America in Bloom 2023 Evaluation Report

Community: Edmonston, Maryland
Evaluation Dates: July 17-18, 2023

Lead Advisor: Barbara Vincentsen
Co-Advisor: Connie Baggett

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.

This year's program included the launch of a new evaluation report and matrix. This new evaluation provides a fresh benchmark for both long-time and first-year AIB communities. It is anticipated that the introduction of the evaluation form based on the new metrics will have different scores and overall percentages from previous years in the program. Scores received in the past should not be compared to scores received this year and moving forward as the evaluation metrics have been entirely revamped.

Evaluation Areas	Possible Points	Actual Points	Percent
Community Vitality	192.00	149.00	77.60%
Floral Impact	144.00	86.00	59.72%
Landscaped Areas	168.00	112.00	66.66%
Urban Forestry	144.00	98.00	68.05%
Environmental Initiatives	160.00	133.00	83.12%
Celebrating Heritage	128.00	92.00	71.87%
Overall Impression	152.00	116.00	76.31%
Evaluation Tour Preparation and Actions	13.00	11.00	84.61%
Total Points and Percent	1101.00	797.00	72.38%
Star Rating		8	
Community Involvement Total	88	73	82.95%

Star ratings are based on overall percentage.

1 star = 0% - 9.99%	2 stars = 10% – 19.99%	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 R. Gant	Mayor	tgant@edmonstonmd.gov
Rod Barnes	Town Administrator	rbarnes@edmonstonmd.gov
Ed Hooker	AIB Chair/volunteer	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. 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 points): programs or procedures are not in place.

In Progress (1-2 points): programs or procedures are developed, and a plan of action is implemented.

In Place (3-5 points): programs or procedures are utilized and beneficial.

Surpassing (6-8 points): programs or procedures are exceptional, utilized, and beneficial throughout the community.

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):

Edmonston, Maryland, is a very small town that thinks big, aims high and accomplishes much. Creative solutions to numerous challenges have resulted in a town which pulls together for the common good. The goals of Edmonston and those of America in Bloom seem to be in close alignment, and with each year the common interests lead to community improvements. Congratulations, Edmonston, for all that you have accomplished, and welcome back for your fifth year in the America in Bloom Program.

The Town of Edmonston is located in a largely urban setting. While it has no schools, business district, post office, civic club or other features which define many communities, it does have a strong connection with neighboring towns and is part of the Port Towns communities which provide access to an expansive infrastructure. This provides great advantages to Edmonston but occasionally poses limitations. For example, Edmonston's popular and frequently used Community Center is actually located just over the boundary between Edmonston and a neighboring town which leases the facility to Edmonston. Unfortunately, the lease may not be renewed, which would be a blow to Edmonston since there is no alternative community gathering space. Current plans to expand the municipal building may solve that problem we understand.

We were surprised to learn that volunteer organizations in Edmonston have the ability to record hours but do not necessarily do so when working on projects in the town. We strongly suggest the town encourage volunteers to record these hours*. Consider adding a section to the Edmonston website which includes a blank form for recording hours and a brief video describing the benefits of saving this information. The video should describe grants made possible in part by the inclusion of data reporting volunteer hours and their equivalent in dollars to further emphasize the importance of this information.*

The strong connection between Operation Arts Foundation, Inc., was initially quite a surprise. The subsequent presentation and further observation of the interesting and engaging work throughout town showed the benefits that Op Arts has made possible. In addition to street art, sustainable bus stops, youth programs and the like, the new logo adopted by Edmonston is crisp, clean and , with the green leaf, entirely appropriate.

It was a pleasure to tour Edmonston this year and see and hear about all you have accomplished to help Edmonston thrive. We thank you for your participation in America in Bloom this year and look forward to your continued participation in 2024 as part of your 100-year celebration.

Sincerely,

Barbara Vincentsen
Connie Baggett

Your America in Bloom 2023 Advisors

COMMUNITY VITALITY: Policies, programs, activities, and facilities that lead to a vibrant community and promote a sense of health and well-being. Includes, but not limited to, senior and community centers, libraries, museums, arts/cultural organizations, mentoring programs, schools, faith-based organizations, parks, playgrounds, dog parks, sports fields, water activities, trails, golf courses, and other active and passive recreational opportunities for all ages and abilities.	**Not Applicable (N/A)**	**Not Started (N/S) 0**	**In Progress 1-2**	**In Place 3-5**	**Surpasses 6-8**
1. Master plan is implemented for current and future public green space, growth, and enhancements.					6
2. An economic development plan is in place, implemented, and regularly evaluated.					6
3. Communication of ordinances and policies are easily accessible to businesses and residents.				5	
4. Active recreation opportunities such as water sports, golf, baseball, and soccer, are available and meet the needs of the community.				5	
5. Passive recreation opportunities such as hiking, nature trails, bird watching, and picnic areas are available and meet the needs of the community.					6
6. Age-appropriate play areas and equipment are ADA-compliant, conform to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and are inspected by a Certified Playground Safety Inspector.				5	
7. Participation in outdoor community events such as Bike-to-Work Day, Walk to School Day, and charity 5K events, are offered throughout the year.					6
8. Public parks and green spaces are within a 10-minute walk of all neighborhoods.					6
9. Alternative transportation programs are available such as bicycle, electric scooter, car/van pools, and ride sharing.					6
10. Seating is available near walking, exercise, playground areas, and public transportation stops.					7
11. Shade is provided for participants and spectators such as structures, shade sails, and trees.					6
12. Cultural performances/events for art, dance, theatre, music, lectures, and/or cinema meet the needs of the community.					6
13. Community celebrations and festivals are held throughout the year.					8
14. Businesses are engaged and participate in community events.					6
15. Community center is accessible and available throughout the year for all ages and abilities.					6
16. Access to educational opportunities such as higher, adult, and vocational education is available.					8

17. Public library resources are available and accessible for all ages and abilities.					6
18. Municipal, business, and residential garden plots, rooftop gardens, community gardens, farmers markets, and/or Community Supported Agriculture are available.					7
19. Secure food distribution programs, such as food pantries and hunger relief efforts, are available and include systems to elevate under-served individuals.					8
20. Community-focused service organizations such as Rotary, Veterans, Chamber of Commerce, Scouting, and faith-based are present and active in the community.				4	
21. Volunteer boards are comprised of representatives from businesses and residents.					6
22. Neighborhood organizations are in place and active.				4	
23. Volunteer programs have structure and the ability to record and track volunteer numbers and hours.					8
24. Programs are in place to encourage, recruit, and engage volunteers of all ages and segments of the community.					8
Totals:	**Possible Points**		**Actual Points**		**Percent**
1. Community Vitality	192		149		77.60%

Community Vitality Recommendations:

The Town of Edmonston published an Economic Development Strategy in May of 2023. This working document was prepared with the assistance of a technical planning firm and included numerous community workshops over a period of approximately 18 months. The report includes economic, demographic and real estate analyses, a well-done SWOT analysis, and a four-part community economic development plan. Based upon our recent tour of Edmonston, this plan and its recommendations are right on target. *It would appear that Edmonston has already begun work on some of the low-hanging fruit. An early picture of a Public Storage building published on page 35 of the report illustrates a tired, unkempt landscape. In July the advisors saw a significantly improved version. Given the response we suggest you continue to urge businesses in the industrial district to improve the appearance of the streetscape. Highlight those businesses whose efforts are clearly successful and give them face time on your web page .*

Veterans Park, which is in the town limits, is a prime example of a strategically located park. Amenities within the park provide access to art, books and food in a restful setting located near transportation opportunities. The nearby bridge on occasion becomes the locus of major town festivals. Finally, a bike trail is located near the park, providing access to active recreation opportunities.

The bridge near the park with its vibrant artwork is currently used once or twice a year as the locus for a town-wide festival. *This bridge, which is centrally located in the town, begs to be used more often as a town gathering space. Consider closing the bridge to traffic once a month, say the "Second Saturday of the Month" during the warmer months for a town event. Food trucks and music would provide a festive atmosphere. Perhaps several businesses could set up tables to sell art, crafts, specialty food and more.*

Several playground locations are scattered in town, most of which are ADA accessible but not necessarily equipped for children with disabilities. We noted that the playground in the park near the community gardens appeared to be the only one with equipment which was designed for children including those with mobility and cognitive impairments. Consider *reviewing the equipment available in each park and expanding equipment so that at the least an ADA accessible swing and one more piece of equipment could be used by children of all abilities.*

Food distribution programs in Edmonston are numerous and varied. The smallest of these is the free food pantry in Veterans' Park which is a mere 16 cubic feet in size and restocked as needed with canned goods. Every Saturday over 100 residents line up to receive food distributions at Town Hall. Excess produce from the Community Garden plots is also made available at either the Town Hall or at the Community Garden as is excess produce from ECO City Farms.

While Edmonston does not have any service organization such as Rotary, Veterans and the like, it is home to a vibrant youth organization called End Time Harvest Ministries. This amazing organization works with underserved youth tracking skills necessary for success. Parents are part of the program which includes service projects staffed by both parents and students. The 2024 project focuses on the Edmonston 100 Year Celebration. Students will

collect and catalogue thousands of photographs and create files of same. They will produce a calendar and video tape for the town. In addition to the projects each year, students receive help with studies, college or technical school applications and assistance in writing resumes.

As mentioned in the section on Environmental Initiatives, Edmonston provides many opportunities for active and passive recreation within both the Town of Edmonston and the Port Town area. These include biking and hiking trails, sports fields picnic areas, playgrounds and more. Also, as efforts to control stormwater runoff and pollution in these towns has gained traction, the Anacostia Waterway is reaping the results. Many people now enjoy boating of various kinds. In the foreseeable future fishing and swimming may return.

FLORAL IMPACT: Strategic design, use, installation, and maintenance of floral displays and seasonal accents for beautification, including but not limited to annuals, perennials, bulbs, tropical plants, flowering topiaries, colorful foliage, and cultivated and native plants for season-round interest for displays in containers, hanging baskets, window boxes, raised planters, trellises, and in-ground plantings.	**Not Applicable (N/A)**	**Not Started (N/S) 0**	**In Progress 1-2**	**In Place 3-5**	**Surpasses 6-8**
1. Plan developed each season for procurement, scheduling, planting, and maintenance of seasonal flower and holiday displays.				4	
2. Plant combinations are properly selected for location and environmental conditions, create visual interest, provide dramatic effect, and appear coordinated.				4	
3. In-ground flower displays are designed with mature plant heights, color, and texture in mind. Plants are healthy, robust, and floriferous.					6
4. Hanging baskets and containers are in use, scaled to their surroundings, and have suitable plants that are robust and floriferous.				5	
5. Floral displays such as flowerbeds, raised beds, planters, hanging baskets, window boxes, carpet bedding, and mosaics are located throughout the community.					6
6. Creative use of flowers such as flower towers, topiaries, logo displays, rotating baskets, and official town flower is used and appealing.		N/S			
7. Demonstration/display gardens with labeled flowers are available and promoted to the public.					6
8. Training programs for proper floral display care and maintenance are available for seasonal staff and volunteers conducted by qualified personnel.				4	
9. Effective information and education about selection and care of flowers for beautification is available to the public.					6
10. Efforts are in place to educate and raise the public awareness of the importance of flowers in the landscape.				5	
11. Programs to educate, encourage, and expand the understanding of the role and importance of pollinator and ecological habitats are available.					6
12. Efficient water-wise strategies are in use, such as drought-resistant plants, use of gray water, and timing of irrigation.				4	
13. Regular pruning, dead-heading, weeding, removal, and replacement of dead plants is conducted on public and private properties.				5	
14. Appropriate fertilization procedures are implemented and effective.				4	
15. The community utilizes the expertise of growers, garden centers, county extension, and/or city departments to create and implement floral enhancements.				5	
16. Recognition programs are in place for attractive displays created by businesses and residents.					6

17. Volunteers, including businesses and residents, participate in the design, planting, and care of flower displays.				4	
18. Programs are in place to encourage, recruit, and engage volunteers of all ages and segments of the community.					6
Totals:	**Possible Points**		**Actual Points**		**Percent**
2. Floral Impact	144		86		59.72%

Floral Impact Recommendations:

Just like the beautiful Anacostia River cutting through the landscape, Edmonston is clearly a community improving every day. Congratulations on establishing beautiful floral displays at key points and entranceways, and the highly functional rain gardens add more color and vibrant foliage to the town's streets. Pots were located throughout the community with color and texture in the plantings. Even the roof of the bus stop included flowers. Climate pressures of heat and drought were taking a toll on many bedding areas and containers. *We suggest adding a mix of succulents in areas where enhanced irrigation is not possible to better fill the spaces with color. Another suggestion is to add a large capacity water tank to a utility vehicle so adequate watering can help the plantings reach their potential. A spray wand delivers much more effective hydration that permeates the soil so the watering effort is not wasted.*

Labeling more of the plantings might increase interest in the effort as well. Flowers at Town Hall were lovely and showed vigor and explosive color both in containers and hanging baskets. Bedding plants were labeled and perfectly chosen for the space*. Adding QR codes could add to public outreach and help volunteers learn more about each plants ideal conditions. We also recommend incorporating pollinator/wildlife friendly selections wherever possible—even in the containers.*

Kudos for recognition programs for residents and businesses that make the effort to create lovely displays! That kind of excitement is contagious.

LANDSCAPED AREAS: Strategic design, use, installation, and maintenance of the managed landscape. This includes hardscape features, cultivated and native trees, shrubs, ornamental grasses, vines, succulents, edibles, evergreen topiaries, turf, groundcovers, and pollinator-friendly plant material.	**Not Applicable (N/A)**	**Not Started (N/S) 0**	**In Progress 1-2**	**In Place 3-5**	**Surpasses 6-8**
1. Comprehensive plan to identify, protect, restore, and maintain natural areas (e.g., removal of invasives, no-mow areas planted with native grasses and wildflowers, succession tree plantings).				5	
2. Communication of ordinances and policies are easily accessible to businesses and residents.				5	
3. Management plan developed for procurement, scheduling, planting, and maintenance of public landscaped areas.				4	
4. Qualified landscape personnel or experienced contractors are available to design, install, and maintain public landscape sites.				4	
5. Training programs conducted for proper landscape display care and maintenance are available for staff and volunteers.					6
6. City landscape ordinance requires specifications for landscaping and maintenance for new and improved residential, commercial, and public development.					6
7. Landscape displays enhance community entryways.					6
8. Landscaping found throughout the community including public areas, parks, gateways, and key buildings.					6
9. Appropriate plants are selected for location, environmental conditions, and impact.				5	
10. Best practices are implemented for proper maintenance, pruning, removal, and replacement of dead and overgrown plants.				5	
11. Action plan developed and implemented for the identification and management of invasive plants.				4	
12. Strategies developed to monitor and manage diseases and pests and communicated to the public.				4	
13. Best practices are used to manage lawn and turf areas, including mowing, edging, watering, weeding, and replacement of dead material.				4	
14. Lawn and turf areas display health and vigor.					6
15. Mulch from renewable and sustainable sources is appropriately used by municipality and available to residents.	N/A				
16. Landscapes provide a sense of place and identity to the community and are preserved and well maintained.				5	
17. Effective use of naturalization, xeriscaping, and suitable plant varieties to enhance such features as traffic calming, bank stabilization, and water management.					7

18. Innovative plans of action are used in the community, such as strategies for lower maintenance, rain gardens in parking lots, sensory gardens at playgrounds, and meditative gardens at health centers.					8
19. Residential landscaping provides streetscape appeal and reflects community value in landscaping.				5	
20. School garden programs are in place and incorporated into the curriculum for multiple grade levels.					6
21. Volunteers assist in design, installation, and/or care of public landscaped areas.				5	
22. Programs are in place to encourage, recruit, and engage volunteers of all ages and segments of the community.					6
Totals:	**Possible Points**		**Actual Points**		**Percent**
3. Landscaped Areas	168		112		66.66%

Landscaped Areas Recommendations:

With no discernible “downtown” area, the challenge for Edmonston is creating a sense of community and place throughout the neighborhoods and even in the industrial parks—congratulations on accomplishing that and more.
The rain gardens serve a noble and needed environmental function but have been designed and implemented in such a way that they greatly enhance the landscape along town streets and in the industrial areas alike.
Gateways are well-maintained with signage and landscaped areas that are welcoming. A bright spot is the new Zen Garden with xeriscaping and excellent plant choices.

We suggest using only native plants where possible and fewer non-natives like nandina that can be detrimental to children, pets and other wildlife.

Residential areas were, on the whole, well-maintained and included many homes with attractive garden areas. We did note some areas where invasives like Asian bamboo cane and others could be problematic if not removed.

We suggest pursuing more pocket park areas on vacant lots, and more rain gardens as these areas are identified.
Mapped rain gardens would make a lovely trail through the community, particularly with the ease of QR coding.

URBAN FORESTRY: Strategic design, use, installation, and maintenance of trees on public and private lands.	**Not Applicable (N/A)**	**Not Started (N/S) 0**	**In Progress 1-2**	**In Place 3-5**	**Surpasses 6-8**
1. Certified municipal personnel or trained arborist/urban forester actively manages the urban forest.					6
2. Tree board and/or department is available and interacts with the community.					6
3. Strategic plan addresses the role urban forest initiatives play in the green infrastructure of the community.				4	
4. Municipal ordinances enacted and enforced for tree planting and preservation on public and private property, including new construction projects.					7
5. Policy enacted and enforced that includes performance requirements to meet the minimum crown canopy and succession planting.				5	
6. The municipality is an active member in urban forestry organizations, such as Tree City USA and state agencies.					7
7. Best practices are used for appropriate selection and diversity of tree species, proper spacing, and planting depth.				5	
8. Best practices are used to manage tree health and public safety.				5	
9. Ordinance enacted and enforced for the handling and removal of damaged, dying, or dead trees on public and private property.					6
10. Communication of ordinances and policies are easily accessible to businesses and residents.				5	
11. Effective communication is available to the public of recommended trees, proper planting, "Right Tree in the Right Place," mulching, placement and spacing, and maintenance.					6
12. Policies are implemented and education is available for the safe participation by volunteers in planting trees on public properties.					6
13. Tree programs exist that highlight and honor historic trees.				4	
14. Innovative programs in place to increase, support, promote, and protect trees, such as civic native tree nursery, repurposing fallen trees, managing destructive pests, and urban orchards.				4	
15. Ongoing urban forest tree care training in place for staff and community volunteers.					6
16. Policies are implemented for the protection of historic trees located on public and private properties.				4	
17. Public sites such as arboretums, parks, and cemeteries have tree identification labels and descriptive signage.	N/A				

18. Efforts are in place to educate and raise the public awareness of the importance of urban forestry.				5	
19. Programs are in place to encourage, recruit, and engage volunteers of all ages and segments of the community.					7
Totals:	**Possible Points**		**Actual Points**		**Percent**
4. Urban Forestry	144		98		68.05%

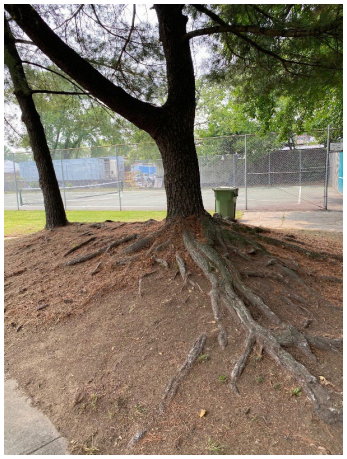
Urban Forestry Recommendations:

Nothing beats mature shade in the summer and Edmonston is fortunate to have great trees all over the community. The impressive ongoing planting initiative is helping ensure that future generations can enjoy the canopy as generations live along the Anacostia. Congratulations on the Chesapeake Conservation Corp capstone project focused on the town's canopy. Needed policy updates to add a Tree Board and public education will benefit Edmonston for generations to come.

Tree City USA status is vital and this achievement in its eighth year is a bonus for Edmonston's trees. Add that to the tree mapping, completed and ongoing planting, and tree care programs, and your forest will have the best chance at expanding the lovely shade, cleaning your air and helping combat stormwater runoff.

While a professional tree service is employed to tend the town's trees, a member of the Tree Board or other volunteer might be needed to be sure that vines and other diseases or pests have been dealt with in a timely manner throughout the year.

How delightful to find a public orchard in the community garden! Though labels were not readily visible, those might help tempt residents to take advantage of the resource. *We suggest adding a food preparation demonstration using the orchard fruits in the summer season.*
While the trees did have maturing fruit, some were suffering from insect infestation. *We suggest checking with the cooperative extension service to find suitable organic sprays and treatment scheduling for worms that infest the fruit and others that can damage or kill the trees. Here's a link to some great info from the Maryland Cooperative Extension Service: https://extension.umd.edu/resource/peach-cherry-plum-and-nectarine-insect-pests*



Removal of fallen fruit is also important to keep these pests at bay, particularly in heat and drought as they weaken the natural defenses of these beautiful trees.
We also suggest creating a historic tree trail for the 10 trees located and identified in the recent tree inventory. Adding a QR code could boost the interest and care of these old giants.

ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES: Environmental and sustainable leadership, policies, plans, and programs for water, resource conservation; pollution control; trash, recycling, and reuse; climate change issues, green Infrastructure, and alternative energy resources.	**Not Applicable (N/A)**	**Not Started (N/S) 0**	**In Progress 1-2**	**In Place 3-5**	**Surpasses 6-8**
1. Environmental Boards are active and effective.					6
2. Appropriate green infrastructure policies and techniques are used to reduce storm water run-off pollution, such as bio-swales, rain gardens, and permeable materials.					8
3. Communication of ordinances and policies are easily accessible to businesses and residents.				5	
4. The municipality has a Sustainability Action Plan that is accessible, reviewed annually, and promotes water conservation, alternative energy use, and responsible land management.					8
5. Municipal employees and volunteers receive year-round training on environmental initiatives.					6
6. Public awareness strategies regarding environmental issues are implemented and effective, such as the 3 Rs, Earth Day events, pollution prevention, "leave no trace" signs, landfill reduction, and community clean-up days.					7
7. Green infrastructure and natural asset inventory mapping and information systems are implemented and regularly updated.					6
8. Management strategies implemented for the effective adaptive reuse of buildings, structures, and land.	N/A				
9. Incentives are available for home and business energy audits, solar energy, and water conservation.					8
10. Water conservation measures are used throughout the community.					6
11. The municipality uses electric/alternative fuel vehicles in their fleet.					7
12. Electric vehicle charging stations are located throughout the community.				5	
13. Residential and business curbside or collection sites available for trash, recyclables, and compostable collection.					7
14. Recycling and trash containers are available and present themselves together in public areas with consistent labeling.					7
15. Events and sites are available for drop-off of hazardous, household, electronics, and difficult-to-recycle items.					8
16. Reuse opportunities are available such as clothing, books, household goods, resale shops, and equipment repair initiatives.					7

17. Prepared food waste collection system is available and used by businesses.					8
18. Educational programs for all ages are available and promoted for the use of environmental initiatives such as rain barrels, backyard habitats, pollinator gardens, rain gardens, solitary bee hotels, xeriscaping, chemical reduction, water conservation, and green business practices.					8
19. School/youth programs and events encourage involvement in environmental initiatives, and participants are recognized for their efforts and achievements.					8
20. Policies, procedures, and educational programs address light pollution.		N/S			
21. Programs are in place to encourage, recruit, and engage volunteers of all ages and segments of the community.					8
Totals:	**Possible Points**		**Actual Points**		**Percent**
5. Environmental Initiatives	160		133		83.12%

Environmental Initiatives Recommendations:

Emphasis on sustainability in recent years has changed the face of Edmonston. Unlike many urban settings which feature acres of hardscape, Edmonston has taken every opportunity to go Green. The results are amazing.

The most apparent result of this approach is the 38 raingardens of varying sizes scattered about the town, with an additional 12 to be added by year end. While the main goal of these gardens is to control storm water runoff and subsequent flooding and pollution, a corollary benefit has been the addition of beautiful color to the landscape. Each of the town rain gardens has been professionally designed by a landscape architect. We understand the town has identified the location of each. *We recommend the town prepare an overlay map showing this information and post it on the town website as "Garden Walk." In addition, provide small signage with a QR code in each raingarden which leads to information on plant material in the garden as well as information on the structure of the garden which improves percolation. Using this approach, when plant material changes the information can easily be made available to anyone perusing the garden.*

We noticed that the rain garden to the right of the driveway into the Municipal Building had washed out, leaving the mulch scattered on the roadway rather than in the garden. *To avoid this in the future, replace the mulch with river rocks 2-4" in diameter. This will slow the flow of the water through the garden, improving percolation and eliminating a cleanup problem for the neighbors.*

Public awareness strategies regarding environmental issues are numerous. The Green Team is very aware that engaging children early is the best way to encourage lifelong habits. Perhaps the most effective efforts in this category are the town Treasure Hunt and the Trivia Hunt. The first rewards those completing the Treasure Hunt with a free backpack and school supplies. Prizes for the latter are Dunkin Donuts Gift Cards. Both activities require youth to be aware of the green initiatives in town in order to successfully compete. Great idea!

Despite the limited area available in Edmonston for active and passive recreation, the town, partly in conjunction with the other three Port Towns, provides its residents numerous opportunities for same. Bladensburg Waterfront Park, located on the Anacostia River is a stellar example of such a park. Signage near the docks and again near the pavilion emphasize the importance of environmentally sustainable efforts in the area. More importantly, however, the solar panels, rain gardens, recycling containers and rain barrels clearly demonstrate the need to walk the walk, not just talk the talk.

Numerous events are scheduled each year for town cleanup. In the spring and fall the town hosts Dumpster Days when nine 30-yard dumpsters are filled with waste. Growing Green with Pride is also held in the spring and fall, and volunteers not only pick up trash but also plant tulip bulbs. Earth Day sees another cleanup effort, this time along the NE bank of the Anacostia River*. If you have not already done so, we strongly recommend your Green Team have brightly colored matching shirts to wear when volunteering on cleanup days. To encourage volunteers to become more active, provide vests to wear over the shirts for those volunteers who have passed an "occasional" level of volunteering and have graduated to the group of "regulars."*

The Community Forklift, a non-profit reuse warehouse in the Edmonston industrial district is an outstanding example of the benefits of recycling building material, furniture, household appliances, lighting fixtures and more, saving these materials from the scrapyard to providing incredible savings for shoppers. We were surprised to find few opportunities for recycling gently used clothing. *While churches frequently provide seasonal opportunities to donate or accept used clothing, many communities have thrift stores which provide this year-round service. An outstanding example of that is the Westfield Service League Thrift and Consignment shop in Westfield, NJ See http://www.thewestfieldserviceleague.org. This shop was originally begun by volunteers in a small residence and now resides in a converted residence devoted solely to the shop. In addition to recycling gently used clothing, the volunteers raise money for numerous charities in the area. The Community Forklift could provide a location within the warehouse for such an endeavor if a church group or Green Team group were to express and interest. Children below the poverty line could receive a voucher enabling them to shop with their own "money."*

Numerous programs for assistance are available in Edmonston. The Rain Check program administered by the Chesapeake Bay Trust combines efforts to assist the environment with those to assist homeowners as well as business owners. Building owners qualify for a rebate of up to $12/square foot to remove an impermeable driveway or walk and replace it with a qualifying permeable surface using an approved contractor under an approved contract. Rebates are capped at $6000.00 for residential projects, $12,000 for commercial projects**.**

CELEBRATING HERITAGE: Recognition, designation, protection, commemoration, and celebration of historical, cultural, natural, agricultural, and industrial resources.	**Not Applicable (N/A)**	**Not Started (N/S) 0**	**In Progress 1-2**	**In Place 3-5**	**Surpasses 6-8**
1. Historic Preservation, Historic Society, and Architectural Review Board are active and effective.					6
2. Historic Preservation ordinances are enacted, enforced, and effectively provide commercial and residential designation, guidance, and protection.					6
3. Communication of ordinances, policies, and restoration resources are easily accessible to businesses and residents.				5	
4. Incentives are offered to promote property preservation such as tax credits, waived permit fees, eased setbacks, and rebates.					8
5. Natural and agricultural areas are designated, identified, and protected.				5	
6. Historic districts, neighborhoods, structures, and events are identified and designated.				5	
7. Cemeteries, monuments, and historical plaques are in place and well maintained.					6
8. Archives, artifacts, and community records are collected, properly stored and preserved, and catalogued.					6
9. Oral histories are collected, properly stored and preserved, catalogued, and utilized.					6
10. Historical museums and interpretive displays are available and maintained.					6
11. Community heritage and diversity are promoted through websites, publications, tours, interpretive signage, mobile apps, and educational programs for all ages.					6
12. Programs are in place for the purchase, installation, and long-term maintenance of memorial features such as benches, trees, brick pathways, and lamp posts.					7
13. Programs are available to bring history to life, such theater dramas, reenactments, historic characters at public events.		N/S			
14. Historical programs are in place to encourage youth involvement, such as classes and tours available to multiple age levels.					6
15. Parades, festivals, events, and programs are held to commemorate the community's heritage, culture, and diversity.					7
16. Volunteers or staff are properly trained and participate in maintaining historical sites, records, artifacts, and structures.	N/A				
17. Programs are in place to encourage, recruit, and engage volunteers of all ages and segments of the community.					7
Totals:	**Possible Points**		**Actual Points**		**Percent**
6. Celebrating Heritage	128		92		71.87%

Celebrating Heritage Recommendations:

Historical preservation ordinances and architectural review boards serving Edmonston are not under the purview of the Town of Edmonston but under the jurisdiction of Prince George's County. Similarly, tax credits, where applicable, are offered under both the county and the State of Maryland.

There is no museum in Edmonston. Instead, archives, artifacts and the like are stored, preserved and catalogued at the Prince George's County Historical Society. Displays are not centralized but are located in either Riversdale Plantation, Prince George's County African American Museum or the Prince George's County Historical Society Museum, all of which are located in neighboring communities. *As the celebration of the 100-year anniversary of Edmonston is fast approaching, consider requesting a loan of artifacts and photographs from the various museums listed above to go on temporary display in Edmonston. If the new addition to the Municipal Building is complete, perhaps the display could be mounted at that location. If a suitable location cannot be found in Edmonston, consider requesting one of the museums listed above to mount a special Edmonston exhibit which includes the most important artifacts from all the museums listed above.*

Your growing collection of oral histories is a treasure. As many of your residents are Spanish speaking, we were glad to hear that the transcriptions are in both Spanish and English. Ideally another college intern with a strong interest in the history of the town can be found to continue to expand the collection*. If possible, photographs of the speaker, the family and other pertinent memorabilia could be included with each oral history.*

According to the analysis of residential real estate in the Economic Development Strategy report, 63 per cent of housing units in Edmonston were constructed prior to 1946, yet only two have been identified as historic and registered through the Prince George's County Historic Site program*. We understand you have an inventory of houses eligible for registration as historical through either the county or national program. Unless a special informational mailing has gone out, many owners in town may not know that their house is so listed. As façade grants are being given for houses which are in disrepair or as families embark on renovations to their residence, it would be important for them to know if special consideration should be given to materials used in restoration of houses identified as eligible. Using inappropriate material could eliminate the qualification for historic registry listing and its benefits. In addition to assistance from a façade grant, a house listed as historic or in a historic district could qualify for tax credits for certain categories of work, an economic advantage to the owner. Consider including information about eligibility and its benefits in tax notices or in a special mailing to current owners of houses listed in your inventory.*

Storyboards located throughout town are extremely well done and maintained in good condition.

Edmonston hosts numerous festivals, events and programs which commemorate the history of the town. Annual events such as the Black History Celebration, The Edmonston Day Parade and Festival, the Hispanic Heritage Festival, Unity Rally and more decorate the calendar. In addition, smaller events are held throughout the year around holidays such as Memorial Day, Thanksgiving Easter and Christmas-related events. Edmonston is now, and has historically been, definitely a social town.

OVERALL IMPRESSION: Adequate and effective amenities are provided and in good condition. The community is welcoming, attractive, and leaves a positive impression.	**Not Applicable (N/A)**	**Not Started (N/S) 0**	**In Progress 1-2**	**In Place 3-5**	**Surpasses 6-8**
1. Signage ordinances are enacted and enforced, such as for temporary stake signs, billboards, and permanent signs for businesses.				5	
2. Ordinances are enacted and enforced to address issues such as overgrown lots, abandoned vehicles, unscreened dumpsters, public nuisances, unregulated garage sales, and empty storefront windows.				5	
3. Code enforcement/compliance officer is on the municipal staff and all codes are enforced.					6
4. Communication of ordinances and policies are easily accessible to businesses and residents.				5	
5. Community infrastructure is in good condition to include but not limited to roadways, road shoulders, curbs, corner pads, medians, sidewalks, railroad crossings, sewers, transformers, and utility poles.					6
6. Community amenities are in good condition, such as signs, site furnishings, public restrooms, water features, lamp posts, benches, bicycle racks, drinking fountains, trash and recycling receptacles, crosswalks/pavement markings, containers, planters, and cigarette receptacles.					6
7. Residential, municipal, and business structures are in good condition, including but not limited to buildings, decks, and patios, related to lack of vandalism, graffiti, broken windows, peeling or faded paint, and rust.					6
8. First impressions are positive in residential, business, and municipal areas. Condition of buildings, grounds, and yards are neat and in order.					6
9. Pet waste policies are posted and enforced, and pet clean-up stations are available and stocked throughout the community.					7
10. Programs exist and are effective to address graffiti, litter, and nuisance areas.					7
11. Ample parking with good lighting is available throughout the community.				3	
12. Non-plant seasonal decorations are used in key areas.					6
13. ADA standards are implemented throughout the community, such as public buildings, parking, sidewalks, public transportation, and trails.					7
14. Gateway entry features exist and are prominent, welcoming, and maintained.					7
15. Wayfinding signage is visible, attractive, and in appropriate locations throughout the community.				5	

16. Public art features such as banners, murals, and statues are used, attractive, and in effective locations throughout in the community.					7
17. Community is welcoming and promotes inclusivity such as cultural, ethnic, faith, age, and orientation.					8
18. Volunteers participate in community improvement initiatives, such as Adopt-A-Spot, Habitat for Humanity, River Sweep, home repair programs, disaster relief, and clean-up days.					8
19. Programs are in place to encourage, recruit, and engage volunteers of all ages and segments of the community.					6
Totals:	**Possible Points**		**Actual Points**		**Percent**
7. Overall Impression	152		116		76.31%

Overall Impression Recommendations:

Edmonston is a rare gem of a community where the intersection of cultures yields a beautifully diverse town with its priorities in clear focus. From the list of events that highlight local history to others celebrating everything from Earth Day to Salsa—residents can find common bonds and a place where "E pluribus unum" is a living reality.

From the first trip across the bridge at Veteran's Park, murals and street art on little libraries and public utilities boxes bring the spirit of inclusion and childlike wonder to the forefront.

Operation Art is a stroke of genius and Edmonston is fortunate to have such talented community partners.

Congratulations on plans to expand the public meeting space at Town Hall, and on the upcoming sidewalk project.

As is the case in many communities, litter is a challenge to be addressed. *We suggest adding a game element to trash receptacles to encourage young people to dispose of bottles and other litter accordingly. Here's the idea: https://www.pinterest.com/pin/415597871877752836/.*

Operation Art can easily help make this a reality.

As your community grows, *consider creative ways to address the need for more parking both in residential areas and industrial parks*.

While play areas include ADA accessible playgrounds, we suggest adding ADA-specific equipment to each playground.

Incentives for improving facades are making a positive impact in your "bridging" community. Congratulations on creating a community where diversity and inclusion are indeed your strengths.

EVALUATION TOUR PREPARATION AND ACTIONS: Community's readiness prior to and the action during the Evaluation Tour including an Informative Community Profile, preparedness prior to Advisors' arrival, and effective content during the Evaluation Tour.	**Not Applicable (N/A)**	**Unmet (U/M) 0**	**Met 1**
1. Community contact was available for pre-visit meeting for introductions and discussion of preparations.			1
2. Community Profile was provided to Advisors at least two weeks prior to the first official tour date.			1
3. Community Profile includes contacts with emails and positions.			1
4. Community Profile from a returning community includes what is new and implemented from previous Advisors' recommendations (scored as Not Applicable for a new community).			1
5. Community Profile includes a map with tour boundaries and a daily itinerary.			1
6. Evaluation Tour provided a representative cross-section of the community.			1
7. Advisors met with elected/appointed municipal leaders and staff.			1
8. Advisors met with the business and non-profit community.			1
9. Advisors met with volunteers.			1
10. Advisors met with the media.		U/M	
11. Advisors were asked to give a presentation.			1
12. A tour wrap-up session was conducted with a community representative.			1
13. Enough time was allotted for Advisors to work on the Evaluation Report in a quiet place with adequate Wi-Fi.		U/M	
Totals:	**Possible Points**	**Actual Points**	**Percent**
8. Evaluation Tour Preparation and Actions	13	11	84.61%

Evaluation Tour Preparation and Actions Recommendations:

The evaluation tour preparation was extremely well done. The profile was sent to the advisors well before the scheduled visit and was organized in a manner that coincided with the metrics listed in the Evaluation Report. In addition, a supplementary information package was provided to the advisors with an updated itinerary and a most informative report listing recommendations from previous evaluations by year which have been implemented and the steps taken to do so.

Given the numerous volunteers, the town interest in community improvements and the many programs available for people of all ages and interests, any complete tour of Edmonston requires a significant amount of time. That being the case, the tour of the town and the excellent presentations inevitably lasted longer than anticipated, leaving little time for the advisors scheduled work sessions each day.

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 Level 3 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.

2023 Community Recognitions

Community name/state: Edmonston, Maryland

Recognized Criterion: Environmental Initiatives

The Town of Edmonston strongly supports environmentally sustainable programs, policies and initiatives across the board. Public awareness and involvement efforts in this arena begin with programs encouraging youth awareness, involvement and education and expands to include the greater population by means of community wide events which range from numerous cleanup events, recycling efforts and energy audits to residential rain gardens and other stormwater initiatives.,

Municipal environmental efforts are expansive and include efforts which have significantly reduced stormwater runoff throughout the town. From early sustainability efforts going back to the construction of a “green street” in 2009, the number of environmentally sustainable programs and initiatives has expanded, and efforts have accelerated. These efforts have transformed the town, not only reducing flooding and energy use and increasing recycling efforts among others, but also significantly improving the overall impression of Edmonston.

Noteworthy Project or Initiative: Municipal raingardens

An extensive municipal investment in beautifully designed rain gardens in residential and industrial districts graces the streetscape in Edmonston. The chain of gardens expands each year and brightens the town landscape while significantly reducing stormwater runoff and the threat of localized flooding.