# America in Bloom 2024 Evaluation Report

**Community:** Edmonston, Maryland
**Evaluation Dates:** July 7-8, 2024

**Lead Advisor:** Kristina Whitney
**Co-Advisor:** Ellen Paparozzi

*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.*

| Evaluation Areas | Possible Points | Actual Points | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Community Vitality | 128.00 | 106.00 | 82.81% |
| Floral Impact | 88.00 | 54.00 | 61.36% |
| Landscaped Areas | 96.00 | 67.00 | 69.79% |
| Urban Forestry | 104.00 | 71.00 | 68.26% |
| Environmental Initiatives | 152.00 | 120.00 | 78.94% |
| Celebrating Heritage | 112.00 | 79.00 | 70.53% |
| Overall Impression | 112.00 | 87.00 | 77.67% |
| Evaluation Tour Preparation and Actions | 13.00 | 12.00 | 92.30% |
| | | | |
| Total Points and Percent | 805.00 | 596.00 | 74.03% |
| Star Rating | | 8 | |
| Community Involvement Total | 64 | 49 | 76.56% |

***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.

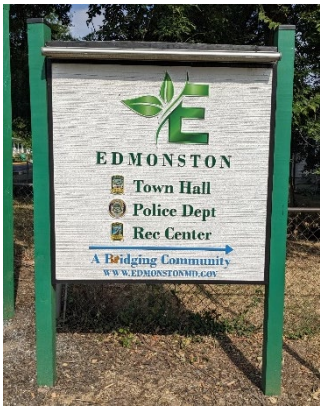
**In Place** (3-5 points): programs or procedures are utilized and beneficial.

**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):**




Congratulations to Edmonston, MD on your 8-star rating! What a win! This rating is entirely reflective of the town's dedication to its shared sense of community and vibrancy. Mayor Tracy Gant, Rod Barnes (the town administrator), and Ed Hooker (AIB Chair) are to be commended for their hard work in making Edmonston the wonderful and homey town that it is.

Edmonston, MD is one of the four port towns in Prince George's County. Although small, with a population of 1,617, the town thinks big and does big things. This mainly happens through a strong network of volunteers, local businesses and non-profit organizations, and local governments. The level of organization and teamwork within and amongst the community is astounding.

We appreciate that the recommendation from last year about recording volunteer hours was applied – the information we received showing over 3,300 volunteer hours is fantastic!

We genuinely loved the recycled bike art sculptures throughout the town. The entire project really embodies the ethos of Edmonston as a bridging and green community. Utilizing local sponsorships for the purchase, installation, and care of the sculptures is a stroke of genius, reducing maintenance costs for the town while providing beautiful community art.

The amount of material available on your website is amazing! *However, keeping up the pace will be challenging particularly since you have just lost your web designer. Since salaries for competent computer web designers can be quite steep, we recommend that you try to hire students or interns from the local community colleges or universities.*

It was a pleasure to tour Edmonston this year and to see all you have done to make the town thrive. We are thrilled by your six years of participation in America in Bloom and look forward to many more.

Sincerely,

Kristina Whitney and Ellen Paparozzi
AIB 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. An economic development plan is in place and implemented. It includes the direction for short- and long-term economic growth, and programs to improve the economy. It is regularly evaluated, measured, and/or reevaluated. | | | | | 6 |
| 2. Communication of ordinances and policies pertaining to Community Vitality are easily accessible. Topics include, but are not limited to, culture, education, government, recreation, and technology. Examples of communication avenues include, but are not limited to, lectures, print, city website, city hall, library, and social media. | | | | | 7 |
| 3. Master plan exists for current and/or future public green space. Growth, enhancements, and/or protection of undeveloped areas is included. It is reviewed and routinely updated. | | | | | 6 |
| 4. Public parks and/or green spaces are available. Properties may include pocket, school, neighborhood, city, county, state, and national parks and green spaces. Parks and green spaces meet the needs of the community and are clean, maintained, welcoming, and utilized. | | | | | 8 |
| 5. Active and/or passive recreation opportunities are available and meet the needs of the community. Examples include, but are not limited to, water sports, golf, baseball, pickleball, skiing, soccer, hiking, nature trails, bird watching, picnic areas, and fishing. Year-round programs are available. | | | | 5 | |
| 6. Seating is available near walking, exercise, playground areas, and/or public transportation stops. The seating and area are clean and accessible. | | | | 5 | |
| 7. Shade is provided for participants and/or spectators at cultural and sporting events. Structures include, but are not limited to, shade sails, dugouts, pergolas, arbors, and trees. Structures are maintained and inspected for safety. | | | | 4 | |
| 8. Community gathering space is available. The space is accessible and used throughout the year for all ages and abilities. Examples include, but are not limited to, community center, senior center, YMCA, churches, libraries, and town hall. | | | | | 7 |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9. Age- and ability-appropriate play areas are accessible. Equipment is ADA-compliant and/or inspected by a Certified Playground Safety Inspector. | | | | | 7 |
| 10. Active outdoor community events are offered throughout the year. Examples include, but are not limited to, Bike-to-Work Day, Walk to School Day, and 5K events. | | | | | 8 |
| 11. Community celebrations and/or cultural performances meet the needs of the community. Examples include, but are not limited to, festivals, art, dance, theatre, music, and cinema. | | | | | 8 |
| 12. Secure food programs are available. Examples include, but are not limited to, hunger relief efforts, food pantries, garden plots, rooftop gardens, community gardens, farmers markets, and Community Supported Agriculture. | | | | | 8 |
| 13. Alternative transportation programs are available. Transportation is available in all areas of the community. Examples include, but are not limited to, bicycle/scooter rental, car/van pools, public transportation, and/or ride sharing to all areas of the city. | | | | | 8 |
| 14. Safety policies, programs, and/or services are in place. Examples include, but are not limited to, police, fire, emergency medical services, community health, crime prevention, homeland security, gang prevention, traffic, homelessness, civil and human rights. Information is easily accessible and communicated. | | | | | 6 |
| 15. Youth-focused programs are in place for multiple ages and/or abilities. Examples include, but are not limited to, sports, gardening, clubs, and lectures | | | | | 6 |
| 16. Non-municipal volunteer boards are active and/or comprised of representatives from business and residents. Examples include, but are not limited to, In Bloom committee, Rotary, Veterans, Chamber of Commerce, Scouting, HOAs, and faith-based organizations. | | | | | 7 |
| **Totals:** | **Possible Points** | | **Actual Points** | | **Percent** |
| **1. Community Vitality** | 128 | | 106 | | 82.81% |

**Community Vitality Recommendations:**

The town of Edmonston, MD is vibrant, energetic, and fun. Everyone that the advisors spoke with during the visit was excited to live in Edmonston. That vibrance and energy is evidenced by the 3,389 volunteer hours recorded in one fiscal year! That number actually exceeds the town's population by almost double. It is heartening to see such a strong spirit of community service, especially one that is getting shared with younger generations. The town's partnership with End Town Harvest Ministries is quite extraordinary with respect to the program's high level of continued, ongoing success.

Another wonderful thing about Edmonston is the number of parks and green space. For such an urban setting, there really is a lot of outdoor community gathering and play space. *One recommendation we have is to increase the amount of shade throughout the community in these shared communal areas, including parks and bus stops. Although planting drought-tolerant tree species is a long-term recommendation, shade sails would work for the more immediate future.* While the parks within Edmonston are managed by the Maryland National Capitol Parks and Planning Commission (MNCPPC), a goal such as the above is still possible through increased partnership with grant writing and public support.

In addition to the above, *we would like to recommend increasing opportunities and awareness for bird watching.* Edmonston's location on the Anacostia watershed lends potential to birdwatching, or at least more information to residents and visitors about birdwatching on the riverfront. We greatly enjoyed the informational boat tour along the river – perhaps educational tours with expert bird watchers within the town's limits could be hosted in partnership with the Bladensburg Branch Library for students or could serve as a fundraising event.

Finally, Veteran's Park is a beautiful spot ideally situated in a highly accessible and visible part of town. Due to this visibility, *we recommend installing a watering source at this park. Ideally, this would be potable water to help serve potential resident needs in addition to providing an easier access point for town maintenance or contracted staff or volunteers to tie into for landscaping needs.*

| **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. Plant combinations are carefully selected for location and environmental conditions. The combinations create visual interest, provide dramatic effects, and appear coordinated. Routine maintenance is evident. | | | | 5 | |
| 2. In-ground flower displays are designed with mature plant heights, color, and texture in mind. Plants are healthy, robust, and floriferous. Routine maintenance is evident. | | | | | 6 |
| 3. Containers and/or hanging baskets are in use, scaled to their surroundings, and have suitable plants. Plantings are robust, floriferous, and provide a dramatic effect. Routine maintenance is evident. | | | | | 6 |
| 4. Floral displays are located throughout the community. Displays are well maintained and attractive. Examples include, but are not limited to, flowerbeds, raised beds, planters, hanging baskets, window boxes, carpet bedding, topiaries, and/or mosaics are located throughout the community. | | | | | 6 |
| 5. Regular pruning, dead-heading, weeding, removal, and/or replacement of dead plants is conducted on public properties. | | | | | 7 |
| 6. Demonstration/display gardens are available. Plants are labeled. The garden is promoted to the public. Garden is available for events to residents and businesses. | | | | 5 | |
| 7. Efficient water-wise strategies are in use. Examples include, but are not limited to, drought-resistant plants, use of gray water, and timing of irrigation. Strategies are easily accessible and communicated. Examples of communication avenues include, but are not limited to, lectures, print, city website, city hall, library, and social media. | | | | 4 | |
| 8. Appropriate fertilization (chemical and/or non-chemical) procedures for municipal, parks, and/or school properties are implemented. The procedures produce effective results. Educational information about fertilization is communicated. Examples of communication avenues include, but are not limited to, lectures, print, city website, city hall, library, and social media. | N/A | | | | |

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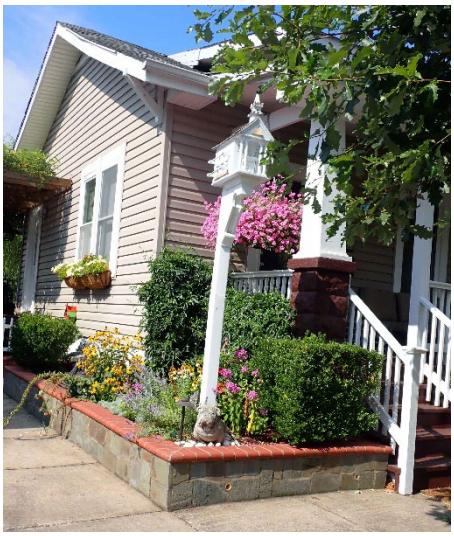
| 9. Training programs for proper floral displays care and maintenance are offered to seasonal staff and/or volunteers. Training is conducted by Master Gardeners, County Extension, local garden centers, state agencies, and/or contractors. | | N/S | | | |
| 10. Efforts are in place to educate and raise public awareness of the importance of flowers in the landscape. Educational information about selection and care of flowers for beautification is available and communicated to the public. Examples of communication avenues include, but are not limited to, lectures, print, city website, city hall, library, and social media. | | | | 5 | |
| 11. Recognition programs are in place monthly, quarterly, and/or annually for attractive displays created by businesses and/or residents. | | | | | 6 |
| 12. Programs are in place to encourage, recruit, and/or engage volunteers of all ages and segments in the community's floral displays. Routine opportunities present themselves for residents and/or businesses to get involved. | | | | 4 | |
| **Totals:** | **Possible Points** | | **Actual Points** | | **Percent** |
| **2. Floral Impact** | 88 | | 54 | | 61.36% |

**Floral Impact Recommendations:**



Edmonston has really bought into the AIB concept of flowers everywhere. Many homeowners have beautiful floral displays with hanging and window baskets. To support this, the city made available (at an attractive cost) potted plants to HOA homeowners. There are also demonstration gardens, a succulent garden on the bus stop's roof, baskets of annual flowers on the recycled bicycle art throughout the community, large planters below light posts, and in-ground floral displays highlighting their entrance signs. City hall has beautiful containers and plantings including a pollinator garden. Even the Mayor has her own vegetable garden at City Hall! Many of these plantings are changed throughout the year to provide year-round beauty.

Some of the demonstration gardens are labelled. *We recommend that more QR code labels be added. Not every plant needs to be labelled – just a significant group so that the public can identify one plant type from the other. It would also be helpful to know if people are utilizing the QR codes. Therefore, we suggest that Edmonston select one or two of the more visited gardens and track how many times a QR code is used. This could provide valuable information about public acceptance of QR codes.*

Edmonston has excellent recognitions and rewards for their community members and volunteers including a Plant Award, Garden of the Month, and individual homes being included on a Garden tour. There are some efforts in place to educate the public about the importance of flowers in the landscape. *However, given the warming climate and limited access to water, programs to educate the public about drought resistant plants as well as proper care of plantings during dry times should be conducted. This could start as simple as pamphlets in the nearby Bladensburg Branch Library and at town hall and grow into a seasonal class hosted by the garden club.*

| **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. Action plan developed and implemented for proper maintenance, pruning, removal, and/or replacement of dead and overgrown plants. Best practices are utilized. | | | | 5 | |
| 2. Plan developed each season for procurement, scheduling, planting, and/or maintenance of flowers and/or landscapes. | | | | 5 | |
| 3. Landscape ordinances and/or policies are in place. City landscape ordinance requires specifications for landscaping and maintenance for new and improved residential, commercial, and public development. Ordinances and/or policies are easily accessible. | | | | | 6 |
| 4. Landscaping is found throughout the community including public areas, parks, gateways, and/or key buildings. Landscape displays are selected for location, environmental conditions, and/or impact. Attractive designs are utilized and well maintained. Landscapes serve as focal areas in the community. | | | | | 7 |
| 5. Landscape displays enhance community entryways. The use of trees, shrubs, annuals, perennials, signage, hardscapes, and/or lighting create a welcome display. The displays are attractive and/or well maintained. | | | | 5 | |
| 6. Residential landscape provides streetscape appeal and reflects community value in landscaping. They are neat, attractive, and well maintained. | | | | | 6 |
| 7. Effective use of naturalization, xeriscaping, rain gardens, and/or suitable plant varieties to enhance such features as traffic calming, bank stabilization, and water management. Displays are well maintained. | | | | | 8 |
| 8. Lawn and turf areas display health and vigor. Procedures and practices, such as Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and/or permaculture, are used to manage lawn and turf areas, including mowing, edging, watering, and/or weeding. | | | | 5 | |
| 9. Procedures in place to monitor and/or manage diseases and/or pests in the landscape. Pertinent information is available and/or communicated to the public. Examples of communication avenues include, but are not limited to, lectures, print, city website, city hall, library, and social media. | | | | | 6 |

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| 10. Qualified landscape personnel and/or experienced contractors are available to design, install, source, and/or maintain public landscape floral and landscape sites. Additional support provided by growers, garden centers, County Extension, and/or city departments are utilized to create and implement municipal floral and landscape displays. | | | | | 8 |
| 11. Training programs for proper landscape display care and maintenance are available for seasonal staff and/or volunteers. Examples include, but are not limited to, Master Gardeners, County Extension, local garden centers, state agencies, and contractors. | | N/S | | | |
| 12. Programs are in place to encourage, recruit, and/or engage volunteers of all ages and segments of the community in the landscape displays. Volunteers from businesses, residents, schools, and/or organizations participate in the design, planting, and/or care of floral and landscape displays. | | | | | 6 |
| **Totals:** | **Possible Points** | | **Actual Points** | | **Percent** |
| **3. Landscaped Areas** | 96 | | 67 | | 69.79% |

**Landscaped Areas Recommendations:**

Edmonston is a well-landscaped community. Care is taken each season to obtain plants and maintain flower beds and landscapes. Even corners near signage have been thoughtfully planted and maintained. This is done in concert with a commercial landscape company that also performs maintenance. However, the lawn and turf areas have suffered greatly due to the recent drought. *Consider trying new drought tolerant turfgrass varieties. Some newer types can be found at The Spruce. Contact the Prince George's County Extension office to discuss the best choices and installation issues. The County Extension can also help the city to integrate IPM into the newly refurbished areas.*

The city has also landscaped the parking area of many of the streets by installing rain gardens. These are all visually appealing and many seem to be growing quite well. Others, however, are not as well maintained. *Consider starting a rain garden maintenance training program for volunteers as well as interested homeowners*.

| **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. The municipal plan addresses the role urban forest initiatives play in the green infrastructure of the community. Policy is enacted and enforced that includes performance requirements to meet the minimum crown canopy and/or succession planting. | | | | | 6 |
| 2. Efforts are in place to educate and raise the public awareness of the importance of urban forestry. Examples include, but are not limited to, the use of print, videos, websites, apps, and social media. | | | | | 7 |
| 3. Municipal ordinance enacted and enforced for tree planting and/or preservation. Ordinance addresses the handling and removal of damaged, dying, or dead trees. Ordinance includes public property, private property, and new construction projects. Communication of ordinances and policies are easily accessible. | | | | | 7 |
| 4. Tree board and/or department is available, active, and/or interact with the community. Examples include, but are not limited to, tree planting events, addressing safety concerns, education, and making recommendations to municipality. | | | | | 6 |
| 5. Certified municipal personnel, trained arborist, urban forester, and/or Department of Natural Resources (DNR) entity actively manages the urban forest. Businesses and residents are updated routinely on urban forestry matters. Information delivered via city website, paper, and social media. | | | | 4 | |
| 6. Trees are healthy and contribute to public health and wellness. Procedures are in place for the appropriate selection, diversity of tree species, proper spacing, planting depth, and/or monitoring and managing diseases and pests. Pertinent information is available and/or communicated to the public. | | | | | 6 |
| 7. Policies are implemented for the protection of historic trees located on public and private properties. Tree programs exist that spotlight and honor historic trees. Trees are labeled and/or indexed. Historic trees are highlighted in a brochure and/or tree walk. | | | | 5 | |
| 8. Programs in place to increase, support, promote, and/or protect trees. Examples include, but are not limited to, civic native tree nursery, repurposing fallen trees, managing destructive pests, and urban orchards. | | | | | 6 |

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| 9. Trees are identified in public sites such as arboretums, parks, and/or cemeteries. Examples include, but are not limited to, identification labels, descriptive signage, QR codes, kiosks, maps, apps, and brochures. | | N/S | | | |
| 10. Policies are implemented and education is available for the safe participation by volunteers and staff in planting trees on public properties. Ongoing urban forest tree care training and educational information and/or seminars available for residents and/or businesses. | | | | | 6 |
| 11. Effective communication of recommended trees is available to the public. Topics include "Right Tree in the Right Place," mulching, placement, spacing, and/or maintenance. Examples of communication include, but are not limited to, lectures, print, city website, library, City Hall, and social media. | | | | | 6 |
| 12. The municipality is a member of urban forestry organizations, participates in programs, and/or earns designations and awards. Examples include but are not limited to Tree City USA, Arbor Day Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, and regional or state agencies. | | | | | 6 |
| 13. Programs are in place to encourage, recruit, and/or engage volunteers of all ages and segments of the community's urban forestry. Volunteers from businesses, residents, schools, and/or organizations participate in the design, planting, and/or care of the urban forest. | | | | | 6 |
| **Totals:** | **Possible Points** | | **Actual Points** | | **Percent** |
| **4. Urban Forestry** | 104 | | 71 | | 68.26% |

**Urban Forestry Recommendations:**

As Edmonston has a number of forested parks and residential areas, trees are a very important part of the community. The community employs Bartlett Tree Experts to provide care and maintenance. Edmonston's efforts in urban forestry have also been recognized with a Tree City USA designation by the Arbor Day Foundation. This year the community conducted a Forest Bathing Walk which allowed residents to learn about the connection between nature and mental health. Edmonston continues to plant trees to further enhance their urban forest. Unfortunately, many of the smaller saplings have died. *We suggest that when the city replants this Fall that they work with Bartletts to select drought tolerant trees and use treegators (which hold water) to help with establishment both during the Fall and subsquent Spring.*

The city has labelled historic trees (and memorial) benchs in various places throuhout the city. However, they are not visible. On their website, there is a category called Native Tree Canopy. This category is under the main link, Sustainability Practices and Efforts. This does not really explain the contents. *We suggest a retitle to something like Sustainability Practices – Rain Gardens, Trees and More. If this is done then we suggest that they advertise the existence of the historic trees. Creating a Historic Tree Story, Tree Walk brochure, or a virtual, downloadable tour featuring many sites would be a great addition.*

| **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. Comprehensive plan to identify, protect, restore, and/or maintain natural areas. Examples include, but are not limited to, removal of invasives, no-mow areas planted with native grasses and wildflowers, and succession tree plantings. | N/A | | | | |
| 2. A municipal environmental plan is accessible and reviewed annually. The plan promotes water conservation, alternative energy use, food security and sustainability, carbon reduction, and/or responsible land management. | | | | | 6 |
| 3. Environmental board and/or Green Team are available, active, and/or interact with the community. Examples include, but are not limited to, sustainability initiatives, events, education, and making recommendations to the municipality. | | | | | 6 |
| 4. Public awareness strategies regarding environmental issues are implemented and effective, such as the 3 Rs (reduce/recycle/reuse), Earth Day events, pollution prevention, "leave no trace," landfill reduction, and community clean-up days. Municipal employees and/or volunteers receive training on environmental initiatives and participate in events. | | | | | 6 |
| 5. Communication of environmental plan and ordinances is easily accessible. Topics include sustainability, water quality, recycling, composting, reducing pesticide use, and light pollution. Examples of communication avenues include, but are not limited to, lectures, print, city website, city hall, library, and social media. | | | | | 8 |
| 6. Programs to educate, encourage, and/or expand the understanding of the role and importance of pollinators and ecological habitats are available for all ages. Programs are held routinely. | | | | | 7 |
| 7. Green infrastructure policies and/or techniques are used throughout the community. Examples include, but are not limited to, naturalization, xeriscaping, rain gardens, suitable plant varieties to enhance such features as traffic calming, bank stabilization, stormwater run-off, and water management. | | | | | 7 |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8. Green infrastructure and natural asset inventory mapping are implemented. The inventory is regularly updated and includes climate, vegetation, soils, topography, wetlands, air, and/or water quality. | | | | | 7 |
| 9. Home and business energy audits are available and promoted. Incentives are available and communicated for items such as solar energy, water conservation, home appliance replacement, weatherization. | | | | | 7 |
| 10. Water conservation measures are used throughout the community. Examples include, but are not limited to, water-saving shower heads, full loads for dishwashers and washing machines, sink and toilet leaks, and lawn irrigation. Methods of water conservation are shared with the community through lectures, print, city website, library, City Hall, and/or social media. | | N/S | | | |
| 11. Management strategies implemented for the effective reuse/repurpose of buildings, structures, and/or land. The municipality has a reuse plan in place. | | | | | 6 |
| 12. Collection is available for trash, recyclables, compostables, and food waste. Events and/or sites are offered for drop-off of hazardous, household, electronics, shredding and/or difficult-to-recycle items. Sites are available for year-round recycling. | | | | | 8 |
| 13. Recycling and trash containers are available in public areas. Containers to address both recyclables and trash present themselves together. Labeling is consistent. Routine trash and recycle pickup are scheduled. Additional containers are available during special events. Events promote zero waste. | | | | | 6 |
| 14. Reuse opportunities are offered. Clothing, books, household goods, resale shops, tool lending, durable medical equipment, and/or equipment repair initiatives are available for donations and/or purchase. | | | | 5 | |
| 15. The municipality uses energy-efficient vehicles in its fleet for police, fire, public transit, and/or city employees. Options may include electric, fuel cell electric, plug in electric hybrid, compressed natural gas, and/or hybrid electric vehicles. | | | | | 7 |
| 16. Electric vehicle charging stations are located throughout the community. Charging stations are available to city, residential, and/or visitor vehicles. 240-volt home charging outlet installation incentive is available and promoted. | | | | 5 | |
| 17. Mulch from renewable and/or sustainable sources is appropriately used by the municipality. Mulch is available for residential use. | | | | 5 | |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 18. Educational programs for all ages are available and promote environmental initiatives such as rain barrels, backyard habitats, rain gardens, solitary bee hotels, xeriscaping, chemical reduction, water conservation, and green business practices. | | | | | 8 |
| 19. Youth organizations such as Scouts, Green Teams, schools, and 4H encourage involvement in environmental initiatives. Participants are recognized for their efforts and/or achievements. Efforts are communicated to the public through social media, newsletters, city website, and other methods. | | | | | 8 |
| 20. Programs are in place to encourage, recruit, and/or engage volunteers of all ages and segments of the community's environmental initiatives. Volunteers from businesses, residents, schools, and/or organizations participate in events, programs, boards, and promotions. | | | | | 8 |
| **Totals:** | **Possible Points** | | **Actual Points** | | **Percent** |
| **5. Environmental Initiatives** | 152 | | 120 | | 78.94% |

**Environmental Initiatives Recommendations:**

Edmonston takes environmental issues very seriously. As one of the towns bordering the Anacostia River, flooding is an ongoing concern. To handle this issue, Edmonston shares a pumping station and was the first community to install permeable pavement in one of their streets.

As part of their Sustainable Maryland Action Plan, Edmonston will be installing permeable pavement in 3 additional streets with the goal of having this completed by 2025. The city has not only an active Green Team but also a junior green team that meets once per month. They have invested in wind power and currently have installed LED streetlights and are planning on installing solar streetlights. The community's trash containers and benches are all made from recycled materials. Their trash compactors are solar powered. They have installed over 30 rain gardens and pet-waste stations, with the town's website promoting both rain barrels and rain gardens. They also provide grants for homeowners to get energy audits.

Many of the city-owned vehicles are electric. *As more electric vehicles are added to the fleet, we suggest that more charging stations also be added, both at town hall and throughout the community.*

Edmonston also partners with Eco City Farms. Eco City Farms offers summer programs that educates young people and their families about sustainably growing and cooking their own fruits and vegetables as well as the importance of fruits and vegetables in their diet. *We suggest that Edmonston promote this family opportunity possibly by creating a link on their website to that of Eco City Farms.*

| **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/or Architectural Review Board are available, active, and/or interact with the community. Activities/responsibilities include, but are not limited to, review proposals for construction and rehabilitation, promote historic preservation incentives, submit recommendations to National Register, and designate local historic landmarks. | | | | 3 | |
| 2. Historic Preservation ordinances are enacted and enforced. Ordinances effectively provide commercial and/or residential designation, guidance, and/or protection. Ordinances, policies, and restoration resources are available, easily accessible, and communicated. | | | | 5 | |
| 3. Historic districts, neighborhoods, structures, landmarks and/or objects are identified and/or labeled. Designation by such organizations as the Department of Archives and History and/or National Register are in place and/or in progress. | | | | 5 | |
| 4. Cemeteries and monuments are in place and well maintained. Historical plaques are used and well maintained. Examples of plaque locations include, but are not limited to, buildings, sites, residences, districts, historical events and people, and battle sites. | | | | 5 | |
| 5. Historical museums and/or interpretive displays are available and maintained. Events and educational opportunities are held for all age groups to utilize historic assets. | | | | 5 | |
| 6. Archives, artifacts, community records, and/or oral histories are collected, safely stored, preserved, and/or catalogued. | | | | | 6 |
| 7. Volunteers and/or staff are trained to maintain historical sites, archives, records, collections, artifacts, structures, and/or landscapes. Historic educators are trained to effectively communicate a community's history. | | | | 5 | |
| 8. Historic preservation incentives are available and promoted. Incentives may include but are not limited to tax credits, waived permit fees, eased setbacks, and/or rebates. | | | | 4 | |

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| 9. Programs are in place for the purchase, installation, and/or long-term maintenance of memorial features. Examples include, but are not limited to, memorial benches, trees, brick pathways, and lamp posts. | | | | 5 | |
| 10. Natural and agricultural areas are identified and protected. Designation by such organizations as The Nature Conservancy, the National Park Service, Department of Natural Resources are in place and/or in progress. | N/A | | | | |
| 11. Parades, festivals, events, and/or programs are held to commemorate the community's heritage, culture, and/or diversity. Participants represent all segments of the community. | | | | | 8 |
| 12. Programs and/or events are available to bring history to life. Examples include, but are not limited to, theater dramas, reenactments, and historic characters at public events. | | | | | 8 |
| 13. Community heritage and/or cultural diversity are supported and promoted to all ages. Educational opportunities such as websites, publications, tours, interpretive signage, mobile apps, and/or programs. | | | | | 8 |
| 14. Youth of all ages and abilities participate in historical programs. Examples include, but are not limited to, lectures, tours, events, reenactments, research, and reader's theater. Participants are recognized for their efforts and/or achievements. | | | | | 6 |
| 15. Programs are in place to encourage, recruit, and/or engage volunteers of all ages and segments of the community's heritage preservation efforts. Volunteer representatives from businesses, residents, schools, and/or organizations participate in events, programs, boards, and promotions. | | | | | 6 |
| **Totals:** | **Possible Points** | | **Actual Points** | | **Percent** |
| **6. Celebrating Heritage** | 112 | | 79 | | 70.53% |

**Celebrating Heritage Recommendations:**

While Edmonston is brimming with many general and specialized events, the town takes particular care to celebrate its diverse community makeup. There is a lot of attention paid to celebrating Hispanic and African American heritage through events, parades, and celebrations. *We would like to recommend working with the senior population in Edmonston for shareable family recipes that could be incorporated into the calendar the town publishes every year. This would serve to further share heritage and modern culture within the community. Additionally, planting culture-specific flowers in shared or community flowerbeds or baskets could also serve to continue to further cross-cultural ties, so long as this was done with appropriate research, sensitivity, and collaboration of a given community.*

While touring Edmonston, we had the opportunity to visit the Riversdale Plantation. While not in Edmonston proper, the history of the plantation and one of the enslaved men is deeply entwined with the town's history. Adam Francis Plummer was enslaved by the Calvert family, who owned the Riversdale Plantation, and became free when Maryland abolished slavery in 1864. Plummer purchased land in what is now Edmonston, naming his new home Mt. Rose. Although the house is no longer extant, this is a remarkable and poignant part of American and Maryland history that should receive greater attention. *We recommend developing a physical walking trail or virtual tour that ties Riverdale Plantation and its history to Mt. Rose and Edmonston. This could be expanded to the entirety of the four port towns, to better expound upon their shared histories and unique identities. This would serve to encourage local and regional tourism, develop community awareness, and support local education.*

| **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. Ordinances address temporary stake signs, billboards, and/or permanent signs. Enforcement helps to reduce visual clutter and/or helps to enhance the community's identity. | | | | | 6 |
| 2. Ordinances are enacted and enforced to address issues such as overgrown lots, abandoned vehicles, unscreened dumpsters, public nuisances, unregulated garage sales, building facades, and/or empty storefronts windows. Ordinances are routinely reviewed and updated as needed. | | | | 5 | |
| 3. Code enforcement/compliance officer is available. Violations are detected, investigated, and/or resolved. Code enforcement includes but is not limited to Public health, safety, consumer protection, building standards, and land use. | | | | 5 | |
| 4. Communication of ordinances is easily accessible. Examples of communication include, but are not limited to, lectures, print, city website, library, City Hall, and social media. | | | | | 6 |
| 5. First impressions are positive in residential, business, and/or municipal areas. Properties, buildings, structures grounds, decks, patios, and yards are neat and in order. Examples include, but are not limited to, lack of vandalism, graffiti, broken windows, peeling or faded paint, and rust. Programs exist and are effective to minimize graffiti, litter, and nuisance areas. | | | | | 7 |
| 6. Community infrastructure is in good condition. Examples include, but are not limited to, roadways, road shoulders, curbs, corner pads, medians, sidewalks, railroad crossings, sewers, transformers, and/or utility poles. | | | | | 6 |
| 7. Community amenities are in good condition. Examples include, but are not limited to, signs, site furnishings, public restrooms, water features, lamp posts, benches, bicycle racks, drinking fountains, trash and recycling receptacles, safe parking, proper lighting, crosswalks/pavement markings, containers, planters, and/or cigarette receptacles. | | | | | 7 |
| 8. Community is accessible to people of all abilities. Examples include, but are not limited to, public buildings, parking, sidewalks, public transportation, playgrounds, parks, sports fields, and trails. | | | | | 7 |

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| 9. Wayfinding signage is visible, attractive, and in appropriate locations throughout the community. Signage adequately lists directional information and/or areas of interest. | | | | 5 | |
| 10. Public art is located throughout the community. Features such as banners, murals, and/or statues are used, attractive, and effective. | | | | | 8 |
| 11. Year-round seasonal decorations are used in key areas. The decorations are well maintained and attractive. Examples include, but are not limited to, lighting, ornamental displays, wreaths, planters, luminaries, and displays in government buildings, residential homes, and storefronts. | | | | | 7 |
| 12. Pet waste policies are posted and/or enforced. Pet clean-up stations are available throughout the community. Stations are monitored and stocked. | | | | | 6 |
| 13. Volunteers participate in community improvement initiatives. Examples include but are not limited to Habitat for Humanity, home repair programs, disaster relief, and clean-up days. | | | | | 6 |
| 14. Programs are in place to encourage, recruit, and/or engage volunteers of all ages and segments of the community's overall impression. Volunteers from businesses, residents, schools, and/or organizations participate in events, programs, boards, and promotions. | | | | | 6 |
| **Totals:** | **Possible Points** | | **Actual Points** | | **Percent** |
| **7. Overall Impression** | 112 | | 87 | | 77.67% |

**Overall Impression Recommendations:**

Edmonston is really a community that WOWS. It is diverse, accessible, navigable, and full of town staff and volunteers that actively desire to help and keep Edmonston beautiful. The town has no problem getting volunteers in numerous criteria, especially with the multiple organizations that tie into the community to provide support. *We would like to recommend that Edmonston consider formalizing volunteer recruitment programs. This would assist in helping to assure longevity for the volunteer programs and general volunteer ethos within the community while also providing a mechanism to track volunteer retention and growth over time. Formal programs can be as basic as a spreadsheet tied to a button or page on the town website focused on volunteering.*

Turning community services into public art with the assistance of Operation Arts Foundation really seems to be the definition of public art and Edmonston does it brilliantly with the food pantry, Little Free Libraries, and the Art M.A.G.N.E.T. It would be wonderful to see these ideas spread further amongst the Port Towns.

Public art is in force throughout Edmonston, with numerous murals and sculpture installations throughout the community. This includes the bridge, the physical embodiment of "a bridging community." *We recommend installing themed hanging baskets along the bridge. This is a main entrance into the community and would provide an enduring first impression.*

| **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. | | | 1 |
| **Totals:** | **Possible Points** | **Actual Points** | **Percent** |
| **8. Evaluation Tour Preparation and Actions** | 13 | 12 | 92.30% |

**Evaluation Tour Preparation and Actions Recommendations:**

As a seasoned America in Bloom community, Edmonston was well prepared for the advisor's visit. The schedule was a good mix of community tour, activities, meet and greets, and down time. We appreciate that the In Bloom team took into account last year's recommendation to allow the advisors more time to compare notes.

Unique to this trip was the opportunity to have a shared itinerary between Edmonston and Colmar Manor, as they were visited at the same time and are in the same population category. This was a great idea and one we would like to encourage, as it eliminated redundancy in the shared resources we would see for both towns and provided greater flexibility with the itinerary and schedules. *We recommend that this approach be continued for future Advisor visits.*

**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.

# 2024 Community Recognitions

**Community name/state**: Edmonston, Maryland

**Recognized Criterion:** Overall Impression

It is pretty clear, that over the years, Edmonston has taken every recommendation the AIB advisors have made and not just incorporated them into their community but enhanced them. In each of the categories, improvements have been made in an organized fashion resulting in a vibrant community, connected to other communities and briming with color. The town of Edmonston is an example of what America in Bloom is all about.

**Noteworthy Project or Initiative:** Community Beautification through Art

The partnering of Edmonston with the Operation Arts Foundation has made sure that every available surface and place is coverd with artwork. From the arty food pantry and Little Free Libraries to painting the town electrical boxes as well as painting murals on the bridge and construction areas, art is everywhere. Making available for free, used and new art suppplies completes the picture!