initiatives.

PHASE I IMPROVEMENTS

East/West Corridors from Baltimore Avenue to the Boardwalk
The challenge presented to IWG (as related to pedestrian traffic patterns) was to motivate pedestrian mobility from the beach and boardwalk to and from the bay front. The first logical step in obtaining a unified downtown core is the ability to tie the successful boardwalk development with the interior downtown blocks. Very little pedestrian traffic is directed towards activities in the downtown interior. Subsequently, in order to achieve a more balanced circulation pattern, safe, inviting and friendly pedestrian corridors need to be designed.

To date three street segments have been converted from vehicular streets to pedestrian/semi-pedestrian streets only:
Somerset Plaza (Baltimore Avenue to the Boardwalk)
South 1st Street (Baltimore Avenue to the Boardwalk)
South Division Street (Philadelphia Avenue to the Bay)

Although is it very challenging to create these pedestrian corridors, they can play a major role in the revitalization of downtown Ocean City. The Town of Ocean City and OCDC should evaluate other potential pedestrian corridors as they arise.

In addition, certain streets will require wider sidewalks to accommodate increased pedestrian movements, particularly for safety issues.

Parking Facility/Multi-model Transit Station
Since the 1970's there have been a number of studies related to downtown Ocean City. Each study has recommended the construction of a parking facility.

The IWG report believes that in order to achieve a balanced pedestrian circulation pattern and address some of the congestion issues, that a parking facility be constructed along the interior core of the downtown area. The site which would have the greatest impact on circulation but the least impact on existing businesses are the two blocks bordered by Baltimore Avenue (on the east), S. Division Street (on the south), Philadelphia Avenue (on the west) and Wicomico Street (on the north).
This combination of properties lies strategically near the south end of the downtown area and in the middle of the bay and boardwalk. In addition, the parking facility can incorporate a new multi-model station, replacing the existing transit station on S. Division Street. A new multi-model station could house the existing transit functions, a stop for bicycles, a park and ride destination as well as a ticket outlet for a potential water transportation system operating parallel to the bayside.
The parking facility's design should be compatible with surrounding architecture and reinforce the new "Downtown Village" theme. The facility will have to be designed around and incorporate the existing water tower. As mentioned earlier in this phase, some modifications to vehicular circulation will need to be made.
Financing the parking facility will be the greatest challenge. Most facilities are financed through public means. These facilities are not usually required to make a profit. Most are publicly financed through tax exempt bond issues or revenue bonds. More recently however, are facilities financed with some infusion of

private funds. Outsourcing of facility development allows the private sector turnkey delivery of a facility, on a public site, within a structured agreement, typically a leaseback.

Lenders prefer locations that offer a mix of monthly and transient revenue. The proposed site's proximity to the boardwalk and amusement areas, coupled with the elimination of a portion of metered spaces in the pedestrian corridors and proposed facility location, provide the demand counts to help justify its use. Close proximity to future developable sites also is advantageous. Another strategy to consider when looking at financing alternatives is seeking a new financing vehicle, which includes more amenities than just a parking facility. For example, the facility could incorporate some retail on the first level. High turnover storefronts such as dry cleaners, coffee shops, and ATM machines would be beneficial. These types of services are more for convenience. Most are small spaces, and premium rents can be justified because they're going to benefit from the pedestrian traffic.

A local cost-sharing program might also be developed with local businesses that would include parking packages for employees working in nearby businesses. Furthermore, by incorporating a multi-model facility, the project becomes eligible for federal funding. Federal grants can help buy down the capital cost of the parking facility, making the complex more financially feasible.

Pedestrian Plan

As an extension of the Inlet Park is the wrap-around boardwalk along the inlet. The boardwalk along the inlet should extend from the edge of the proposed Inlet Park and wrap around to the bayside following the waterside as much as possible until the connection to the bayside boardwalk at 2nd Street. It is recognized the U. S. Coast Guard station can present an obstacle given homeland security issues with extending this boardwalk through this property. However, easements for this proposed boardwalk should be pursued on other properties as much as possible.

Specialty Retail

Providing parking in the interior core of the downtown area will have a significant impact in redistributing the circulation pattern throughout the area. However, commercial opportunities are created when a parking facility is constructed from the high amount of pedestrian traffic that will be generated. Specialty retail and convenience goods are natural tenants to locate near parking facilities.

As mentioned earlier in the report, convenience goods would be ideal tenants as part of a parking facility. The IWG team noticed however, that very few specialty shops existed in the downtown core area (antique shops, apparel, furnishings etc.). As part of an overall strategy to redevelop the core area a "Specialty Retail Village" concept should be designed in the interior core between Baltimore Avenue and Philadelphia Avenue from the Inlet to N. Division Street. This area, along with the parking facility will set the tone for the rest of the district as it relates to the building's architectural design.

An important component to the special retail concentration is the inclusion of adequate outdoor shopping, dining and quality entertainment spaces. The large open public spaces are designed wide enough so that service vehicles could access the interior spaces. This type of design allows people to not only shop by strolling but also attracts people who want to just watch the people (a similar concept to the boardwalk). The open outdoor spaces would allow other "public" uses to occur, such as art exhibits and musical entertainers. An *interesting place* happens when a person experiences a place where they can be stimulated by sight, by smell, and by sound.

The vision described above will only happen if there is a commitment to make it happen. The easiest way to realize this vision is by starting with one of the interior blocks and move outwards. The IWG team suggested that the city, through the DVA (OCDC), implement a two-step process in selecting a concept and development team for the Specialty Retail Village.

The first step would be a Request for Development Qualifications followed by a Request for Proposals. Following OCDC and city council selection of the developer, city staff would then negotiate terms and conditions for implementation. Using this specialty retail concentration as an initial financing tool, the concept can begin small and evolve into one of the most desirable areas in Ocean City.

East/West Corridor Enhancements from Baltimore Avenue to Philadelphia Avenue
While making the necessary improvements (pedestrian crosswalks and pedestrian improvements) along Baltimore and Philadelphia Avenues, as well as during the design of the Specialty Retail blocks, careful consideration will need to be made as to the design of the east/west corridors between Baltimore Avenue and Philadelphia Avenue.

South Division Street could become a "transit only" thoroughfare, however, it acts as a strong pedestrian link between the boardwalk and bayside. This will be one of the more popular pedestrian routes with the parking facility/transit station situated along S. Division Street. This proposed project will only occur with the cooperation of the property owners along S. Division Street east of Baltimore Avenue.

The remaining east/west streets from Wicomico Street to N. Division Street will all be open to vehicular traffic, however, should include similar pedestrian amenities to those corridors east of Baltimore Avenue. These streets will play an important role with respect to east/west circulation and compliment the proposed Specialty Retail block(s) with respect to access and parking. Several side streets could be redesigned to allow for wider sidewalks and angled parking.
The remaining east/west streets between Baltimore and Philadelphia Avenues, from N. Division Street to 3rd Street could also contain pedestrian enhancements. These streets will preserve their width and current parking space allotments.
East/west streets north of 3rd Street should be reviewed for increased opportunities to provide wider sidewalks and improved pedestrian amenities.

Baltimore Avenue Enhancements
Similar to Philadelphia Avenue, Baltimore Avenue north of North Division Street necessitates an improved look. Currently, Baltimore Avenue serves as Ocean City's "Main Street". In 1993, the southern portion of Baltimore Avenue (up to South 2nd Street) was completely renovated with upgraded underground utilities, landscaping, decorative paving and street furniture.
Similar to the Philadelphia Avenue evaluation, Baltimore Avenue should also be analyzed to the most appropriate use of traffic lanes and parking. During the IWG report it was stated that many residents and business owners expressed a desire to see parking made available again along Baltimore Avenue. While IWG concurred with this request, it would be in the best interest of the city to have the comprehensive transportation analysis completed prior to finalizing these plan specifics. The City will be reviewing options for the area of public right of way that is located in significant sections of this street north of North Division Street.

PHASE II IMPROVMENTS

Completion of East/West Corridor Enhancements to the Bayside
The final phase of the east/west corridor enhancements takes the pedestrian improvements from Philadelphia Avenue all the way to the bayside. This includes all of the streets from 3rd Street to S. Division Street. All of these streets will preserve their widths as well as their existing parking spaces. The pedestrian enhancements for these remaining streets will be consistent with the rest of the previously improved streets.

Future Developable Site Evaluation
Up to this phase the recommendations made toward realizing a more active interior downtown core centered on small-to-medium size public/private sector investments. This approach is logical considering the seasonal challenges and unproven market for a large-scale investment project. Having achieved success in phases I and II, the next natural evolution is the ability to attract the "high-profile" anchors, such as an IMAX theater, new hotel anchor or museum.
Towards this goal, the Town of Ocean City and OCDC must identify potential developable sites that offer prospective projects a location with easy access, high visibility, and land availability. Several obvious parcels rise to the top of the list including the former Cropper Concrete location which offers long term possibilities. The OCDC and Town of Ocean City should develop a comprehensive strategy in packaging these properties as potential public/private ventures.

Proposed projects to pursue in future:

Business Assistance Program – The OCDC should continue its successful commercial façade program which has improved the overall appearance of the downtown area. In addition, such façade applicants will be required to adhere to the downtown design standards for such renovation work. A new business assistance program has been started by the OCDC to provide financial assistance to new and expanding businesses in the downtown area. Other business assistance programs may be considered in the future.

Land Acquisition/Landbanking – The consolidation and assembly of land is proposed to begin the physical transformation of the downtown area. The recommended location(s) of this land assembly is an interior block that is west of Baltimore Avenue and east of Philadelphia Avenue; however the OCDC should be flexible to reviewing other properties that are available for other redevelopment endeavors.

The interior area project is planned as a mixed commercial/residential use development with a single anchor tenant (i.e., a high density residential or hotel with limited convention facilities that would bring people to and have them stay in the area for a period of time). The project should meet recommended architectural style/theme standards and promote a strong pedestrian orientation.

The property should contain limited onsite parking. This will allow for compact development while simultaneously limiting building height. Parking should be provided via a fee process within the anticipated Downtown public parking facility. An Incentive Program should be created that includes recommended development guidelines as well as financial "incentives" to encourage redevelopment.

Downtown Parking Facility – Ocean City's mass transit system provides an excellent service and will remain an important ingredient in bringing people to the Downtown area. In fact, due to the success of the City's bus service, the use of the parking/transit center at South Division Street has expanded significantly and needs to be replaced with a larger facility. A larger facility with accompanying service lanes is necessary at the earliest possible time. The center also handles buses from the County's bus system.

A major obstacle for redevelopment of the downtown is the lack of parking. Parking should be used as a redevelopment strategy to allow new and existing properties to redevelop and utilize this intermodal facility. A multi-level parking deck should be constructed in the downtown area and the parking structure should be tied into a new intermodal transit station. It is imperative that the parking structure be attractive and emphasizes the quality of the redevelopment efforts. First floor retail or other active use should be considered to provide additional street life to South Baltimore Avenue and Worcester Street.

Inlet Boardwalk Connection – In order to physically tie the bayside properties and the Boardwalk together, an inlet boardwalk will need to be constructed. This connection will run westward from the present City's Inlet boardwalk and then continue northward to link to the Philadelphia Avenue's 14 feet wide boardwalk constructed on the west side of the street. The long term goal is a connected boardwalk along the waterfront, extending northwards to 4th Street.

Route 50 Bridge improvements – Presently, the Route 50 Bridge contains limited space for pedestrians, bicyclists, and fishermen. To correct this situation, several options have been discussed ranging from renovations of the existing bridge to the construction of a new bridge. The decision as to this bridge issue will be determined in the near future although the actual construction/renovation will be many years away from occurring.

Downtown Public Arts Program – Public art is a major component in creating a city's visual image. Public art is often the element that can help in making a city memorable and provides it significance for succeeding generations. The OCDC recognizes the importance of public art as a means of enhancing the quality of life in the community and as a means of providing professional opportunities to local and regional visual artists. The OCDC has established a committee to promote and sponsor various types of

public artwork for the Downtown area. This committee includes representatives from the Downtown Association, Beautification Committee, and the Art League of Ocean City.

Historic Preservation Program– Ocean City contains several structures and sites that have interest from a historic and architectural viewpoint. The preservation and enhancement of such places can be a boom for redeveloping the Downtown area. However, without any incentives to fit these structures into the future plans for the Downtown area, many will continue to deteriorate and be demolished. Besides direct preservation of such structures, the OCDC will provide educational materials to promote the preservation efforts for specific structures. Such efforts can include a historic marker program and walking tour maps.

Residential Enhancement Program – There are number of residential buildings in downtown Ocean City that could be provided with incentives for renovation as with the residential Façade Program. In particular, the St. Louis Avenue area, between North Division Street and 1st Street presents an opportunity that is unique in the Downtown area. This area possesses a number of quaint homes that can be rehabilitated and help create another "interesting place" in the Downtown area. Also, additional year round housing opportunities in the downtown area should be promoted to increase the number of residents and help the local year round restaurants and retail stores.

OCDC Fence Program – Consistent with its downtown design standards, the OCDC will provide financial assistance to commercial and residential property owners desiring to install new fencing on the street sides or front yards of their properties. Such fencing can be used as an effective screening method for parking areas for commercial uses as well as an attractive and traditional element for residential properties.

Employee Housing – This item has been a major issue for the many years. Although, newer hotels and service related businesses are constructed, the number of employee housing units is decreasing. The OCDC supports efforts to improve, rehabilitate, and construct new units reserved for employee housing. Such housing generally does not require much parking and can be effectively integrated into mixed-use developments.

Future Large Site Redevelopment – There are several large scale sites that can be utilized for future redevelopment in the downtown area. Two potential sites are the present Coast Guard Station, south of Worcester Street on the Bayside, and the Cropper Property, which was used as a concrete plant and located on the Bayside, north of N. Division Street, but is now available for redevelopment. Both properties represent potentials to locate larger attractions to the area, such as an aquarium or IMAX Theatre, as well as, compact mixed-use development. Of course, the Coast Guard site would be problematic to redevelop given the need for such a facility near the inlet area. The Cropper property could be impacted by the Route 50 Bridge configuration. Either type of project will need to comply with the general guidelines, which the OCDC promotes. Other larger street sites can be included as land assemblage becomes practical and necessary.

Baltimore Avenue street improvements – This important corridor should be provided comprehensive street improvements between North Division Street and 15th Street. The additional public right of way may be useful to improve portions of this street.

St. Louis Avenue Improvements – Future streetscaping along St. Louis Avenue north of N. Division Street will assist in creating a more pleasing walking environment. Such improvements should consist of improved pedestrian amenities, improved intersections, and undergrounding of utilities. This project is currently in the construction process over a three year period.

Street enhancements – Consistent with the IWG Plan of Action, various downtown streets should be provided various improvements. Some of these improvements may include changes to the traffic flow, but many should improve the pedestrian amenities with special reference to wider sidewalks.

Alleyway improvements – As already referenced alleys play a significant role in downtown Ocean City. Provisions should be made to improve alleys when necessary as well as promoting alleys in larger projects. Such alleys can be improved to provide additional stormwater management techniques.

Water taxi – consistent with the original IWG Plan of Action a water taxi system can be included into the downtown transportation plans to provide an interesting method for visitors and residents to travel to various destination points.

Wayfinding signage program – Fitting into the various redevelopment strategy of identifying important points of interest in downtown is the need to direct people to such points. A wayfinding signage program can be used for vehicular and pedestrians to direct and highlight various destinations to visit.

Interactive water display – Although not yet identified for a specific suitable site, an interactive water display should be considered to attract people.

Improved entranceway to inlet parking lot – Recognizing the large number of vehicles visiting the Inlet Parking Lot, it should be provided with a more appealing look. This project could be combined with improvements to the Inlet Park which is adjacent to this entrance.

Special events – The Town of Ocean City and OCDC should continue to promote special events in downtown Ocean City. Some of these special events could be directly provided by the OCDC or through sponsorship assistance.

Building demolition program – There are several buildings that are severely dilapidated in downtown and could require demolition. The State of Maryland has a program for providing financial assistance to such severe structures. These buildings should be reviewed on a case by case basis working with the affected property owner and Town of Ocean City.

Marketing – The OCDC will pursue strategies to promote downtown Ocean City as well as the OCDC's program and successes. Such marketing may consist of press releases, videos, City publications, local radio and television resources, area publications, and OCDC newsletters.

Design Standards – Work with Town of Ocean City to create design standards for other areas of the Town.

Community Partners

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The OCDC will need to partner with the Town of Ocean City on the redevelopment program for this area. The OCDC will also require the financial assistance of the City on specific projects, too. Since the creation of the OCDC, this organization has had a strong relationship with the City. The City's Planning and

Community Development Director is the appointed contact between the City and OCDC and he attends our Board meetings. He also works closely with the OCDC Executive Director on several projects. The OCDC provides various information to the City on a regular basis as well as provides a quarterly report of its activities to the Mayor and City Council.

The most important partnership for the OCDC is to work with the area business owners, property owners, and residents. Other important organizations which the OCDC has partnered with include the UMES/Rural Development Center, Salisbury University, the Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore, the Art League of Ocean City, Patrick Bennett Foundation, and Worcester County Arts Council.

The OCDC will also be partnering with area business and property owners to continue its façade improvement program, if funded by the State. As previously mentioned, the OCDC recognizes the need to partner with the private sector to bring about successful redevelopment. And it also realizes that such actions will require the OCDC to take an aggressive role in promoting this form of redevelopment.

<u>**Recommended Action Items**</u>

The following projects are recommended planning initiatives followed by a three-phase plan of action:

Planning Initiatives

- Develop plan and initiate evaluation of streets requiring wider sidewalks in downtown
- Plan for future land acquisition activities
- Design wayfinding signage program
- Evaluate appropriate business assistance programs
- Identify buildings and programs to preserve designated historic buildings
- Identify Buildings for renovations
- Develop marketing strategies
- Work with Town to create design standards for other areas of city, including the Boardwalk.
- Create and promote a program that provides tax relief to specific older structures which complete significant renovation
- Consider the development of an Historic District Program incorporating the Lifesaving Museum and increasing the role of the Historical Society
- Address the Tax Differential with Worcester County to increase funding

Phase I
- Continue OCDC Commercial Façade Program
- Continue OCDC Residential Façade Program
- Continue OCDC Public Art Program
- Create and implement business assistance program
- Pursue land acquisition/landbanking activities
- Pursue parking structure development
- Expand Fence program
- Prioritize Code Enforcement
- Implement renovation program
- Implement wayfinding signage program
- Promote additional special events in downtown area
- Assist owners in historic preservation efforts as requested
- Manage employee housing units
- Promote street improvements to St. Louis Avenue
- Promote park improvements to $3^{rd}/4^{th}$ Street park area
- Alleyway improvements

Phase II

- Continue programs referenced in Phase I
- Continue to pursue wrap around Bayside/Inlet Boardwalk project
- Completion of East/West corridor enhancements
- Development of specialty retail concentration in interior block area
- Work with City to develop Baltimore Avenue enhancements from N. Division Street to 15th Street
- Inlet Park/entranceway improvements

Phase III

- Continue programs referenced in Phase I
- Completion of East/West Corridor enhancements to the bayside
- Pursue developers for land banked properties
- Promote water taxi system

Section V. Progress Measures

(2) And, list the specific benchmarks that will be used to measure progress toward these outcomes.

There are a number of benchmarks to use to gauge the success of the redevelopment efforts of this extended Community Legacy Plan. They are as follows:

Design Standards implementation – the easiest method to determine the effectiveness of this project is to evaluate the quality of the new buildings being designed and developed in this district. The OCDC has already been working with the Town of Ocean City in this site plan process and has offered many recommendations that have been incorporated into the design of new projects.

Façade Program – the increased number of commercial uses that are renovating their facades. As previously mentioned, this program would be aimed at commercial businesses as well as motel, hotels, bed & breakfast establishments, and housing serving workforce employees. The effectiveness of this program is easily determined by the number of projects completed as well as the level of private investment.

An increase in the pedestrian traffic within this district, particularly in the inner blocks, would be good measure of success.

The number of site plans and building permits being issued could also measure additional private sector redevelopment.