America in Bloom
2017 EVALUATION REPORT

Community: Edmonston, MD

Population Category: Under 3,500

Evaluation Dates: July 26 - 27, 2017

Judges: Kristin Pategas & Marjorie Egee

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

All evaluation criteria are adjusted to the climate and environmental conditions of the community's location.

This Evaluation Report is based upon your community's efforts in each of the following criteria:

Criteria	Possible Points	Actual Points
1. Floral Displays	175.00	138.00
2. Landscaped Areas	175.00	131.00
3. Urban Forestry	125.00	86.00
4. Environmental Efforts	175.00	138.00
5. Heritage Preservation	160.00	104.00
6. Overall Impression	125.00	94.00
Total	**935**	**691.00**
%	**0.73904**	
Bloom Rating	**FOUR**	

Five blooms = 85% Four blooms = 72.50–84.95% Three blooms = 60.00–72.45% Two blooms = 45.00–59.95% One bloom = <45.00%

Community representatives to receive the Evaluation Report:

Name: Rod Barnes	Title: Town Administrator	Email: rbarnes@edmonstonmd.gov
Name: Tracy Grant	Title: Mayor	Email: tfarrish@edmonstonmd.gov
Name: David Tana	Title: Green Team	Email: davidtana@gmail.com

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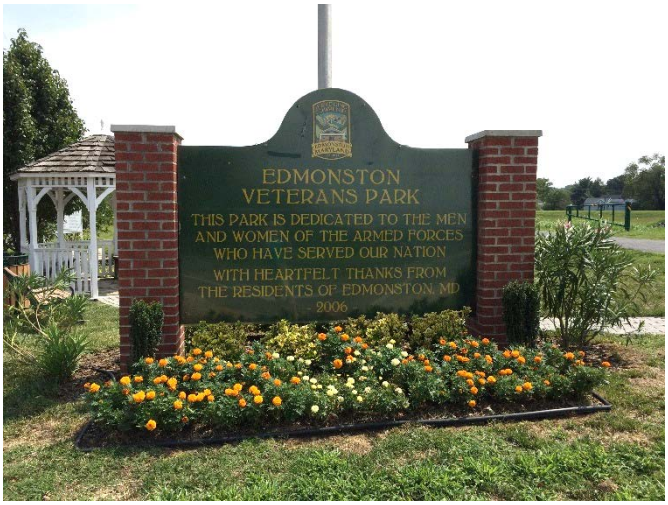
General Observations and Recommendations:

Recommendations are indicated in italics.

Congratulations Edmonston, Maryland for the third year in America in Bloom's National Awards Program. Edmonston has now achieved a four-bloom rating! This is a significant achievement that indicates commitment and innovation of the leadership as well as the community. Edmonston deserves to be proud of all that has been accomplished each year, trying new things and building upon success. The four blooms rating requires focus and engagement in each of the six America In Bloom evaluation criteria to achieve this high level of community enhancement. We applaud the vision, determination and results.



In early 2000, Edmonston suffered flooding and damage to homes, forcing residents to evacuate. The source of the problem came from stormwater that ran off roads, roofs, and other impermeable surfaces. By 2010 Edmonston garnered national attention when it dedicated the reopening of Decatur Street, a "green street". This project pioneered the combination of low impact development and complete street principles. Elevated crosswalks, rain gardens, and permeable pavement bike lanes together capture nearly 100% of storm water runoff, which percolates through the soil, reducing pollution. LED streetlights, traffic calming bump-outs and a green power purchase agreement together earned a White House award for "Innovations in Infrastructure." This project set the bar high and the town has worked extensively to continue to make environmental improvements for healthy living.

Leadership is strong, with a clear vision of what can be improved with innovation and partnering. Over twenty organizations, schools and businesses are involved with Edmonston-based projects. For example, Edmonston is a leading community in the Sustainable Maryland Program. Recipient of several grants to fund sustainable practices, the town has accomplished numerous environmental projects. Partnering with three nearby communities, the Port Towns is a strong collaboration that focuses on healthy and sustainable lifestyles for their residents, businesses and environment. Developing the Port Towns as an Eco District will facilitate these objectives of sustainable development and reducing the ecological footprint.

For twenty years Reverend Gail Addison has directed a nonprofit faith based, community based, school based, youth development and empowerment organization. Port Towns Youth Council is a leadership institute for youth wellness, with pathways to successful careers. We met some of Rev. Addison's youth leaders at Eco City Farms where they were learning about healthy foods and preparation. The vision is to work through youth to connect families to communities that do more than survive, but thrive. Another initiative for youth was hosted by the town of Edmonston, the first Environmental Summer Camp for children ages 8 to 13 for ten weeks this summer. The Busy Bees campers learned how they are part of the environment and that we are all connected. The community's philosophy is being taught to the next generation of avid students.

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Edmonston's town hall is beautifully planted with rain gardens, a pollinator garden, children's garden, and numerous containers filled with blossoms by the entryway. Containers and hanging baskets are generously located all around town, with numerous rain gardens and landscaped areas abloom with beauty and pride. Green team member Ed Hooker has led the charge to accomplish these feats. There is a new community garden, a new code enforcement officer, and tremendous energy and creativity in Edmonston. This is a community with a strong heartbeat. The Green Team also has a new logo. *We recommend this logo be used promoting the team and recruiting new members. Add the logo to the Facebook page, to brightly colored t-shirts or work vests and to the town's website to create awareness and advertise all the great work taking place around town. When people stop to ask what's happening or to say thank you, be sure to ask for their email and actively recruit them for the next project.*

Note that some line items in the Urban Forestry and Heritage Preservation criteria were not scored (shown with NA) due to the lack of natural areas and potential tree planting at most of the businesses as well as the lack of historic business properties. This procedure reduces the number of maximum points so the score is not compromised with a low score in those line items. Where an NA is used the possible points in that criterion were reduced.

We thank Edmonston for its participation and enthusiasm for America in Bloom. We encourage continuation to round out the program and build upon the successes. With so many projects initiated, Edmonston has much to anticipate for its future! We greatly appreciate the generous and warm hospitality during our two-day visit. We thank you for the continued relationship with America In Bloom and we hope to work with Edmonston again in 2018.

Kristin Pategas
Marjorie Egee
America in Bloom Judges

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1. Floral Displays

Flower beds, containers, planters, baskets, window boxes, trellises. Arrangement, originality, distribution, location, diversity, balance, harmony, quality of maintenance. Use and integration of annuals, perennials, ornamental grasses, bulbs, tropical plants, and seasonal flowers and colorful foliage that provide year-round interest.	Max points	Actual Score
Municipal		
Leadership and plan of action for floral displays	20	17
Concept and design, variety of plantings, overall effect	20	15
Maintenance and quality of displays	20	16
Design for all seasons	15	12
Business		
Concept and design, overall effect	15	13
Maintenance and quality of displays	15	13
Residential		
Concept and design, overall effect	15	10
11Maintenance and quality of displays	15	11
Community Involvement		
Volunteer involvement in design, planting, and maintenance of floral displays	20	15
Financial and in-kind contributions to floral displays	20	16
Total (the fields automatically calculate – do not type in them)	**175.00**	**138.00**

Observations and Recommendations:

Edmonston is a working-class town of just under 1,500 residents and employs Police, Public Works and administrative staff with a small operating budget. For this community to find the funds and manpower to install and maintain floral displays seemed like a distant dream. However, in 2017 that dream came true.

In 2016 a local paving company, Metro Paving, acquired several large, used concrete planters from a federal property. These planters also served as traffic bollards, so they were extremely heavy and durable. Metro Paving approached Edmonston and asked if they would like 39 of these containers to beautify the town. Town staff and volunteers from the Green Team quickly marshalled their forces to identify strategic locations for the planters. Some were placed along Decatur Street, the town's main street, while others were placed at town hall, the recreation center, and other public locations.

Businesses donated monies and labor to expedite planting. A local nursery provided discounts on plants and the Green Team worked with Proven Winners to provide design assistance in the plant selection. The results were almost immediate. The consistency of planter style, color and floral palette suddenly gave the town an identity. Commuters traveling through now knew they were in a special place. Keep the momentum by going by reviewing this year's plantings and designing for next year. Some recommendations include:

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1. *Keep current with new plant introductions by Proven Winners and other growers. Visit the Mt Cuba Center's trail gardens for potential natives and perennials to include in the floral displays. If possible, attend Proven Winners plant trials to review plant performance and combinations. The closest location may be Delaware: https://www.provenwinners.com/learn/plant-trials*
2. *Care for containers with regular watering and fertilization. Develop a schedule for Public Works staff to follow and work with Nature's Source to determine if their liquid fertilizer can be safely tank-mixed for faster applications using the truck-mounted water tank.*
3. *Conduct tests on applying a slow-release fertilizer to stretch the time between liquid applications. When using slow-release products, be sure to incorporate them evenly into the soil, rather than placing it on the soil surface. Otherwise, such applications can result in plant damage.*
4. *This year's plantings used the thriller/filler/spiller technique with great results. Unfortunately, some of the thrillers were so impressive (small Japanese maples) that they were appropriated by others. To discourage future pilfering, choose less expensive thrillers such as ornamental grasses, cannas or upright perennials. Keep in mind that small shrubs may not survive freezing temperatures in the winter.*
5. *To help fund spring bulb plantings, consider registering with Brent and Becky Bulbs' special fundraising program called "Bloomin Bucks". This program gives 25% of the cost of the bulbs to a chosen not-for-profit. Set up the Green Team to receive a percentage of the purchase price of all bulbs purchased by the community. Get the word out to encourage Edmonston residents and businesses to purchase and plant their own bulbs, while helping finance the town's displays (http://www.bloominbucks.com/).*

The Green Team had two hanging basket displays using the 16" Weekender hanging basket from Eckert's Greenhouse. These smaller baskets on a 10' pole and base look best in an intimate setting. The display at the bridge looks out of scale and the baskets appear to be drying out quickly due to the location. *We recommend that this display be added to the one at the community garden beds behind town hall and grow herbs or vegetables in these containers. In this location, the baskets will receive the attention they need to thrive.*

We applaud the venture into adding hanging baskets and recommend starting with the 23" H2O Labor Saver or 28" Wrap Around baskets. These larger baskets can hold more soil and water to support lush floral displays and do not require daily watering. Start with a few test baskets in a location where they can be easily watered, fertilized and groomed as needed. Keep track of the maintenance time they require in order to determine how many baskets Public Works can support and if dedicated volunteer time is needed. One AIB community efficiently waters their baskets by counting the seconds it takes to water the first one (stop counting when water drips from the bottom). Then they water each basket for the same number of seconds.

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If adding hanging basket displays on the bridge prove too difficult due to traffic or access, we suggest looking at planters attached to the bridge. They can be attached to the top railing and be trimmed so they do not cover the graphics. However, the plants can trail over the outside of the railing to provide a colorful display seen from the water. Here is an example from AIB community Warrenville, IL.

As the realty market heats up, local realtors have the most to gain from Edmonston's beautification efforts. *Encourage them to play an active role in sponsoring some of the floral and landscape projects. Sponsoring the displays at the welcome signs would be a great start. Be sure to place thank you signs for each sponsor.*

Here's another creative way to finance floral displays*. In one community, retiring officers or town staff are recognized by chipping in to sponsor the purchase of a handsome container planting called "Going to Pot" in honor of the individual*. It's a witty way to recognize the service of a dedicated individual while further serving the community.

For 2017, Edmonston implemented a "Yard of the Month" program for residential gardens. The colorful lawn signs are great for attracting attention and acknowledging those who work hard to create a beautiful display for the town to enjoy. *We encourage extending this program to include businesses to encourage more beautification in these industrial areas.*

Collect flower and vegetable seed packets from garden centers at the end of the growing season. These expired seeds are still viable (especially when stored in the refrigerator) and can be given to residents the following spring to encourage more flowers. Save the vegetable seeds for the town's community gardens.

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2. Landscaped Areas

Overall design and suitability of landscape, turf, and ground covers. Use of native and introduced plants. Good use of design principles (i.e., balance of plant material and constructed elements, harmony, color, texture, shape, focal points, etc.). Sustainability. Integration of lighting, hardscapes, and site elements such as lamp posts, water features, drinking fountains, bicycle racks, benches, trash/recycling receptacles, etc. Maintenance (weeds, mulching practices, edging). Site rejuvenation and rehabilitation. Efforts in strategic planning. Community gardens, children's gardens, healing gardens, pollinator gardens, Backyard Wildlife Habitat, Audubon, and other specialty public gardens and zoos.	Max points	Actual Score
Municipal		
Overall design and planting of landscape, turf and groundcovers	15	12
Environmental management of sports fields and turf	15	12
Quality of landscape maintenance	15	13
Sustainable management, naturalization and eco-design	15	10
Business		
Overall design and planting of landscape	15	12
Management of turf and groundcovers	10	7
Quality of landscape maintenance	15	12
Residential		
Overall design and planting of landscape	15	10
Management of turf and groundcovers	15	10
Quality of landscape maintenance	15	10
Community Involvement		
Volunteer involvement, i.e. garden clubs, neighborhood groups, Master Gardeners and University extension, in funding, planting, and maintenance of landscaped areas	15	11
Participation in future planning (committees, councils, and advisory boards.)	15	12
Total (the fields automatically calculate – do not type in them)	**175.00**	**131.00**

Observations and Recommendations:

The town hall is attractively planted with two rain gardens in the front, a pollinator habitat, a children's garden, crapemyrtles and numerous containers bursting with color. The beautiful blooming entry to this municipal building puts a smile on everyone's face.

We understand the wood fence along the south side is to be replaced. Behind this fence is a six-foot high chain link fence, located on the neighboring property. *To save the cost of installing a new fence and avoid repeating a double fence that leads to weeds that cannot be accessed, consider removing the wood fence and asking permission to grow an evergreen vine on the chain link fence to create privacy and a living wall. If the town proceeds with a new wood fence, then a simple support trellis of black insulated wire (available from Home Depot) and eye screws can be installed for vines. Download this pdf file for recommended vines to grow in Maryland: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/greenspring/infosheets/vines.pdf*

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The town hall parking lot has small hydrangeas that require more room to reach their mature size. Consider moving them to a larger space. Plant the small triangular spaces between the vehicles with the vines for the previous recommendation or with ground covers, short ornamental grasses or sedges.

The Welcome to Edmonston sign at the Sunoco station (Decatur Street and Kenilworth Avenue) has a small garden in front, several large planted containers, a bench, and shrubs facing the intersection. But these plantings and furnishings are not unified visually. *Create a new overall bed to incorporate these units into one space. Remove turf inside the bed line and use low ornamental grasses and other groundcovers. Flowering perennials or flowering shrubs can be used to add color. This simple change will reduce the time needed to mow and edge around each individual item and along the sidewalk.*

The previous recommendation can also apply to the restored Veterans Memorial sign at the bridge. Use a garden hose or landscape paint to mark where the new bed edges will be dug. We recommend planting an evergreen for use as a holiday tree. Select a location and bed size that will accommodate it at maturity and be visible from both Decatur Street and Taylor Road. Seating in the gazebo would also be a welcomed addition.

The community garden is well staged for success. It is fully enclosed with raised beds, fruit trees, a water tank, tool shed and a compost bin. Outside the fence are attractively planted containers of flowers, herbs and a pollinator habitat. Inside the fence, vegetable gardens spill their bounty. Mr. Johnson is a dedicated volunteer who manages the garden by clearing plots, turning the soil in spring and helping others with their planting and care. *Some residents are inconsistent in keeping their plots productive and there is frustration in the lack of rules to ensure that these plots are used by those who will keep them productive. Thus, develop guidelines for these plots and appoint someone to have the authority to manage its use. If a space is neglected, inform those participants that their application will be moved to the bottom of the waiting list the following year so others can participate.*

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If there is excess produce, reach out to End Times Ministry and ask Reverend Addison's students to determine a way to distribute this surplus to needy recipients. Another program to incorporate is Plant a Row for the Hungry (http://gardenwriters.org/gwa.php?p=par/index.html). This national program is managed by the Garden Writers of America and is a call to residents to plant an extra row of vegetables in their own gardens to donate to local food pantries. All additional fruits and vegetables can make a difference.

Interest in the environment and making a difference by personal action is a way of life in Edmonston. Urban areas are typically deserts for wildlife because they lack landscape plants for food, rest, nesting and protection. Public lands alone cannot do the job. Residential yards can also support birds and pollinators by including a variety of landscaped areas with native plants, and providing shelter and water for wildlife. Homeowners can help, especially if these backyard oases begin to connect. The National Wildlife Federation has a certification program that includes a checklist on how individuals can create these habitats in their own yards. *View: www.nwf.org/Garden-for-Wildlife/Create.aspx to learn more about Backyard Wildlife Habitat. Promote this program in the town newsletter and the town website. Ask certified homeowners to proudly display their signs so photos can be posted.*

The judges were impressed with the landscaping at Metro Paving and Robey's Towing Service. When Robey's heard that the America in Bloom judges were coming to town, they jumped into the spirit and created an imaginative landscape by re-purposing items found on site into planters. Kudos to Robey's Towing and the other businesses in Edmonston for making a difference.

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3. Urban Forestry

Distribution, variety and suitability of trees; new plantings; urban tree program; qualified personnel or access to trained individual(s); inventory or database; frequency of tree surveys; care and maintenance programs; preservation of heritage trees and woodlots and green buffer zones; scheduled succession plantings, Tree City USA and their Growth Award. Efforts in management, planning, maintenance, improvement, and innovation. Written policies, bylaws and regulations, long- and short-term plans, trees on private property protected.	Max points	Actual Score
Municipal		
Overall plan of action, tree planting programs, variety of species, inventory	20	16
Tree maintenance	15	10
Preservation and restoration of natural areas	NA	
Tree protection/planting regulations and by-laws	15	12
Business		
Overall planting program	NA	
Tree maintenance	NA	
Residential		
Overall planting program	20	13
Tree maintenance	15	10
Community Involvement		
Volunteer involvement in funding, planting, and maintenance of trees (i.e. Tree City USA)	20	15
Volunteer involvement of youth in tree programs (i.e., Arbor Day, etc.)	20	10
Total (the fields automatically calculate – do not type in them)	**125.00**	**86.00**

Observations and Recommendations:

Edmonston became a Tree City USA in 2015 and has maintained this designation each year. In addition, the town received the "People Loving and Nurturing Trees" (PLANT) award from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources in 2017 for their work in planting edible forests (pawpaw and persimmon trees) in the town's right of ways, distributing free trees to residents for planting on private property, and for the street tree planting on Decatur Street as part of their Green Street project.

This year for Arbor Day, volunteers planted 26 native trees along Crittenden Street. The Tree City USA Growth Award from the Arbor Day Foundation recognizes higher levels of tree planting and care by participating Tree City USA communities. *Consider striving for the Growth Award which highlights innovative programs and projects as well as increased commitment of resources for urban forestry. It also provides an opportunity to share new ideas and successes across the country. Check out this link: www.arborday.org/programs/treecityusa/growthAwards.cfm.*

Trees selected for the Green Street project on Decatur Street included oaks, maples and sycamores; a good diversity of trees that offer shade and wildlife support. We observed several of these trees either planted too deep or with excess mulch on top of the root ball and touching the trunk. Tree planting depths are critical for the success of tree growth and sustainability. Trees planted too deep will slowly decline and may develop girdling roots. The trunk should not look like a telephone pole going straight into the ground. If a tree does not have its trunk flare visible then odds are it is planted too deeply. *Prior to planting, find the trunk flare with the*

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top main root within the root ball. If needed, remove excess soil to expose it. Excavate the planting hole no deeper than two inches less than the measured height of the root ball to the top main root. Thoroughly compact the soil in the bottom of the hole to minimize settling. After planting check to make sure the top main root is two inches above grade. Do not add soil onto the top of the root ball. However, it may be used to make a tree saucer just outside the edge of the root ball. For trees already planted, remove the excess soil and small roots from the top of the root ball until the root flare is exposed.

Volcano mulching (mulch piled high against the trunks) invites trunk diseases, prevents water from reaching the root ball, encourages tree roots to grow upward into the mulch where they may girdle the trunk, and wastes mulch. *A maximum depth of only two to three inches should be applied to the top of the root ball four-inches away from the trunk. To learn more and how to remove the mulch visit: https://pender.ces.ncsu.edu/2012/10/can-too-much-mulch-killl-plants/*

Edmonston enlisted the help of a certified arborist to assist in completing a tree inventory for the town. *We look forward to its completion and encourage the use of this information to develop a tree protection ordinance, identify heritage trees and identify areas for future tree planting. Consider enlisting the help of students from End Times Ministries who are developing mapping and GPS skills. This would be a great practical case study for the students while providing help for Edmonston to complete the inventory.*

At the Veteran's Park, there are several Bradford pear trees exhibiting included bark and poor pruning cuts. Included bark or "ingrown" bark tissues often develop where two or more stems grow closely together causing weak, under-supported branch angles. When trees are young, this can be corrected by removing one of the stems. However, on more mature trees this pruning may not be possible without severe damage. Bracing and cabling can be used to hold these branches together, but is only recommend for trees of special note or value. *We recommend Public Works staff learn to recognize included bark and not purchase any trees with this condition. Visit: https://www.thoughtco.com/problems-with-included-tree-bark-1343312 for more information, photos and diagrams.*

collar, which is found at the base of a trunk. Over time, these cells will grow rot and disease. However, if these cells pruning, the cut will not heal and diseases. Dr. Alex Shigo developed pruning that are now used by practicing *https://www.thoughtco.com/the-1342700 to learn more about branch prune young trees and safeguard their*

Trees also have the capacity to "seal off" pruning cuts with specialized cells in the branch branch where it connects to the over and cover the cut, preventing are damaged or removed with provide entry of water and many concepts regarding tree arborists. *Visit shigo-tree-pruning-method- collars and how staff can properly health.*

Our recommendation for the Bradford pear trees in Veteran's park is to remove them. The number of poor cuts and included bark has severely

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compromised their health. Their removal will also provide room for the nearby oak to grow to its full height and spread.

To assist in funding for tree planting, we offer two opportunities:

1. *One potential source of funding is to offer residents the option to "round up" a municipal utility bill (such as water and sewer) with the extra funds earmarked for beautification efforts.*
2. *Another funding source is to develop a memorial tree program. Residents, past and present, can contribute to the purchase, planting and maintenance of a tree. To avoid costly plaques, have memorial paver bricks engraved and installed at town hall. Keep a database of tree locations so contributors can locate their tree.*

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4. Environmental Efforts

Sustainability practices. Recycling (paper, glass, metal, plastic, electronics, clothing, etc.), transfer/recycle stations, policies and by-laws, sustainable development strategies, waste reduction, hazardous waste minimization and collection (oil, paint, chemicals, used batteries, etc.), water quality and conservation, energy conservation, environmental cleanup activities, reducing carbon footprint, environmentally friendly transportation, LEED certification, air, noise and light pollution, Integrated Pest Management (IPM), rain gardens and rain barrels, composting, energy efficiency, youth programs, etc. Events such as Earth Day, Recycling Days, Bike to Work Days, etc.	Max Points	Actual Score
Municipal		
Leadership in environmental initiatives	25	21
Effective communication of environmental strategies and initiatives	25	21
New programs, improvement and innovation	25	22
Business		
Participation in environmental efforts	20	17
New programs, improvement and innovation	10	8
Residential		
Participation in environmental efforts	20	12
New programs, improvement and innovation	10	6
Community Involvement		
Volunteer involvement in environmental efforts	20	15
Youth participation in environmental activities	20	16
Total (the fields automatically calculate – do not type in them)	**175.00**	**138.00**

Observations and Recommendations:

Congratulations for setting a high standard for environmental practices. It is no surprise that the town with the first Green Street on the east coast is home to businesses that are environmentally focused. Community Forklift is a nonprofit reuse center for home improvement supplies that have been donated or salvaged. This reduces the strain on dwindling natural resources, reduces construction industry waste and keeps reusable materials out of landfills. ECO City Farms is an educational nonprofit designed as a prototype for sustainable urban farming. DES Electric voluntarily installed a pervious parking lot with solar lights and rain gardens. Creating the dream of environmental responsibility and setting the example attracts positive results.

Community Forklift hosts numerous “How To” programs for the community. *We suggest that they video tape these presentations and post them on YouTube to reach a larger audience. Community Forklift also has a great business model to share with the other communities. We suggest contacting the communications department at the University of Maryland to facilitate a student project and produce a feature video of this business model as an example for other communities nationwide.*

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The Town of Edmonston and Community Forklift can partner together to host "Fix It, Don't Pitch It" workshops. *Invite people of various skills to donate their time and help repair small appliances, watches and clocks, lamps and bikes, mend clothing, etc. Then invite the community to bring items to repair. More than just returning these items to usefulness, it reduces waste, saves money and builds community. View: www.thetoollibrary.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/DTRC85x11FlyerFINAL.pdf to see an example of how fellow America in Bloom community Winter Park, FL structures their workshops.*

The Anacostia River Trail Park is maintained by Maryland National Capital Parks and Planning (MNCPP), but Edmonston monitors its usage. A soccer field was recently converted to a meadow by abandoning its mowing. The judges noticed a flock of robins at this site, who favor meadows and grassy areas. This meadow can support more than just robins; bluebirds are also a good choice to foster. During our tour, the Busy Bees summer campers gave a presentation about the importance of providing birdhouses. *Next summer we encourage the Busy Bees to design, build and install bluebird houses in this meadow. Include plans for proper placement and the monitoring needed to keep out unwanted species and predators. This meadow is prime for such a project, and MNCPP could be approached for permission. View: www.audubon.org/news/welcome-bluebirds-nestboxes for more specifics on attracting bluebirds.*

Planting native perennials around the edges of the meadow is also a great addition to support wildlife. *Check soil and drainage conditions to determine how wet the area is and select appropriate plants. In the mid-Atlantic region, meadows are not sustainable unless they are mowed once yearly to discourage colonizing trees. Ensure that MNCPP knows this. Ideally mowing would occur once in late fall to avoid damaging nests and breeding wildlife.*

In 2015 the Federal government called for a national recycling rate goal of 75 percent for all municipal solid waste. A 75 percent national recycling rate is achievable, but it first starts with individuals doing what they can to improve their recycling habits. *Start by working with the waste management contractor to determine what the town's present percentage of recycling is and set annual achievable goals. Changing from twice a week to once a week trash pickup and providing larger recycling carts discourages recyclables from going into the trash.*

Communication is important to Edmonston, and a lot of effort is made to communicate to residents about town processes in both English and Spanish. *Adding standardized bilingual labeling to all recycle receptacles (municipal, business and residential) will increase and improve their effectiveness. Recycle Across America can work with* Edmonston *to create customized labels: http://www.recycleacrossamerica.org/*

Typically, plastic bags should not be placed with recyclables since they are contaminates requiring intensive labor to remove during processing. An informative site to visit that encourages proper disposal of these bags is www.plasticbagrecycling.org. *Information is available about all types of plastic that is recyclable. Enter a zip*

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code and get a list of store locations in the area that take back plastic bags as well as other plastics. Share these store locations and the above link.

During our tour, we were shown an entry to an industrial park that is a challenge for large trucks to maneuver. *We suggest the town purchase that corner property, widen the turn, convert the space to a rain garden and install solar panels to augment Edmonston's clean energy sources.*

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5. Heritage Preservation

Historical, natural, agricultural, and cultural heritage. Preservation and restoration of buildings, homes, churches, cemeteries; heritage sites and/or monuments; heritage parks, historical gardens; historical trees, artifacts; historical society; heritage advisory committee, museums, archives, history books, land trusts/conservation easements and interpretative programs; ordinances and policies including protection of structures/sites from demolition/development. Resource availability. Farmers markets, festivals and parades.	Max Points	Actual Score
Municipal		
Leadership in preservation and restoration initiatives	25	15
Legal protection of heritage sites	25	12
Resource availability for preservation and restoration	25	12
Business		
Conservation, restoration, and rehabilitation of properties	NA	
Participation in and support of heritage/cultural activities	15	13
Residential		
Conservation, restoration, and rehabilitation of properties	15	10
Participation in and support of heritage/cultural activities	15	12
Community Involvement		
Volunteer involvement in cultural, historical, and natural heritage activities	20	17
Youth involvement in heritage activities	20	13
Total (the fields automatically calculate – do not type in them)	**160.00**	**104.00**

Observations and Recommendations:

Many of Edmonston's buildings date from the 1890's to the 1940's and include many architectural styles including representations in the Queen Anne, Colonial Revival and Craftsman styles. Some buildings have been altered, changing their historic presence, while others still retain their original design. To ensure that future remodeling requests for these remaining structures is sensitive, we encourage the development of permit review procedures that require additions and alterations be sympathetic to the architecture of the building and adhere to Maryland Secretary of Interior standards. The goal is to preserve the integrity of these buildings for possible future historic nomination. Use Edmonston's 2007 survey of recommended buildings for historic nomination as a guide.

Each county in Maryland has a historic designation process. Selected properties receive a plaque and this designation is highly coveted. However, the property is not protected from alteration or demolition. Only a deed restriction or special easement initiated by the homeowner can protect a building. *We recommend that Edmonston contact the owners of potential historic designation properties and offer workshops on how to apply for the county designation and how owners can self-protect with deed restrictions and easements. Create a self-guided walking tour of these properties and*

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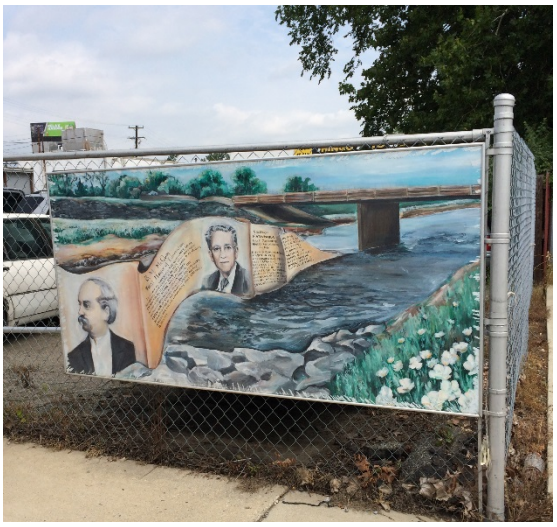
support the creation of a town historical association. Edmonston can present additional incentives for property owners to undertake this process with reduced county property taxes (county will lower property assessments), reduced permit fees for renovations and allowing use of more relaxed setbacks.

To assist with funding for heritage preservation projects we recommend that Edmonston become a Certified Local Government (CLG). This is the official preservation partnership that connects local, state and Federal governments to help communities save their historic resources. Edmonston would make a commitment to historical preservation by undergoing this certification. It declares the community's awareness and commitment to preservation of its unique cultural heritage. Information is available at: https://mht.maryland.gov/grants_clg.shtml and: http://www.nps.gov/clg/.

Edmonston has many long-time residents and their memories of growing up or living in Edmonston would be excellent recordings for future residents and historians. *Tap budding film students from the local high school or another youth organization to video-tape these interviews. Once complete, post them online for viewing. Realize that these recordings are not searchable and must be listened to or watched to obtain needed information. Consider using a free service such as https://speechlogger.appspot.com/en/ (one of many) to translate the audio files to searchable text that can also be posted online.*



During our tour, we were shown two "murals" that captured the spirit of the community. These included a painting of Adam Plummer (first African-American landowner in the area that is now Edmonston) and Mayor Matsudaira (first Japanese-American mayor elected in the nation). Both paintings are framed with Plexiglas on a plywood backing and hung on fencing. This treatment has created a moisture trap and the artwork is being damaged by water and temperature changes. *Both paintings would benefit from being moved to an interior location for permanent display. Remove the cover and backing and allow the artwork to thoroughly dry. Resist having anyone unskilled in restoration to attempt any repairs. Winterthur Museum has a University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation. As part of its public mission, they will meet for 30 minutes at no charge to review these murals. Accepted projects are repaired by graduate students. Visit: www.winterthur.org/?p=577 to make an appointment.*

With all its cultural diversity, Edmonston celebrates its heritage throughout the year with well attended events such as Black History Month, Mexican Independence Day and Cinco de Mayo. However, the most successful event is the Edmonston Birthday Celebration held every June to commemorate the founding of the town. The day begins with a parade including a police motorcade and fire vehicles, cultural music groups, local clubs and organizations, the color guard from the local high school, clowns and high steppers (a Caribbean tradition). The parade weaves through the neighborhoods and then ends at the Recreation Center and adjoining county park for the festival that includes games, face painting, ethnic foods, entertainment and camaraderie.

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In 1973 the National Trust for Historic Preservation established May as Historic Preservation Month. This campaign encourages people to celebrate the places that are meaningful to them and to their communities and is co-sponsored by local preservation groups, State historical societies, business and civic organizations across the country. *During Preservation Month, Edmonston can celebrate by hosting an event to recognize its historic places, instill community pride, promoting heritage tourism, and share the social and economic benefits of historic preservation. Create yard signs and distribute to property owners to display during the month. Don't forget to collect them for the following year. Go to: https://savingplaces.org/thisplacematterstoolkit#.WaG4yz7fqos for the "This Place Matters" toolkit.*

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6. Overall Impression

Lack of litter and graffiti. Maintenance of public open spaces, medians and boulevard strips, streets, sidewalks, walking and biking trails, curbs, ditches, road shoulders, unattended and vacant lots, buildings, garbage/recycling receptacles; lack of weeds, dog waste policies and receptacles, notices/posters appropriately displayed, vandalism not evident. Maintenance of the hardscape: walls, lamp posts, benches, playgrounds, etc. Appropriate use and placement of sculpture, public art, wayfinding signs, graphic elements such as banners, signs and murals.	Max points	Actual Score
Municipal		
Overall cleanliness	10	8
Maintenance of public roads and shoulders	10	8
Condition of public buildings and properties	10	9
Impact of graphic elements - banners, wayfinding signs, murals, etc.	10	9
Business		
Overall cleanliness	20	16
Condition of buildings and properties	20	15
Residential		
Overall cleanliness	10	7
Condition of buildings and properties	10	6
Community Involvement		
Participation in clean-up efforts, adopt-a-spot, annual cleanup days, etc.	15	10
Recognition of volunteer efforts	10	6
Total (the fields automatically calculate – do not type in them)	**125.00**	**94.00**

Observations and Recommendations:

Edmonston is a clean community free of litter, graffiti and vandalism. Weeds in the streets are kept to a minimum and the code enforcement officer does a terrific job working with property owners to help them bring their homes and businesses into compliance.

Edmonston is also a community that celebrates public art through its numerous murals. *We suggest that Edmonston start a public art review committee that can develop guidelines for the purchase or commissioning of public art, including murals. Look around town and identify potential spaces for sculptures or additional murals. For example, DES Electric has a large blank wall on the side of its building, adjacent to the recently installed green parking lot. Once space is procured, solicit the arts community for design submissions. Visit the Maryland Arts Council for Maryland artists registry www.msac.org/programs to see local artists' projects. Also connect with the University of Maryland art departments to facilitate creating a special mural project for students. The City of Philadelphia has an impressive mural art program, Mural Arts Philadelphia. View their site to learn about their process for mural creation: www.muralarts.org/about/our-process/.*

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Edmonston calls itself "A Bridging Community" and the bridge spanning the Anacostia Tributary sports several eye-catching murals. *We recommend these colorful murals be made into postcards that can be sold as a fund raiser for the Green Team. Visit: www.bikemural.org/ to see how the Duboce Bikeway Mural was executed and then used to make commemorative postcards. One company, Modern Postcard www.modernpostcard.com, (there are many) allows creation of a postcard using uploaded photos and online tools to customize text and proof the final image. Once created, production can be on demand.*

A large electric transformer box stands on the sidewalk by DES Electrical. *This is another space for artistic enhancement. A design like the Escher patterns of dragonflies on the ends of the bridge mural could be quite effective here. Japanese maple leaves in autumn colors could tie into the town's history and celebrate the town tree.*

The Green Street project on Decatur Street included the installation of street lights with the potential to add supports and decorative banners. *To help raise money for the design and purchase of these banners, we recommend approaching the 136 businesses in town for sponsorship. Donations could be made at various levels of $100, $500, $1,000, etc. Offer to include the business logo for the highest level of contribution. Be sure to also include the Green Team logo as well as the America in Bloom logo on these banners*.

Plans are in the works to re-design and fabricate new directional signs in town. *We encourage selection of clear graphics that use the town colors (green and yellow). Consistently use these same graphics throughout town and with other forms of public communication.* On our tour, a special event banner was temporarily mounted on a nearby fence. *Incorporate poles with the new signage so these temporary banners can be displayed directly above the directional signage. This presentation will look professional and keep all information grouped together.*

To engage more youth in the town's volunteer activities, we recommend contacting the local high school to determine if the school requires community service for graduation. Together, propose projects that can benefit the students (possible tie-in with current curriculum) and enhance the town's in-bloom projects. Possible examples are the design and installation of educational gardens (pollinator, rain or native), construction of park amenities (seating, waste receptacles), or planting trees. Have the Public Works department develop a project list and then reach out to local Boy and Girl Scout leaders to generate interest in service projects that benefit the town. Involving youth today grows the volunteers of tomorrow.

Lastly, the Mayor nominates one exceptional volunteer each year for America in Bloom's Community Champion award. This is a wonderful recognition and is shared with the town through newsletters and other publications. *We suggest that the Mayor can also recognize town volunteers by awarding them a key to the town. All volunteers should be recognized with certificates of appreciation annually. This could be done at the wrap up crab feast at the end of the evaluation tour. By adding this fanfare and ceremony, more volunteers will likely attend.*

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Checklist:

Yes	No	N/A	
X			Were the judges given a Community Profile, Evaluation Tour Itinerary, and map prior to their arrival? (Asked for map during tour)
	X		Did the Evaluation Tour Itinerary provide for experiencing a representative cross-section of the community?
X			Were the guides knowledgeable about the community and horticultural aspects?
X			Were the judges able to modify the schedule if needed?
		X	Did the judges meet with the media?
X			Did the judges meet with municipal leaders?
X			Were the judges asked to give presentations?
X			Were the judges able to meet with and talk to volunteers?
X			Was enough time allotted to complete the Evaluation Report in a quiet place?
X			Were you informed about pollinator gardens? How many? 3
		X	Was there a wrap-up session at the end of the tour?

DEFINITIONS (determined by who owns and/or manages the property):

Municipal - city hall and other municipal properties, parks and open spaces, roads, roadsides, sidewalks**,** public cemeteries, public schools/universities/colleges, sports facilities, empty lots and brownfields, libraries, hospitals, public railway and bus stations

Business - commercial and industrial sectors**,** shopping centers, stores, office buildings, restaurants, mixed use developments, service stations**,** private railway and bus stations, plant nurseries, garden centers, assisted living/nursing home/graduated care facilities, apartment buildings, hotels, private hospitals, churches, not for profit/civic organizations, private cemeteries, private schools/universities/colleges, residential common areas managed by associations

Residential - single family residences, town houses, individual homes in planned/gated/manufactured home communities, residential neighborhoods or developments

Community Involvement - volunteer efforts by individuals, clubs, youth groups, church groups, civic organizations, volunteer municipal boards, and social clubs for community enhancement

DISCLAIMER:

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COMMENTS:

Shorten boat tour and focus on Edmonston's role and partnership with the Anacostia Watershed society and how the town impacts the river. Need to meet more volunteers from the Green Team, residents and members of the Hispanic community. Need to further proof-read the Community Profile, condense down to no more than 25 pages. Everyone on the tour needs name tags!

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2017 Community Recognitions

Community: Edmonston, MD

Recognized Criterion: Environmental Efforts

Edmonston excels in sustainability and implementing programs and offering resources that protect the environment, conserve natural resources, promote re-use and encourage volunteerism. The town has a sustainability action plan and recently passed a resolution for sustainable purchasing. The successful completion of the Decatur Street Green Street project has inspired a second green street installation on Crittenden Street. Rain gardens with rain barrels, solar panels, LED lighting, green power purchase, recycling and two electric vehicles for town use are just a few of the initiatives the municipal staff and facilities have implemented. Edmonston is truly a "green" community.

Noteworthy Project or Initiative: Concrete Planters

In 2016 Metro Paving acquired several large, used concrete planters from a federal property and donated 39 to the town of Edmonston. Town staff and volunteers from the Green Team quickly marshalled their forces to identify strategic locations for the planters. Businesses donated monies and labor to expedite planting. A local nursery provided discounts on plants and the Green Team worked with Proven Winners to provide design assistance in the plant selection. The results were almost immediate. The consistency of planter style, color and floral palette suddenly gave the town an identity.

Commuters traveling through Edmonston now know they are in a special place; these floral displays put a smile on everyone's face.

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