America in Bloom 2022 Evaluation Report

Community: Edmonston, MD
Evaluation Dates: June 23-24, 2022

Lead Advisor: Nikki Springer
Co-Advisor: Karin Rindal

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.

Seven Criteria (Codes)	Possible Points	Actual Points	Percentage
1. Community Vitality (CV)	88.00	65.00	73.86%
2. Flowers (FL)	96.00	59.00	61.45%
3. Landscaped Areas (LA)	82.00	50.00	60.97%
4. Urban Forestry (UF)	70.00	40.00	57.14%
5. Environmental Efforts (EE)	94.00	79.00	84.04%
6. Celebrating Heritage (CH)	54.00	35.00	64.81%
7. Overall Impression (OI)	72.00	49.00	68.05%
Other			
8. Evaluation Tour Preparation & Actions (ET)	14.00	14.00	100.00%
Scoring			
Total Points and Percentage	570.00	391.00	68.59%
Star Rating		7	
Community Involvement Total	76	53	69.73%

Star ratings are based on overall percentage.

1 star = 0% - 9.99%	2 stars = 10% – 10.99%	3 stars = 20% – 29.99%	4 stars = 30% – 39.99%	5 stars = 40% – 49.99%
6 stars = 50% – 59.99%	7 stars = 60% – 69.99%	8 stars = 70% - 79.99%	9 stars = 80% – 89.99%	10 stars = 90% - 100%

Community representatives to receive the Evaluation Report (three minimum)		
Name	**Title**	**Email**
Tracy Gant	Mayor	tgant@edmonstonmd.gov
Rodney Barnes	Town Administrator	rbarnes@edmonstonmd.gov
Ed Hooker	AIB Committee Member	edhooker3@yahoo.com

GUIDELINES AND INFORMATION:

Communities are required to provide the following prior to evaluation:

- Community Profile organized to follow the criteria and metrics. For repeat communities, call out what is new and/or implemented due to advisors' recommendations.
- Evaluation Tour Itinerary with start and finish times for each day
- Community Map with community boundaries and the tour route
- Communities are responsible for addressing the metrics in the Community Profile, Evaluation Tour Itinerary, and during the Evaluation Tour.

The areas to be scored:

Advisors will review Community Profiles, Community Maps, and Evaluation Tour Itineraries to confirm the appropriateness of the areas to be evaluated and contact communities prior to the tour so adjustments can be made.

- All areas (municipal, commercial, and residential) within the boundaries of the entrant's community/municipality (except as noted below) are scored and a representative portion of all areas must be included.
- Property to be scored, whether public or private, must be subject to the codes and regulations of the entrant's community/municipality.
- When a property does not meet these requirements, but the community's volunteers significantly impact the property with labor and/or funding, then advisors may include in their scoring the property not subject to the codes and regulations of the entrant community.
- A community may request recommendations for areas toured but not scored.

Metrics are noted with unique codes based on the criteria. Ratings include:

N/A (Not Applicable): Communities should strive to implement all metrics; however, advisors will use N/A when a metric is not scorable in a community. An N/A metric is not included in the point totals and does not affect percentages. Examples when N/A may apply in a metric: commercial/business areas do not exist; state or county statutes prevent implementation of a metric.
Not Started (0 pts.): programs or procedures are not in place.
Launched (1 pt.): programs or procedures are in place but not fully realized.
Achieved (2 pts.): programs or procedures are implemented but could be improved.
Surpassing (3 pts.): programs or procedures are well-implemented.
Excelling (4 pts.): programs or procedures are exceptional.
NS (Not Scored): preset in the Advisors' Discretion metric's point box for when a score there is not appropriate.
Advisors' Discretion (N/A, 3-4 pts.): advisors may add and score an item not in the metrics. This item must be an unusual or newly implemented project, program, or initiative that can be repeated in other communities and perhaps used as a future metric.

Other:

- This Evaluation Report's scoring, general observations, and general and criteria recommendations are based upon the community's efforts including its levels of participation in, or implementation of the metrics in each of the criteria.
- Future projects and programs are not scored.
- The scoring for the seven evaluation criteria is adjusted to the climate and environmental conditions of the community's location. Make sure the advisors are made aware of any challenges that were faced during the year.

General Observations and Recommendations (recommendations are indicated in italics):

Welcome back to America in Bloom, Edmonston! It is wonderful to see a community that continues to thrive and embrace this program year after year! Although we were first-time visitors, it was immediately clear that Edmonston represents the best of a productive, symbiotic relationship between America in Bloom, a community looking to continually improve, and dedicated local advocates upholding the character and culture of the place. We congratulate you on your ongoing and noteworthy achievements!

Edmonston continues to distinguish itself by fostering a unique character and culture while participating in and contributing toward county and regional efforts and initiatives. The community expresses genuine care for its citizens, both new and long-standing, and supports meaningful, in-kind efforts that help both individuals and the greater community.

Edmonston has begun to see some small signs of redevelopment, including the lovely Air B-and-B that hosted us. This type of redevelopment can strain or divide a small, historically-working-class community, so we encourage the America in Bloom committee to continue the great work with municipal leadership to foster positive community relations amongst all residents.

Edmonston is doing so much, particularly in the Environmental area, please excuse us if we propose something you might already be doing. A common theme through our recommendations is to take your excellent work and that of the county and continue and expand the distribution of it throughout the community through as many outlets and means as possible. Do more of all the great things you are involved with!

Thank you for your hospitality and your efforts that made us feel very welcome. We look forward to seeing how Edmonston continues to grow and thrive in the coming years!

Warmest regards,
Nikki Springer and Karin Rindal
America In Bloom Advisors

Community Vitality (CV) Criterion Definition	Metrics Ratings (NS = Not Scored)					
1. COMMUNITY VITALITY (CV): policies, programs, activities, and facilities that lead to a vibrant community and a sense of well-being. Includes libraries, community centers, arts/cultural museums; and parks, playgrounds, dog parks, sports fields, water activities, trails, and other outdoor recreational opportunities	**Not Applicable N/A**	**Not Started (0 pts)**	**Launched (1 pt)**	**Achieved (2 pts)**	**Surpassing (3 pts)**	**Excelling (4 pts)**
a. Leadership and Policy						
CV.a.01 - Municipal volunteer boards are in place and interfacing with municipality and businesses						X
CV.a.02 - Municipality offers grants to neighborhood associations for enhancements						X
CV.a.03 - Master plan in place for public green space and parks						X
CV.a.04 - ADA accessibility in public areas and other programs for inclusion				X		
CV.a.05 - Promotion of alternative transportation: pedestrian, bicycling, car/van pools, and/or ride sharing					X	
b. Facilities and Events						
CV.b.01 - Outdoor recreation facilities meet community needs: parks, playgrounds, splash pads, dog parks, sports fields, sports courts, swimming pools, golf courses, kayak/canoe trails, public access to water bodies, etc.				X		
CV.b.02 - Walking, biking, and exercise trail network in place and is safe, well lit, and connects to a larger network						X
CV.b.03 - Performances/events for art, dance, theatre, music, and/or cinema available					X	
CV.b.04 - Run/walk/bike/kayak/canoe events are held					X	
CV.b.05 - Benches and seating available near walking, exercise, and playground areas				X		
CV.b.06 - Structures, shade sails, or trees provide shade for spectators and/or participants			X			
CV.b.07 - Play areas exist, age-appropriate ranges of equipment offered, and ADA complaint and conform to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and inspected by Certified Playground Safety Inspector					X	
CV.b.08 - Public library/resources center is available for all ages and abilities					X	
CV.b.09 - Community center is available				X		
CV.b.10 - Farmers' Market(s) is available				X		

c. Community Involvement						
CV.c.01 - Community gardening sites are in use						X
CV.c.02 - Level of participation in food banks, hunger-relief, Plant a Row for the Hungry (GardenComm initiative), etc.					X	
CV.c.03 - Participation in civic events such as Bike to Work Days, Walk to School Days, etc.						X
CV.c.04 - Voluntary (non-mandated HOA) neighborhood organizations in place		X				
CV.c.05 - Programs in place to encourage youth involvement						X
CV.c.06 - Recognition programs for volunteers						X
d. Advisors' Discretion: Recognition by the Advisors of an item of special note						
CV.d.01 - Advisors to enter text below		NS	NS	NS		X
Town staff and the Mayor personally intervene in cases of individuals in the community in need to a level of dedication and commitment that is uncommon.						

Totals:	**Possible Points**	**Actual Points**	**Percentage**
1. Community Vitality (CV)	88	65	73.86%

Community Vitality (CV) Recommendations:

Town staff and residents bring a large amount of enthusiasm, synergy and cooperation to their community activities. Lacking a central street or commercial downtown, a county-owned recreation center provides an indoor event facility for Edmonston. A neighboring community also uses it as a church. In the past, pre-COVID, the town funded a summer camp here. It will be expanded in the future to include outdoor seating. *Once expanded consider adding wellness activities and programming at this location.*

A non-profit organization Operation ARTS Foundation partners with the town to provide engaging art-related events and installations in the community. With no downtown to use as a location for display of public art, Edmonston has had to be very creative.

First, like the "Little Library" concept but for art they conceived and installed the Art Magnet structure. It holds two miniature "gallery" spaces where people can contribute their artwork. Tiny blank canvases are provided free for artist to use. Whoever sees an art piece of interest is free to take it. The Art Magnet is also colorfully painted on the exterior. A celebration accompanied the launch of the site - Art in the Park! Public Art Reception – Town of Edmonston (edmonstonmd.gov). This novel concept received regional media coverage on the evening news.

Edmonston also has a brightly painted Food Pantry structure that is stocked by the town. Multiple actual Little Libraries throughout town echo the Art Magnet and Food Pantry in construction but feature children's book illustrations, like Dr. Seuss' "The Lorax", on the outside. Addressing the desire for surface area to display creative activities but also various needs of the community, they all have a commonality between them of sharing with those in need and not wasting resources. More Little Libraries are planned. *A map of the Little Libraries, Art Magnet and Food Bank would be useful once all are in place. (See also Overall Impression.)*

Finally, this year, Operation ARTS foundation and the town of Edmonston also collaborated on a Popotillo workshop, a free event for residents. Traditional folk artist Breanne Carlson of Sepia Rainbow Studio taught participants young and old about a nearly lost Mesoamerican method of fiber-wax mosaic. It consists of creating colorful images by using wild grass or natural fibers of mijo over any design. These fibers go through different coloring processes and are glued to a base using beeswax or Campeche wax. This event was sponsored by the Town of Edmonston and La Fondita's (the only restaurant in town). It allowed for a celebration of Hispanic culture and a chance to be introduced to a historic art form, while potentially also leading to creation of art for the Art Magnet installation.

The youth in the area are supported by the efforts of the very energetic Reverend Gau of End Time Harvest Ministries. In a non-traditional approach a student and family member participate in learning financial planning. Those accepted into the program undertake a variety of projects each year and experience a higher high school graduation rate than non-participants. Diverse project examples include the following noteworthy examples. Concern about storm water runoff containing too many phosphates and nitrogen led to the creation of a community educational video. Another environmental video focused on describing the "Rain Check Rebate." "Time to Talk" focuses on gun violence control. The overall mission is to teach that you as an individual are responsible for your community through analyzing what adds to it and what detracts. More communities should have programs like this in place that foster community vitality.

La Fondita restaurant, the only one in Edmonston, is in the middle of planning an expansion. *Take this opportunity to also be sure there is ADA accessibility since parking will be limited.* See https://www.freedomshowers.com/blog/small-business-funding-for-ada-accessibility-compliance/ for tax rebate-related assistance. ADA compliance is also discussed in the Historic Preservation criteria.

Interested in further increasing resident involvement levels, this year Edmonston engaged a social media consultant to survey how people want to be contacted about community activities and developments. The town decided to focus on using Facebook and Constant Contact™. There will also be a rebranding of Edmonston's logo and new wayfaring signs. While already formalized, *consider adding some indication of foliage to the new town logo and signage because Edmonston has noteworthy green space for such an urban community that should be acknowledged to be preserved*. As part of this overall "relook" a social media intern is redesigning the town newsletter.

The residential area is bordered by a warehouse area, many motor vehicle related. See the comprehensive new guidance on warehousing from the State of New Jersey that *advocates a proactive rather than reactive approach to this aspect of community vitality.* Scroll down at this link: https://nj.gov/state/planning/index.shtml. The link on the planning page connects one to a multi-chapter listing of relevant content. See the introduction in 1., as well as "7. Sustainable Design" and "9. Community Involvement" in particular.

The closest available recreation amenity, other than playgrounds, for Edmonston is the Anacostia River. The problems of the highly polluted river began in the 1950s with industrialization and neglect that were exacerbated when Washington D.C. 's antiquated sewer system was stressed by the added impact of 50,000 attendees at nearby RFK stadium, pollution from the adjoining Navy Yard, among other sources, and rain events that overflowed the city's combined sewage and storm water system spewing raw sewage into the Anacostia. Years of public advocacy and clean-up efforts mean that today wildlife has returned, and boating is allowed. Swimming is still not advised but plans are for European-style river swimming platforms by 2025.

As the population in the community ages, the mayor and town hall staff are pro-active caretakers personally addressing the needs of individual residents, as well as providing broader support like a COVID food drive. The town is filing the gap and going above and beyond normal in this instance by directly engaging with those in need. While resources exist in Prince George's County, they are not provided via the web in a user-friendly way – https://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/1644/Older-Adult-Services Other counties seem to be doing a better job, though also not in neighboring Montgomery County. See this Pennsylvania link - https://montgomerycountyalive.com/seniors/countyresources.cfm for a better example. This should be brought to the county's attention. *Failing county-level website improvement, we suggest the town expand information on its website.* Here is another local area (DMV) example to serve as a template - https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/neighborhood-community-services/older-adults.

As the overall population ages in the U.S. these types of services for this sector of the population will become even more of a necessity. Emerson House in the adjoining town of Bladensburg, MD provides 220 senior housing units in a nine-story building with a variety of senior-friendly activities. Edmonston is ahead of many other communities in beginning to address what will be a growing need.

Flowers Criterion Definition	Metrics Ratings (NS = Not Scored)					
2. FLOWERS (FL): flowering annuals, perennials, bulbs, tropical plants, flowering topiaries, and colorful foliage and/or cut plant material for season-round interest for displays in containers, hanging baskets, window boxes, raised planters, trellises, and in-ground beds	**Not Applicable N/A**	**Not Started (0 pts)**	**Launched (1 pt)**	**Achieved (2 pts)**	**Surpassing (3 pts)**	**Excelling (4 pts)**
a. Leadership and Policy						
FL.a.01 - Public or private management of flower displays						X
FL.a.02 - Program to encourage, expand understanding of role and importance of pollinator habitats				X		
b. Plan of Action						
FL.b.01 - Action plan developed each season for procurement, scheduling, planting, and maintenance of flower displays					X	
FL.b.02 - Recognition program(s) in place for attractive displays by businesses and/or residential						X
FL.b.03 - Demonstration/display garden(s) with labelled flowers in place and promoted						X
FL.b.04 - Effective communication about selection and care of flowers for beautification and pollinator habitats			X			
c. Design						
FL.c.01 - Unity and Variety: plant combinations create visual interest and dramatic effect while appearing coordinated				X		
FL.c.02 - Suitability of Plant Selections: plants selected for location and environmental conditions				X		
FL.c.03 - Distribution and Location: displays found throughout the community						X
FL.c.04 - Location: displays are located to serve as focal points			X			
FL.c.05 - Seasonal Displays: seasonal displays with spring, summer, fall, and/or holiday displays					X	
FL.c.06 - Scale: if hanging baskets are in use, their size is in scale to their surroundings				X		
FL.c.07 - Scale: if containers are in use, their size is in scale to their surroundings				X		
F.L.c.08 – Scale: inground flower displays are designed with mature plant heights in mind			X			
FL.c.09 - Color: pleasing color combinations (monochromatic, analogous, and/or complementary) are used				X		
FL.c.10 - Form: uses a number of different textures in all floral displays				X		
d. Maintenance						
FL.d.01 - Watering procedures to maintain growth in place				X		
FL.d.02 - Fertilization: appropriate fertilization procedures using slow-release, liquid fertilizers, and/or soil amendments				X		
FL.d.03 - Grooming: regular pruning, dead-heading, removal and replacement of dead plants				X		
FL.d.04 - Plant health strategies in place to monitor and manage pests and diseases (IPM-Integrated Pest Management)				X		
FL.d.05 - Health and Vigor: plants are robust and floriferous				X		

e. Community Involvement						
FL.e.01 - Volunteers provide donations and/or funds and/or participate in the design, planting, and/or care of flower displays						X
FL.e.02 - Civic groups, garden clubs, Master Gardeners, school programs, etc., sponsor plant sales, plant swaps, provide information, or educational sessions that contribute to the quality and implementation of the community's flower displays				X		
FL.f.01 - Advisors to enter text below		NS	NS	NS		X
The pottery around town hall is a nice acknowledgement of your Hispanic residents.						

Totals:	**Possible Points**	**Actual Points**	**Percentage**
2. Flowers (FL)	96	59	61.45%

Flowers (FL) Recommendations:

Thirty-four planters are lovingly maintained by volunteers in Edmonston. With little available space they are focal points along streets and in front of town hall. The town hall pots are colorful, unique and speak to the heritage of many town inhabitants. *Look for a little more color in the other undecorated pots with the addition of zinnias and/or marigolds. Height could be achieved by including sunflowers, easily and economically with seed.*

If watering becomes an issue, try switching to the new hybrid, mangave, that has Mexican origins. It comes in a wide variety of leaf forms and colors. Its spiky foliage is quite dramatic. While an annual in your climate, it can be overwintered in a garage. What Is a Mangave Plant – Where Do Mangave Hybrids Come From (gardeningknowhow.com) Cavano's Perennials Nursery that is relatively close to Edmonston has started carrying them, among a host of perennials and a few annual offerings. *As a town government you should be able to apply as a wholesale purchaser and lower your cost to purchase plant material*. Cavano's Perennials (cavanos.com) (See the "Mad about Mangave" tab in the lower right-hand corner of their website.) They are not a retail nursery.

Another way to lower the cost of quality plant purchases is by attending MANTS (the Mid Atlantic Nurserymen's Trade Show) in Baltimore - https://www.mants.com/ In the past vendors have either sold their entire booth to interested buyers at a discount at the start of the show or if you attend at the very last hour, you may be able to get plant material that would otherwise be thrown away because it is not cost effective to transport it back to the vendor's facility.

Perennials also bloom in the many rain gardens throughout Edmonston. While it might have been missed because we did not see every location, the addition of 'Little Joe' Pye weed could provide more color here. 'Little Joe' is a specific dwarf cultivar of a species of native Joe Pye weed. It can reach 3-4 ft. tall and 2-3 ft. wide, and it has the familiar large domes of lavender-pink flowers that attract lots of butterflies and bees in late summer and early fall. Its smaller size makes it a good fit in moist borders or roadside plantings and more manageable than normal Joe Pye weed (Eutrochium purpureum).

Consider planting directly under the "Offer Up" sign at Town Hall, the meet-up spot for private party Internet purchases, with a specific blooming annual whose color you can identify in the listing. Beyond just looking for the sign itself, people can quickly identify the spot they should be standing at. It also would provide an opportunity to educate people about a specific type of flowering plant. It would be great if "Offer Up" chose a signature plant for all its locations so the spot would be universally identifiable, at least during blooming season. Perhaps they can partner with Proven Winners™ to receive plant material at a discount since they are national in scope.

Register the new pollinator garden at the ECO City Farms entrance with the Million Pollinator Gardens challenge so that more people know about its existence. See https://pollinator.org/mpgcmap/ The closest current registered site appears to be a Butterfly Heroes Garden in Cottage City. *It would also be useful for ECO City Farms to include mention of it on their website.*

Landscaped Areas Criterion Definition	Metrics Ratings (NS = Not Scored)					
3. LANDSCAPED AREAS (LA): plants and related programs for the leadership, design, installation, and maintenance of landscape. Includes shrubs, ornamental grasses, vines, succulents, edibles, evergreen topiaries, turf, and groundcovers	**Not Applicable N/A**	**Not Started (0 pts)**	**Launched (1 pt)**	**Achieved (2 pts)**	**Surpassing (3 pts)**	**Excelling (4 pts)**
a. Leadership and Policy						
LA.a.01 - Management of planting public landscaped areas						X
LA.a.02 - Municipal landscape ordinance requires landscaping and maintenance for new and/or improved commercial development	X		NS		NS	NS
LA.a.03 - Municipal ordinance requiring landscaping for new residential developments			NS	X	NS	NS
b. Plan of Action						
LA.b.01 - Planning for restoration of natural areas				X		
LA.b.02 - Strategy for management of invasive plants				X		
LA.b.03 - Demonstration/display gardens with interpretive signage (pollinator, wildlife, native, low-water use, etc.) in place and promoted						X
LA.b.04 - Effective communication of "Right Plant in the Right Place" and other planting issues				X		
LA.b.05 - Recognition program for attractive landscapes in place						X
LA.b.06 - School gardening programs in place for multiple grades				X		
c. Design						
LA.c.01 - Unity and Variety: plant combinations create visual interest while appearing coordinated				X		
LA.c.02 - Suitability of Plant Selections: plants selected for location and environmental conditions			X			
LA.c.03 - Distribution/Locations: landscaping found throughout the community and at key locations						X
d. Maintenance						
LA.d.01 - Grooming: pruning of plants, removal and/or replacement of dead plants				X		
LA.d.02 - Plant Health: Plants display health and vigor, and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategies in place to monitor and manage diseases and pests				X		
LA.d.03 – Mulch from renewable and sustainable sources is used by the municipality in appropriate places				X		
LA.d.04 - Weed Management: strategies in place to manage weeds (removal, mulching, etc.)				X		
LA.d.05 - Health and Vigor: plants are robust				X		
LA.d.06 - Turf Care: proper mowing, edging, and replacement of dead turf				X		
LA.d.07 - Turf Health: Grassy areas display health and vigor, and procedures such as Integrated Pest Management (IPM) are in place to monitor and manage diseases, pests, and weeds				X		

e. Community Involvement						
LA.e.01 - Volunteers assist in funding, design, installation, and/or care of landscaped areas and/or turf in public areas				X		
LA.e.02 - Community educational programs offered related to plant material, including specialty gardens			X			
f. Advisors' Discretion: Recognition by the Advisors of an item of special note						
LA.f.01 - Advisors to enter text below		NS	NS	NS		X
Great use of ID signs for landscape plants and collaboration with the Arts NGO. Consider expanding to trees in certain areas (parks, city hall, etc).						
Totals:	**Possible Points**		**Actual Points**		**Percentage**	
3. Landscaped Areas (LA)	82		50		60.97%	

Landscaped Areas (LA) Recommendations:

Edmonston does address the management of invasive weeds and plants, but this is an area that requires both continuous vigilance and an integrated approach. To supplement the work currently being done at the municipal level, *develop an education program to alert homeowners to the concerns and threats of invasive species and provide simple instructions for their management and removal.* Such a campaign will help residents learn about their environment, develop knowledge to better care for their own property, and help them feel part of a collective effort toward landscape preservation and overall ecosystem health.

The Maryland state website offers a good place to start: https://mda.maryland.gov/plants-pests/Pages/maryland_invasive_plants_prevention_and_control.aspx.
The Maryland Department of Natural Resources also has helpful invasive plant identification materials https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Documents/Invasive_plants_cards.pdf. *This invasive plant guide is well done and deserves to be translated into Spanish and be sent as a multilingual attachment to Edmonston newsletters and/or eblasts, posted online and displayed at community events, as well as being laminated and the individual cards hung on a ring at the community garden.* Lacking education most people assume "green" is all good, particularly when they are not originally native to the area.

We observed certain instances throughout the community where the plants selected will eventually outgrow their location. This can cause a multitude of problems, including damage to infrastructure, difficulty maintain plant stock. and large plants that lack structural integrity and can pose breakage risk and other liabilities, particularly in inclement weather. *As such, the town should develop a revised set of planting protocols that ensure the "right plant in the right place" is extended to include specific guidance related to size, scale, and projected growth at maturity. These guidelines can also be passed along to residents* to help ensure that trees and shrubs planted on private properties do not pose a similar threat (See also Urban Forestry).

Landscapes for Life offers a series of training modules for teens and adults on how better to manage their home landscapes. *Scroll down to print out the Instructor's Manual to use for program creation.* If you contact Ray Mims email: rmims@aoc.gov at the U.S. Botanic Garden in Washington, DC you can get the manual on a USB stick.

Edmonston has a very impressive community gardening program for residents and high school students. It is a gathering place, rich in diversity of plants and users. We did not hear any mention of whether local elementary-school-aged students might be offered this site as an outdoor learning environment. *Consider extending access to younger students*, and perhaps in doing so, coordinate with other youth organizations, such as Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts where you could cater programming to badge requirements. Many Parks and Recreation Authorities in urban areas collaborate with Boy and Girl Scout organizations to create and support badge-related training and projects within the park system. Prince George's County does not appear to have this kind of effort. But reaching out to other large organizations like the neighboring Montgomery County Parks and Recreation program could help speed up implementation, secure grant funding and engage youth from neighboring areas.

Another program resource is Kids Gardening. They significantly increased available resources and training assistance to local community educators in the last year. There is a regularly scheduled discussion forum opportunity. *Finally, as part of this proposed "expansion" engage a hyper-interested student adept with social media and website capabilities to be the "spokesperson" for new Edmonston community garden developments.*

If they are not already aware, nearby urban farming site, ECO City Farms might benefit from this recently created resource from the U.S. Botanic Garden - https://www.usbg.gov/greenhousemanual.

Edmonston engaged an intern to help turn a small street corner into a contemplative Zen/healing garden. *Here are two sources of inspiration that came to mind when this was suggested:* https://www.hakone.com/ (near AIB participant Saratoga, CA) and https://japanphilly.org/shofuso/ in Philadelphia. The Japanese Embassy in D.C. might be able to offer

some assistance. The book “Creating Sanctuary” could also be a useful resource Creating Sanctuary: Sacred Garden Spaces, Plant-Based Medicine, and Daily Practices to Achieve Happiness and Well-Being: Bloom, Jessi, Linehan, Shawn: 9781604697544: AmazonSmile: Books

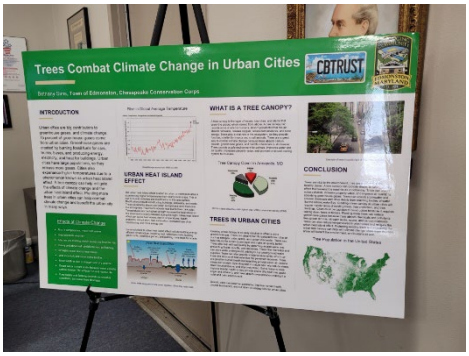
Urban Forestry Criterion Definition	Metrics Ratings (NS = Not Scored)					
4. URBAN FORESTRY (UF): trees and related programs for the leadership, management, design, installation, and maintenance on public and private lands	**Not Applicable N/A**	**Not Started (0 pts)**	**Launched (1 pt)**	**Achieved (2 pts)**	**Surpassing (3 pts)**	**Excelling (4 pts)**
a. Leadership and Policy						
UF.a.01 - Qualified personnel are on staff or accessing trained individuals such as arborists and/or urban foresters				X		
UF.a.02 - Tree board/commission and/or department is active				X		
UF.a.03 - Municipal ordinance(s) enacted/enforced for tree preservation on public and/or private property			NS	X	NS	NS
UF.a.04 - Municipal ordinance(s) enacted/enforced for protection of trees during construction		X	NS		NS	NS
UF.a.05 - Currently a Tree City USA community			NS	X	NS	NS
b. Plan of Action						
UF.b.01 - Tree inventory for public areas is complete and current within the past ten years					X	
UF.b.02 - Annual tree planting program for public areas					X	
UF.b.03 - Management strategies for removal of dead, imperiled, and invasive trees in public areas					X	
UF.b.04 - Policy for recognition and protection of historic trees				X		
UF.b.05 - Effective communication to residents of recommended trees, proper planting, "Right Tree in the Right Place," mulching, placement and spacing, and/or maintenance				X		
c. Design						
UF.c.01 - Variety: current practices include appropriate selection and diversity of tree species being planted				X		
UF.c.02 - Placement: current practices include appropriate spacing and planting area for optimal root and canopy growth			X			
UF.c.03 - Planting: current practices include correct tree planting depth (trunk flare at/above grade)				X		
UF.c.04 - Arboretum/Park in place with labels and descriptive signage	X					
d. Maintenance						
UF.d.01 - Tree Health: strategies in place to monitor and manage diseases and pests					X	
UF.d.02 - Watering, mulching, and pruning for new trees: procedures for watering and proper mulching (i.e., no volcano mulching) in place and effectively communicated to the public				X		
UF.d.03 - Pruning for established trees: appropriate pruning, removal of dead limbs, and canopies raised adequately above vehicle and pedestrian areas			X			

e. Community Involvement						
UF.e.01 - Policy for donations to tree planting in public areas (memorial trees, etc.) in place				X		
UF.e.02 - Community participates in Arbor Day activities						X
UF.e.03 - Volunteers assist in tree planting and/or care				X		
f. Advisors' Discretion: Recognition by the Advisors of an item of special note						
UF.f.01 - Advisors to enter text below	X	NS	NS	NS		

Totals:	**Possible Points**	**Actual Points**	**Percentage**
4. Urban Forestry (UF)	70	40	57.14%

Urban Forestry (UF) Recommendations:

Edmonston is in a very dense urban environment; as such tree plantings, growth and proper care bring unique challenges. That being said, the tree rings around the pictured trees to the left are well done and something that many other communities fail to do correctly. However, *resist the temptation to plant trees in a row like crops, unless you are trying to create an allee effect with equal trees on both sides of a path or road.* Planting in a semicircle or triangle to create a "grove" effect establishes an inviting destination and offers a shaded place to nestle a bench.



Edmonston engaged a student to prepare the graphically pleasing and comprehensive "importance of trees poster'' pictured to the right. For some quick takeaways, *consider taking the Conclusion paragraph and publicizing it as bullet points on a card to make 3-5 important points about the importance of trees in English and Spanish.*

We note that a few residential lots had trees planted too close to the sidewalk. This presents multiple risks, as the tree is likely to raise the sidewalk, creating a trip hazard, as well as compromising the root system and structural integrity of the tree, making it more vulnerable to breakage, especially in instances of heavy snow or wind. For aging members of the community raised sidewalks present a particular problem. *Town staff is connected enough to the community that one-on-one contact with the owners of these trees engaging them in monitoring their growth as "Tree Watchers" would be helpful.* Perhaps home rehab money could be devoted to moving, replacing them or replacing sidewalks with rubberized sections addressing both the inside and outside of residential properties. *Through a tree planting and care guide educate other property owners about appropriate planting locations and the need to anticipate mature size when planting young trees so that others don't duplicate detrimental practices.*

In another instance in Veterans' Park, trees, unless they are a true dwarf variety, are too close to the sign up the hill. (See picture to the right).

"Tree Watchers" could also be engaged in reporting damaged trees as in the example to the left that could be caused by vandalism or possibly improper installation of the tree id tag.

While many communities can obtain free trees or the chance to purchase a selection of native saplings at a minimal cost through their local Soil and Conservation District, it does not appear that your district offers anything like these opportunities. There is the Prince George's County Releaf Grant -https://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/457/Tree-ReLeaf-Grant-Program, which you are probably aware of already. And unfortunately, Maryland state-level activities seems to be focused on rural rather than urban areas. *In regional meetings be sure to continue to advocate to correct this oversight.*

We observed locations with invasive trees. While some may be on private property or in areas you have no immediate authority over, d*evelop a plan to remove existing invasive trees in the near term or at least tag them with some kind of marking to build awareness. Try bringing a roll of caution tape with the words 'invasive."* In conjunction with the Landscape criteria recommendation to educate residents about the identification, prevention, and risks associated with invasive species, ensure residents are notified of the proactive steps Edmonston is taking. *Also ensure that the planting of invasive species is expressly prohibited in all relevant building codes, design guidelines, and other municipal*

ordinances. A least one other state is fining nurseries for the sale of state-level designated invasive trees and plants.

Ensure that the municipal tree inventory records trees in need of being removed and replaced and that this platform is updated at routine intervals to record progress and keep track of priority maintenance needs. If support for these services is in short supply, consider training students, scouts, or members of the EcoFarms, your nearby urban farm organization, to assist with this effort.

Edmonston has an established tree trimming practice, *but the community should consider accelerating the trimming schedule particularly for overgrown or at-risk trees*. This schedule could be further revised to coordinate with the existing program of grant-funded exterior improvements that has made a positive impact on some many individual homes and families thereby address both the inside and outside of residential properties.

Environmental Efforts Criterion Definition	Metrics Ratings (NS = Not Scored)					
5. ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORTS (EE): environmental leadership, policies, plans, and programs for resource conservation; pollution control; trash, recycling, and reuse; and alternative fuel vehicles	**Not Applicable N/A**	**Not Started (0 pts)**	**Launched (1 pt)**	**Achieved (2 pts)**	**Surpassing (3 pts)**	**Excelling (4 pts)**
a. Leadership and Policy						
EE.a.01 - Environmental Advisory Board(s) and/or Green Team(s) in place			NS	X	NS	NS
EE.a.02 - Electric/alternative fuel vehicle(s) used by municipality						X
EE.a.03 - Electric vehicle charging station(s) provided						X
EE.a.04 - Stormwater management policies in place and enforced						X
EE.a.05 - Pet waste policies in place and enforced						X
b. Plan of Action						
EE.b.01 - Sustainability Action Plan in place						X
EE.b.02 - Effective municipal/civic education about environmental efforts for children and adults					X	
EE.b.03 - Effective notification to community regarding pesticide applications and mosquito spraying						X
c. Resource Conservation						
EE.c.01 - Bio-swales and/or rain gardens in place to reduce stormwater run-off pollution						X
EE.c.02 - Home energy audit/incentives available					X	
EE.c.03 - Waterwise irrigation in place				X		
EE.c.04 - Low-flow water device incentives available					X	
d. Trash, Recycling, and Reuse Management						
EE.d.01 - Residential curbside trash collection is available and/or required						X
EE.d.02 - Residential curbside recycling collection and/or collection points are in place						X
EE.d.03 - Recycling containers available in public areas and for private use, and standardized and/or consistent labels used on containers						X
EE.d.04 - Yard waste composting pick-up and/ or drop-off available					X	
EE.d.05 - Prescription drug drop-off(s) available				X		
EE.d.06 - Hazardous waste and/or electronics waste collection or drop-off(s) available					X	
EE.d.07 - Plastic bag and/or foam container collection point(s) available					X	
EE.d.08 - Reuse opportunities are available (clothing, books, household goods, repair initiatives, etc.)						X

e. Community Involvement						
EE.e.01 - Community events that enhance public awareness of environmental issues and distribution of information on effective recycling (lack of contamination), i.e. Earth Day participation					X	
EE.e.02 - Garden clubs, Master Gardeners, and/or Soil and Water Conservation District, etc. provide educational opportunities for rain barrel usage, backyard habitats, and other environmental initiatives		X				
EE.e.03 - School curricula programs and events to encourage youth involvement						X
f. Advisors' Discretion: Recognition by the Advisors of an item of special note						
EE.f.01 - Advisors to enter text below		NS	NS	NS		X
Edmonston has an extraordinary number of rain gardens. Currently there are 30 with grants for 17 more.						

Totals:	**Possible Points**	**Actual Points**	**Percentage**
5. Environmental Efforts (EE)	94	79	84.04%

Environmental Efforts (EE) Recommendations:

Edmonston is already exceling in numerous environmental initiatives, including an extensive Green Streets project that incorporates stormwater infrastructure and best practices throughout the community. As such, several of our recommendations are to improve the efficacy of existing programs or further enhance their impact on the physical infrastructure of Edmonston and the knowledge and engagement of its residents.

As an example and unusual for its small size, Edmonston has installed **30** rain gardens (photo to the left). With two new grants it will add 17 additional sites. The grants come from the Chesapeake Bay Trust, Prince George's County or the federal government.

While you have tackled many of the areas on this following list through your already comprehensive efforts, you might what to cross reference Project Drawdown for new aspects of the global warming challenge you can address. See this link to issues and solutions - https://drawdown.org/solutions.

During our visit, it was unclear the extent that the home energy audit program is actually used by residents. A chart tabulating the number of residents taking advantage of the program would be a helpful addition either for display in Town Hall or through the website. This will also help gauge whether enough residents are taking advantage of the program. If not enough are, one possible strategy to increase use is to coordinate exterior improvements performed via state grants with an interior home energy audit. This would ease hesitation, as the homeowner is already engaged with the community to coordinate the exterior improvements, as well as perhaps inspire positive changes throughout their whole home. For other *incentives like installing low-flow water devices a similar approach could be used.* Given the similar nature of these two potential home improvements, the community may wish to proactively address both incentives at once bundling them with home improvement grants.

The county pumping facility is a unique, interesting, and place-defining piece of infrastructure, but the current lack of facility tours limits the residents' ability to appreciate and learn from this infrastructure. *Consider developing a tour program, perhaps one weekend each month, with perhaps some additional opportunities for school and/or summer camp programs. In conjunction, consider an art project, contest, or other community engagement project to highlight this special local feature.* The facility is reminiscent of a "Magic School Bus "experience – perhaps after a visit children could *enter a story contest and the winning story is published and distributed via community programs and free copies made available in the local Little Libraries.* Or Operation Arts could develop art posters that capture elements of the facility. A modest tour fee could help support water conservation efforts throughout the community.

Other examples of sources for youth-focused environmental education include the following:

- https://projectwet.org
- https://www.plt.org (Your state level contact is in Baltimore, see end of the page at https://www.plt.org/network/maryland)
- http://mdenvirothon.org (Participation by Edmonston/Hyattsville students could be a goal)

As Edmonston continues to construct a truly impressive number of rain gardens, bioswales and other green street infrastructure, it is important to keep residents up to date and engaged with the project. When one searches on the web on "Edmonston + bioswales", several articles and postings that others have created about Edmonston come up but not anything from the town website directly, except for a document from 2010. *Consider developing an online presence for the project with options for residents to track progress, remain aware of street closures, and learn from the construction around them. You could include things like special moments of completion, planting days, where residents might volunteer, the particular plant palate selected or how they might emulate a similar swale or rain garden on their property.* Helping residents engage with and learn from such an impressive project will increase their feeling of ownership, community identity, and disseminate knowledge in new ways.

Recycling food scraps is an upcoming area for Edmonston to address. It used to be that anaerobic digesters were too large for community use but recent innovations make small versions available, as in the following https://www.homebiogas.com/shop/ (Scroll down to the center of the offerings)
Or non-fatty food scraps and plant material can be concealed easily on site with a Subpod that combines composting with vermiculture - https://subpod.com/collections/subpod-compost-system-worm-farm?utm_source=stry&utm_medium=trafb&utm_campaign=storeya60&utm_term= This could be a pilot project for Town Hall, though space is very limited there. *Or since your wonderful recycling asset of Community Forklift is being relocated out of your area due to lease loss, encourage the property owner/power company to include something onsite that at least offers some type of recycling service, like an anaerobic digester somewhere on that property.* See also https://rucore.libraries.rutgers.edu/rutgers-lib/45189/PDF/1/play/ for supporting arguments.

Edmonston currently facilitates Rx drug disposal at the regional level but may want to *consider working with the local police force to coordinate a few "drop off" days at Town Hall or have a collection point during another community event where police offices might already be on site.*

Public art can reinforce the town's environmental messages on shade sails or bluebird houses as examples. Signage about wildlife would be useful around the retention pond. This lets residents know that the pond helps keep water off the streets but also serves as home to redwing blackbirds. It might be helpful to connect with the District of Columbia efforts to see if they have examples you could use. See their recent RFP at https://doee.dc.gov/release/notice-request-applicants-green-stormwater-infrastructure-signage-program *In addition to bluebird or other birdhouses placed throughout town to increase habitat, a Little Library-like structure could be turned into a viewable bee hive as one in the library in Belpre, OH.* This could add another function to your "Mini Service/Educational" network of little structures.

When preparing your next profile consider how your environmental efforts might overlap with other criteria and highlight the overlap in other sections of your profile.

Celebrating Heritage Criterion Definition	Metrics Ratings (NS = Not Scored)					
6. CELEBRATING HERITAGE (CH): recognition, designation, protection, commemoration, and celebration of historical, cultural, natural, agricultural, and industrial resources	**Not Applicable N/A**	**Not Started (0 pts)**	**Launched (1 pt)**	**Achieved (2 pts)**	**Surpassing (3 pts)**	**Excelling (4 pts)**
a. Leadership and Policy						
CH.a.01 - Historic preservation ordinance effectively provides commercial and residential designation and protection from demolition				X		
CH.a.02 - Incentives offered to promote preservation: tax credits, waived permit fees, eased setbacks, rebates, etc.					X	
CH.a.03 - Historic Preservation and/or Architectural Review Board in place and effective				X		
CH.a.04 - Historical Society is active	X					
b. Plan of Action						
CH.b.01 - Effective communication of ordinances, policies, and restoration methods					X	
CH.b.02 - National Register of Historic Places district and/or individual designations in place				X		
CH.b.03 - Natural and/or agricultural areas are protected				X		
CH.b.04 - Archives, artifacts, cemetery records, and/or oral histories collected, properly stored, or preserved					X	
CH.b.05 - Education: historical publications/websites, interpretive signage, tours, and programs in place						X
CH.b.06 - Programs in place to encourage youth involvement, including curriculum-designated tours and available to multiple age levels		X				
c. Commemoration						
CH.c.01 - Signage in place for historic neighborhoods and/or structures				X		
CH.c.02 - Historical museum(s) and/or interpretive displays maintained	X					
CH.c.03 - Cemeteries, monuments, and/or plaques in place and well-maintained				X		
CH.c.04 - Community heritage promoted through tours (guided or self), brochures, Smartphone apps, etc.				X		
CH.c.05 - Parades, festivals, events, programs commemorating a community's heritage are held						X
d. Community Involvement						
CH.d.01 - Volunteers participate in planning and implementing recognition of a community's heritage through historical tours, parades, festivals, etc.						X
CH.d.02 - Volunteers participate in maintaining historical sites and structures	X					

f. Advisors' Discretion: Recognition by the Advisors of an item of special note						
CH.e.01 - Advisors to enter text below	X	NS	NS	NS		

Totals:	Possible Points	Actual Points	Percentage
6. Celebrating Heritage (CH)	54	35	64.81%

Celebrating Heritage (CH) Recommendations:

The area around Edmonston was an early settlement during the Colonial Era. Back then the Anacostia River was navigable by large ships, so the area was a major trading area for tobacco. The river used to be 40 ft. deep, now it is 3-6 ft. It has been re-channelized, so it has boat traffic again, but nothing like in days past.

While not in Edmonston, we visited the neighboring Riverdale Visitor Center. The original occupants fled the French Revolution to establish a plantation in the U.S. At its height there were 77 enslaved individuals working on the property including a man named Adam Francis Plummer. Plummer is notable in that he left behind a rare and extensive written record of his life and that he was able to buy property at an unknown location in present day Edmonston. *Since there are photographs and drawings, an interesting addition here would be a life-sized acrylic or Plexiglas etching of Plummer or with more funds even a hologram of Plummer to bring him to life again in the community.*

The main house of the plantation was abandoned in 1945 and turned over to Maryland Park and Planning. The attractive visitor center offers a look at historic happenings in the community. During our visit we heard about interesting programming going on in the outbuildings, including cooking classes referred to as "Taste and Teach."

The Piscataway tribe was indigenous to the area. It was unclear whether Riverdale does grow Native American crops, if not, *Edmonston could take this on as an assigned plot in the community garden or in ECO City Farms, or around the proposed expansion of the community center as a historic demonstration garden.*

Consider having an intern research and document the historic backstory for street names in Edmonston and publish them in a pamphlet and add them to the town website.

There are quite a number of different events in Edmonston including a Fireworks Watch, National Night and a wonderful event that celebrates student graduates via a parade involving the mayor. *Once the new Bladensburg Library is opened or in coordination with the Riverdale Visitor Center, consider having a literary fundraising event that would incorporate food and gardening-themed literature.* This idea comes from the following very creative cookbook – "The Book Lover's Cookbook: Recipes inspired by Celebrated Works of Literature and the Passages that Feature Them." https://smile.amazon.com/Book-Lovers-Cookbook-Celebrated-Literature/dp/0345465466/ref=sr_1_1?crid=19BN0FB17IML0&keywords=the+book+lovers+cookbook&qid=1659020914&sprefix=the+booklovers+cook%2Caps%2C72&sr=8-1

A list of all page numbers of the appropriate recipes and garden passages is in the appendix at the back of this evaluation (page 21). *Operation ART could treat this like a poetry slam where the passages were read as the foods from the different courses were served.* A summarized passage from the book states, "When characters connect with food…they connect with the reader and smells. Food evokes memories, nostalgia, and **thereby historical connections**." A bit of work… but we believe this speaks to creative talents in Edmonston and is an interesting way to increase awareness of gardening, along with historical foodways. We experienced a wonderful variety of homemade food options in Edmonston. Its volunteers and its local restaurant owner clearly enjoy food and cooking.

Research uncovered a relevant addition to the Book Lover's listing in the appendix. *You could add the works of writer Camille Acker to the authors highlighted.* She has a story called "Mambo Sauce" in her debut short story collection "Training School for Negro Girls." Edmonston's homemade Mambo sauce provided by Operation Art was quite a treat. As a side note: we don't agree with DC Mayor Bowser about Mambo sauce…or maybe she has never tried Edmonston's.

While the current resident majority of Edmonston might not be able to relate to U.S. military service, *more attention should be devoted to creating a greater sense of reverence in Veterans Park.* Because it is so small in area it should be all about veterans only. The Art Magnet and Food Pantry should be moved. (See Overall Impression).

It is a little steep, uneven and hard to find your footing in places in Veteran's Park. *Apply for ADA money to improve accessibility since many veterans are disabled.* While not explicitly stated try contacting the nearby organization Disabled Veterans National Foundation - https://www.dvnf.org/ for potential sources of funding for improvements. *Be inclusive by including the concept that women service members should be honored even though none from the area may have died to be listed by name on the plaque. (See OUR BOYS Heading below)*

Overall Impression (OI) Criterion Definition	Metrics Ratings (NS = Not Scored)					
7. OVERALL IMPRESSION (OI): adequate and effective amenities are provided in good condition, and the community is welcoming and attractive	**Not Applicable N/A**	**Not Started (0 pts)**	**Launched (1 pt)**	**Achieved (2 pts)**	**Surpassing (3 pts)**	**Excelling (4 pts)**
a. Leadership and Policy						
OI.a.01 - Signage ordinances enacted and enforced					X	
OI.a.02 - Ordinances in place to address overgrown lots, abandoned vehicles, unscreened dumpsters, public nuisances, unregulated garage sales, empty storefront windows, etc.				X		
OI.a.03 - Code enforcement/compliance officer on municipal staff and codes are enforced					X	
OI.a.04 - Design style determined, applied, and consistent for site furnishings, crosswalks, gateway entry features, banners, wayfinding signage, etc.				X		
b. Amenities						
OI.b.01 - Site furnishings in place: water features, lamp posts, benches, bicycle racks, drinking fountains, trash and recycling receptacles, containers, planters, and cigarette receptacles					X	
OI.b.02 - Crosswalks well-marked	X					
OI.b.03 - Public restrooms available				X		
OI.b.04 - Effective community gateway entry features					X	
OI.b.05 - Effective use of banners, murals, and/or public art						X
OI.b.06 - Effective wayfinding signage		X				
OI.b.07 - Effective use of non-plant seasonal decorations (lights, ornaments, etc.)					X	
c. Condition and Maintenance						
OI.c.01 - Condition of structures, buildings, decks, patios, etc related to lack of vandalism, graffiti, peeling or faded paint, and rust				X		
OI.c.02 - Condition of infrastructure: roadways, road shoulders, curbs, medians, sidewalks, railroad crossings, crosswalks/pavement markings, transformers, and utility poles related to lack of weeds, vandalism, litter, graffiti, peeling or faded paint, and rust	X					
OI.c.03 - Condition of signs and site furnishings: water features, lamp posts, benches, bicycle racks, drinking fountains, trash and recycling receptacles, containers, planters, and cigarette receptacles						
OI.c.04 - Condition of vacant lots, stormwater retention ponds, and swales						X
OI.c.05 - Control of excessive stake signs, billboards, and posted flyers						X
OI.c.06 - Regularly scheduled street sweeping						X

d. Community Involvement						
OI.d.01 - Volunteer participation and/or funding of community revitalization and improvement initiatives, such as Adopt-A-Spot, Habitat for Humanity, River Sweep, home repair programs (CHIP), disaster relief, clean-up days, etc.						X
OI.d.02 - Process is available for residents to fund public amenities such as memorial benches, brick pathways, etc.				X		
e. Advisors' Discretion: Recognition by the Advisors of an item of special note						
OI.e.01 - Advisors to enter text below		NS	NS	NS		X
The level of public art for a community of its size is significant, also the fact that the public art exists around structures that serve a social welfare, art and recycling purpose. More structures are being planned.						

Totals:	**Possible Points**	**Actual Points**	**Percentage**
7. Overall Impression (OI)	72	49	68.05%

Overall Impression (OI) Recommendations:

Edmonston is a tiny enclave tucked away between the riverbank levies of the Anacostia River and a warehouse district. Homes give one a sense of time gone by…almost like an American version of Brigadoon. With no commercial main street and only one restaurant in town, the community still has a strong sense of identity. Originally a working-class area it remains so today, but with a current Hispanic flavor. Fortunately, there have not been teardowns. Streets are well maintained and in an environmental nod Edmonston contracts with a neighboring community to use their street sweeper rather than investing resources in a larger piece of equipment that would sit idle because the community is so small. It would be great if more towns considered sharing maintenance equipment like this effort in your town.

We discovered a row of interesting historic two-story brick houses during our visit. *Consider adding signage.* They should be consistent with other signage in town like those describing environmental projects. *Include information about the brick homes in your future profile.*

Public art has existed for a while in the community, so much so that a town hall mural restoration is underway, with planning in the works for a new interactive mural. *Try and add more murals on warehouses, or if that is too much, shading their entrances with colorful or even painted shade sails would help distract the eye. Painted shade sails with a theme could be an Operations ARTS project.*

Beyond just murals, there are several different unusual examples of public art throughout the community. Little Libraries are painted with varying themes. There is a painted food pantry structure and a unique painted "Art Magnet" that offers free small works of original art to passersby. There are art installations on electrical boxes.

In terms of placement, consider relocating the Art Magnet and Food Pantry away from Veterans Park. Veterans Park should just be about veterans. Perhaps these structures could be placed on the other side of the street, along with a bench and a bike rack. For the Food Pantry, options also include locating it near Edmonston City Hall, where it will be easier to stock or at a bus stop where a food-threatened person is more likely to frequent.

Other suitable locations for the Food Pantry would be the apartment complex or the community gardens. Or consider co-locating the Art Magnet and Food Pantry with other "mini-service/educational" structures like your Little Libraries or a housing offering free craft supplies. *Wherever they end up, create "staging" behind them with attractive shrubs or grasses so they don't look so isolated. Add consistently colored and formed stepping stones leading up to them, otherwise people might confuse them with a utility box. While each is painted differently, common "staging" with like plant material and stones will make them appear less random and part of an organized service network and thereby contribute to a more unified overall impression.*

Establish town guidelines for consistency of hardscaping furnishings. Those in Veterans Park do not match in esthetic or color, particularly the waste basket and the benches and in combination with the gazebo. (See photo to the right). It is also unclear why a bench is in front of the gazebo that has seating and that it faces the street rather than the green riverbank.

The town would also be more attractive if the amount of chain link fencing could be minimized. *Consider adding this to the home renovation projects you undertake for certain residents in town.* If it cannot be removed through the establishment of an incentive, or if it must remain in place on a person's property for child or pet safety reason, maybe a subsidy for the difference between chain link and other fencing could be offered to residents. Or failing removal, perhaps adding painted rails in keeping with the Little Library esthetic

would be colorful improvement for a few spots around town. (See photo to the left) This could be another new project for the Operation ARTS Foundation that is playing such an active and valuable role in Edmonston.

Lastly. while not town property, Riverdale Park could benefit from cleaning and weed removal.

Edmonston is a lovely community, we hope to be back to visit again soon.

Evaluation Tour Preparation and Actions (ET) Definition	Metrics Ratings (NS = Not Scored)		
8. EVALUATION TOUR PREPARATION AND ACTIONS (ET): community's readiness prior to and the action during the Evaluation Tour	**Not Applicable N/A**	**Unmet (0 pts)**	**Met (1 pt)**
a. Prior to the Evaluation Tour			
ET.a.01 - Community Profile provided to Advisors at least two weeks prior to the first official tour date			X
ET.a.02 - Community Profile includes contacts with emails			X
ET.a.03 - Community Profile from a returning community makes it clear what is new and/or implemented from Advisors' recommendations (scored as N/A for a new community)			X
ET.a.04 - Evaluation Tour Itinerary and Community Map with boundaries provided to Advisors at least two weeks prior to first office tour date			X
b. During the Evaluation Tour			
ET.b.01 - Evaluation Tour provided a representative cross-section of the community			X
ET.b.02 - Advisors met with elected/appointed municipal leaders and/or staff			X
ET.b.03 - Advisors met with the business and/or non-profit community			X
ET.b.04 - Advisors met with the media			X
ET.b.05 - Advisors met with volunteers			X
ET.b.06 - Advisors were asked to give a presentation(s)			X
c. Final Wrap-Up			
ET.c.01 - Enough time was allotted for Advisors to work on the Evaluation Tour Report in a quiet place with adequate Wi-Fi availability			X
ET.c.02 - Community participated in a wrap-up session at the end of the Evaluation Tour			X
ET.c.03 - Evaluation Report metrics were adequately addressed in the Community Profile and/or Evaluation Tour Itinerary and during the Evaluation Tour			X
d. Advisors' Discretion: Recognition by the Advisors of an item of special note			
ET.d.01 - Advisors to enter text below		NS	X
Going out of the way for food accommodations; Airbnb was fun and a nice break from hotel!			

Totals:	Possible Points	Actual Points	Percentage
8. Evaluation Tour Preparation and Actions (ET)	14.00	14.00	100.00%

Evaluation Tour Preparation and Actions (ET) Recommendations:

We thoroughly enjoyed our time in Edmonston and the opportunity to see so many different facets of your community! It's clear that the AIB committee takes the suggestions to heart from previous judges (now advisors) and incorporated numerous different stops in our two-day visit. Edmonston has done a great job of creating a full and readable community profile with thorough descriptions for each metric and organizing the profile in the same order as the scoring system. Both strategies result in a thorough and straightforward evaluation experience for the advisors and ensure no item goes unnoticed. We really appreciate Edmonston highlighting the previous judges (now advisors) recommendations that were implemented in the community in a separate document.

DISCLAIMERS:

1. Communities are responsible for addressing the metrics in the Community Profile, Evaluation Tour Itinerary, and during the Evaluation Tour. Please note that the metric calculations contained herein are final, and each community is encouraged to focus on any changes during the following year's entry in the America in Bloom National Awards Program.
2. All information is given to the best of America in Bloom's knowledge and is believed to be accurate. Your conditions of use and application of recommendations and/or suggested products are beyond our control. There is no warranty expressed or implied regarding the accuracy of any given data or statements. America in Bloom specifically disclaims any responsibility or liability relating to the use of the recommendations and/or suggested products and shall under no circumstances whatsoever, be liable for any special, incidental or consequential damages which may arise from such use.
3. Reference herein to any specific commercial products, processes, or service by trade named trademark manufacturer or otherwise does not necessarily constitute or imply its endorsement, recommendation or favoring by America in Bloom. The views and opinions of authors expressed herein shall not be used for advertising or product endorsement purposes.

2022 Community Recognitions

Community: Edmonston, MD

Recognized Criterion: Environmental Efforts

The community has planned, funded, and executed a truly impressive initiative that not only embraces green infrastructure but also creates and defines a place. In particular, Edmonston is excelling in stormwater management as part of its overall environmental efforts.

While we recognize Edmonston specifically for its environmental efforts, it is important to note that the Green Streets Initiative touches on nearly all the America in Bloom categories – creating rainwater gardens with both landscape material and flowers, returning a historically significant waterway to greater public use, celebrating the once-problematic stormwater in a unique and responsible way, improving the overall impression of the place, all the while engaging with the community.

Noteworthy Project or Initiative: Operation ARTS Cooperation

Edmonston has made an impressive contribution to the local art scene with its partnership with Operation ARTS, resulting in a series of unique art installations that benefit the community, including a series of Little Libraries, a food bank structure, and a tiny art exchange program that encourages residents to make and swap art, as well as the creation of several art-related events for community participants of all ages.

Appendix: Gardening-related Pages from "The Book Lover's Cookbook"

The intention is not to suggest making all of these, but they represent the literary passages that had the most direct gardening connection to pick from out of the entire book.

Page	*Food Type*	*Author*
p. 13	Zucchini	Andrew Rooney
p. 17	Blueberries	Robert Frost
p. 85*	Rice	Pearl Buck
p. 88*	Squash	Louisa May Alcott
p. 112	Grilled Cheese	Joan Bauer
p. 125	Gazpacho	Maeve Binchy
p. 151	Salad	Ogden Nash
p. 153	Fruit	Doris Gates
p. 160	Corn	James Alexander Thom
p. 163	Strawberries	Genevieve Taggard (poem)
p. 165*	Beans	Laura Ingalls Wilder
p. 170*	Mushrooms	Willa Cather & Lewis Caroll
p. 172	Shrimp	Charles Kuralt
p. 177	Cucumber	DH Lawrence & Christina Schwarz
p. 211	Blueberries	Dorothy Gillman
p. 228	Tea Cake	CS Lewis
p. 231	Chocolate Swirl Cake	Kay Chorao
p. 265	Wassail	Robert Frost
p. 279	Peanut Butter Cookies	Tamar Myers

Interesting quotes

p. 112 William Zinsser
p. 183 Debra Magpie Earling
p. 211 Robertson Davies
p. 221 Wanda Rosseland
p. 285 Clifton Fadiman
also p. 334-337 in the Reader's Guide

Notes

- **"*" represents very best examples**
- **A lot of the recipes are based on garden-grown vegetables**
- **Many of the books listed are children's books, so there could be a children's version of this event, as well as an adult one.**