



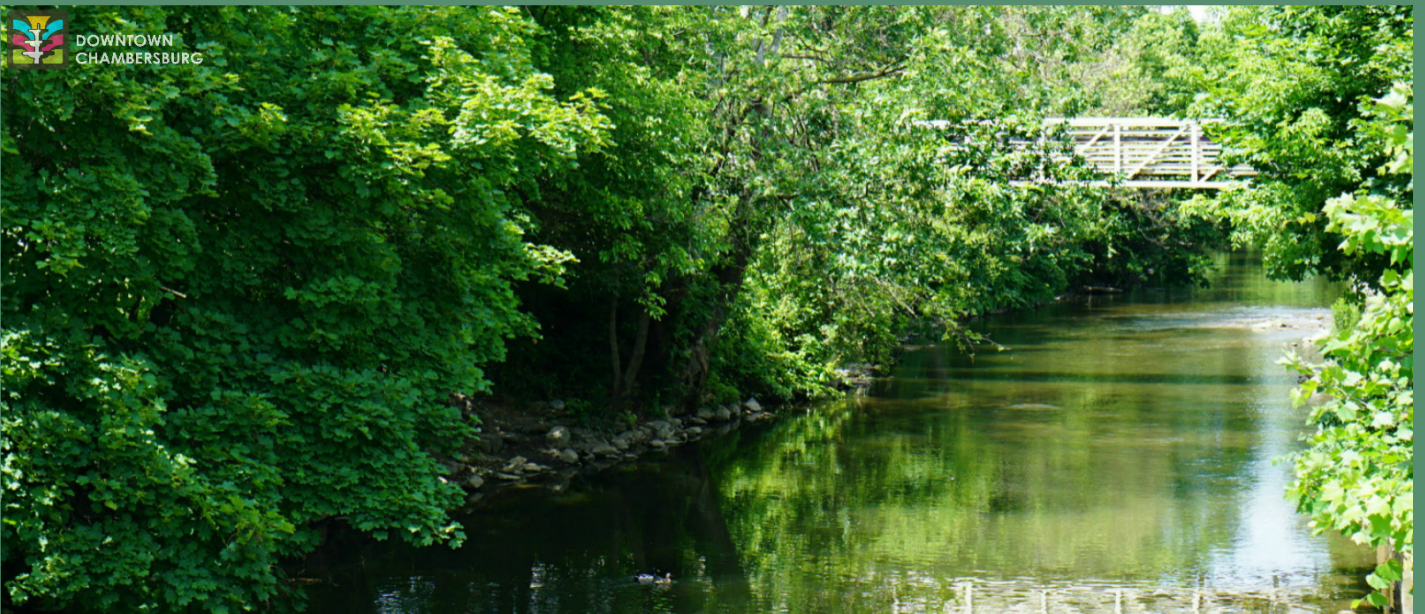
DOWNTOWN  
CHAMBERSBURG



SUSTAINABLE PENNSYLVANIA  
COMMUNITY CERTIFICATION AUDIT  
FOR THE  
BOROUGH OF CHAMBERSBURG



DOWNTOWN  
CHAMBERSBURG

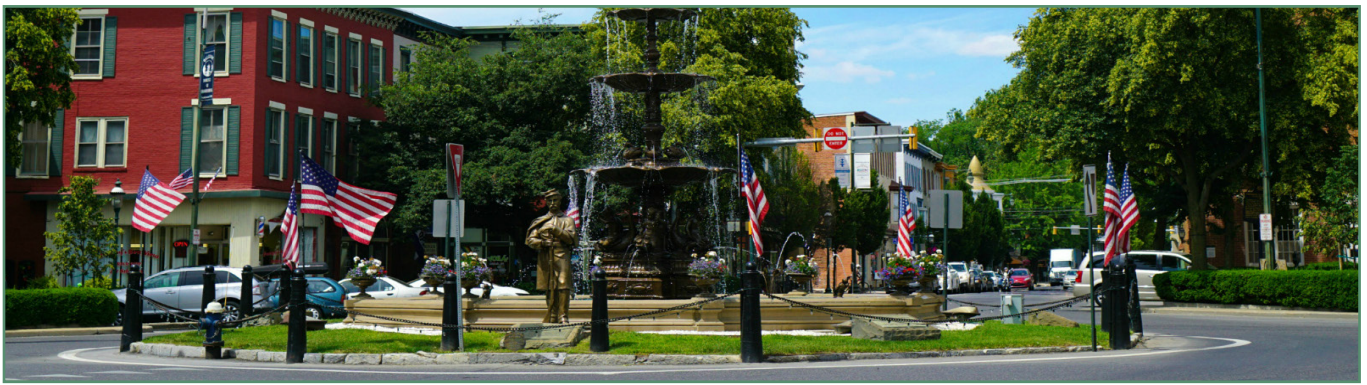


MAY 2017

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## Introduction

The Center for Land Use and Sustainability has partnered with the Borough of Chambersburg to assess the community's progress towards sustainability, using the Pennsylvania Municipal League's Sustainable Pennsylvania Community Certification criteria as a framework. Ultimately, this audit will serve as part of the Borough's application to the Pennsylvania Municipal League for Community Certification, along with a fully annotated criteria check sheet (Appendix A), which will be made available on the Chambersburg Borough's website.

The pursuit of Sustainable Community Certification is made based on the direction of Chambersburg Borough Council. This executive summary highlights our key findings and provides some additional recommendations.

The certification program consists of 131 criteria organized around the nine themes of sustainability set forward by the Municipal League:

The nine topics include:

1. *Governance and Community Engagement*
2. *Diversity, Equity and Inclusion*
3. *Healthy Communities*
4. *Education*
5. *Energy Use, Conservation and Green Building*
6. *Environmental Stewardship*
7. *Housing*
8. *Land Use and Transportation*
9. *Local Economy*

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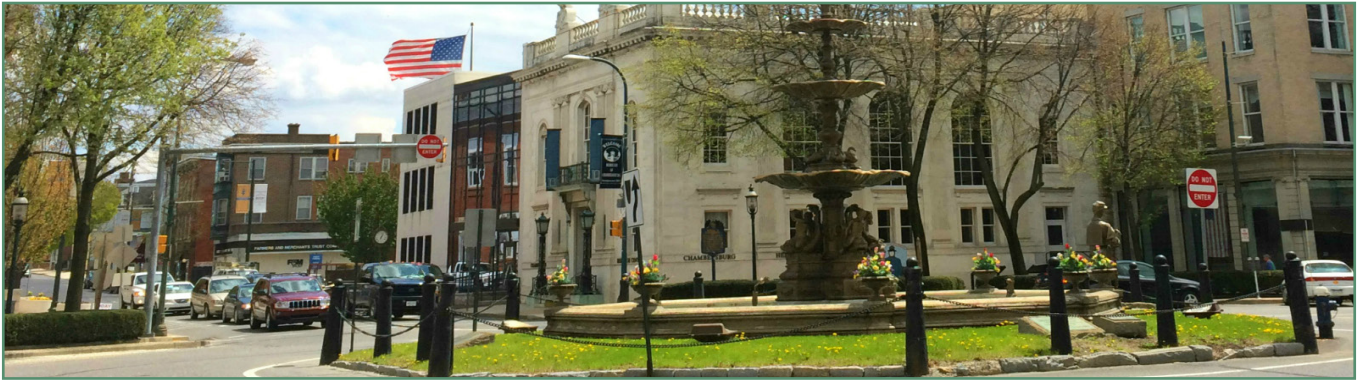
We acknowledge the support and contributions from the Borough Town Council and Borough staff, including Jeffrey Stonehill, Borough Manager, Dave Finch, Assistant Borough Manager, Lance Anderson, Water and Sewer Superintendent, Jason Cohen, Director of Finance, Paul Cullinane, Economic Development Specialist, Ron Pezon, Electric Superintendent and Guy Shaul, Recreation Superintendent.



## About the CLUS

The mission of the Center for Land Use and Sustainability (CLUS) at Shippensburg University (SU) is to support science-based solutions to interdisciplinary sustainability challenges. Our vision is to become a nationally recognized interdisciplinary center that leverages the expertise of SU faculty, staff, and students to promote sustainable land use, economic development, and communities at local, regional, and global scales.

Learn more at <http://www.centerforlanduse.org>



## What is the Sustainable Pennsylvania Community Certification?

Sustainability, at its most basic definition, is the ability or the capacity of something to maintain or sustain itself. It is a complex system involving ideas, people, development, environmental issues and more, to allow for management and growth in the present that will not put future generations in jeopardy. It is a concept and multi-modal practice that intertwines social/cultural issues, environmental issues, economic development, and governmental policies. Balancing the economic, environmental, and social needs of the community, meeting those needs, and respecting the needs of other local communities are the values that embody sustainable development.

The Sustainable Pennsylvania Community Certification is a project of the Pennsylvania Municipal League. It is intended to bring recognition to municipalities that are applying the policy and practice of sustainability as their way of operating

in order to advance community prosperity. Focused on municipal operations, policies, and practices, the certification also serves as a mechanism for sharing best practices for creating a more sustainable Pennsylvania.

Adopting sustainability as a municipal strategy benefits many aspects including: government operations, to foster community economic opportunity, and lead to a more resilient and attractive community.

As noted in the introduction, the certification process focuses on nine essential categories, which break down and assess the many different parts of municipal operations and their role in sustainability. A point system is used to calculate the five achievement levels; Chambersburg's goal is to reach the level of Gold certification.

### The Five Certification Achievement Levels



**Platinum:** 203-300 points *(provide web links to at least 90% of 'yes' responses)*

**Gold:** 136-202 points *(provide web links to at least 70% of 'yes' responses)*

**Silver:** 80-135 points *(provide web links to at least 50% of 'yes' responses)*

**Bronze:** 35-79 points *(provide web links to at least 30% of 'yes' responses)*

**Associate:** 1-34 points *(provide web links to at least 10% of 'yes' responses)*

For more information visit:

<http://www.sustainablepacommunitycertification.org/>



## Becoming Certified Provides Positive Impacts for a Municipality:

- ✔ Clarifies the priority municipal policies and practices that high performing local governments ideally have in place
  - ✔ Helps the municipal administration establish a baseline of where they are now in comparison to implementing best practices and other high performing municipalities
  - ✔ Creates a pathway for continuous improvement
  - ✔ Creates a conversation among municipal management, staff, elected officials, residents, and local employers
  - ✔ Creates a network of high performing municipalities for sharing information and mutual assistance
  - ✔ Raises community awareness about the comprehensive role of local government in advancing a sustainable community
  - ✔ Illustrates that sustainability is a broad framework for social, economic, and environmental performance,
  - ✔ Leads to more valuable content being featured on municipal websites.
- For more information visit:  
<http://www.sustainablepacommunitycertification.org/>





# Sustainable Community Criteria Summary

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The following summary presents highlights of progress toward the 131 criteria within the nine sustainability themes we audited for the Borough of Chambersburg. Based on progress to date, we estimate that Chambersburg will be able to earn gold level certification.

We also provide recommendations that the Borough could pursue in the future to achieve a higher certification level. At the time of this writing, only 69 municipalities - less than 3% of all Pennsylvania municipalities – have achieved certification: 6 platinum, 26 gold, 26 silver, 8 bronze, and 3 associate.

## #1. Governance and Community Engagement

### Municipal Operations

The Borough has a variety of staff employed in separate fields dealing exclusively with both budgeting and finance. At least 80% of long-term pension or post-employment programs are in place for all eligible employees.

Financially, 5-10% of operating funds are carried over from year to year, and currently the Borough is debt free.

A Green Vehicle fleet assesment has initiated “fleet locate” devices on all municiple vehicles. These devices record information and send alerts about idle time, vehicle routes, and speed to the user.



### Recommendations for the Future

- ✓ Routinely evaluate revenue to ensure it is sufficient to maintain public infrastructure
- ✓ Conduct an annual revenue-expenditure trend analysis



### Community Engagement

Civic engagement, public participation, transparency, and public communication are regularly facilitated through the Borough website, the website’s Government Transparency page and the Recreation Department Blog.

The Greater Chamber of Commerce Blog is available to match residents and businesses to volunteer opportunities.

### Recommendations for the Future

- ✓ Establish a Historic Review Commission and an Environmental Advisory Council
- ✓ Regularly include sustainability-awareness components as part of municipal-sponsored events

## Local and Regional Cooperation

The Borough is both part of the Pennsylvania Council of Governments and has an Intergovernmental Cooperative Agreement (ICA) with the Borough of Greencastle.

### Recommendations for the Future

- ✓ ICA agreements to include conflict resolution provisions



## Sustainability

The Chambersburg Borough will pass a resolution to affirm participation in the Sustainable Community Essentials Certification Program. There are many sustainable policies, goals and principles found in the Comprehensive Plan, a few are:

- Upgrading Infrastructure
- Provide Safe, Decent, Affordable Housing
- Preserve Historic and Natural Resources
- Continued Revitalization of the Downtown
- Find Opportunities for Development and Re-Development
- Improve Transportation Options

### Recommendations for the Future

- ✓ Establish an official sustainability program and provide on-going training for employees and officials
- ✓ Provide annual reports to the public on the sustainability program impacts

## Public Safety

Mutual Aid Agreements to share resources are active with neighboring municipalities.

An annual budget is in place to provide both financial and staffing needs for the Emergency Services Department.

The Borough also contracts services with other municipalities for Police, Fire and Emergency Medical Services.



## #2. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

### Human Resources & Economy

The Borough has written municipal policy prohibiting discrimination and in favor of diversity. Every municipal employee is provided diversity training. In 2016, a mandatory training session covered diversity, anti-bullying, and harassment. Town Council also established a full-time Diversity, Outreach and Employment Resources Coordinator position. Annual Reports on diversity can be found in the Adopted Budget.

The Borough of Chambersburg is also part of the Sister City Program and is in contact with the city of Gotemba, Japan!

### Recommendations for the Future

- ✓ Minority Business Enterprise and Women Business Enterprise are considered in municipal purchasing, bids and contracts.





## #3. Healthy Communities

### Local Food

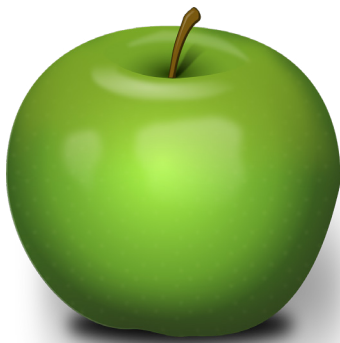
The Borough supports programs like the North Square Farmers Market, who partnered with the Buy Fresh, Buy Local Initiative and the organic Fulton Farm at Wilson College to help engage residents to find sources of local and sustainable food systems. Community gardens at St. Paul's Methodist Church and Network Ministries are also available.



**NORTH SQUARE  
FARMERS MARKET**

### Recommendations for the Future

- ✓ Create incentives for the establishment of farms and community gardens



### Healthy People

There are programs in place to address community health concerns, such as the Annual Healthy Communities Partnership Health Fair. There are also many outdoor recreational opportunities. The Borough has 16 park areas, 7 playgrounds, walking paths, bike parks, and 2 skateboard facilities. Pesticides and herbicides are rarely used in these areas except in extreme cases.

### Recommendations for the Future

- ✓ A program to promote safe walking to school to be re-established

## #4. Education

### Cooperation

The Chambersburg Borough coordinates and shares facilities with members of the Franklin County Council of Governments several times a year including the local school districts of the Chambersburg Area, Fannett Metal, Greencastle Antrim and Tuscarora.



### Engagement

The Borough works with the Boys and Girls Club of America and Network Ministries to engage youth about waste reduction and there are programs in place for trash and leaf collection in local parks.





## #5. Energy Use, Conservation and Green Building

### Municipal Energy Use

The Borough is currently in the process of swapping out traditional incandescent light bulbs to LED bulbs to help conserve energy, and traffic signal lights are all fitted with LEDs.

#### Recommendations for the Future

- ✓ Energy audits, including a greenhouse gas inventory and mitigation plan, conducted for all municipal buildings and new energy goals to be established and implemented
- ✓ An annual report on energy conservation to be conducted for public information, regarding progress and results



### Community Energy Use & Green Building

The Borough Comprehensive Plan includes many energy conservation elements, such as goals to continue street lighting replacement, explore more renewable energy programs, and to maintain and upgrade facilities to meet standards of affordable electricity.

#### Recommendations for the Future

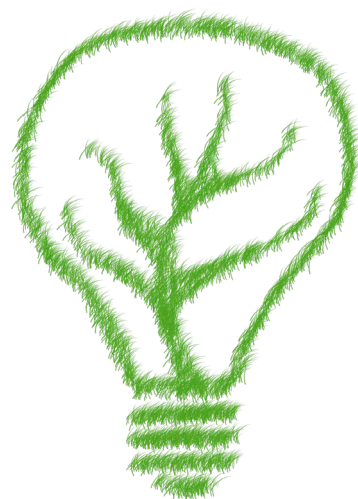
- ✓ Conduct a greenhouse gas inventory for the entire community and develop a mitigation plan
- ✓ A policy or standard is created for green building to achieve the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver principals or the International Green Construction Code (IgCC) for new construction or renovations

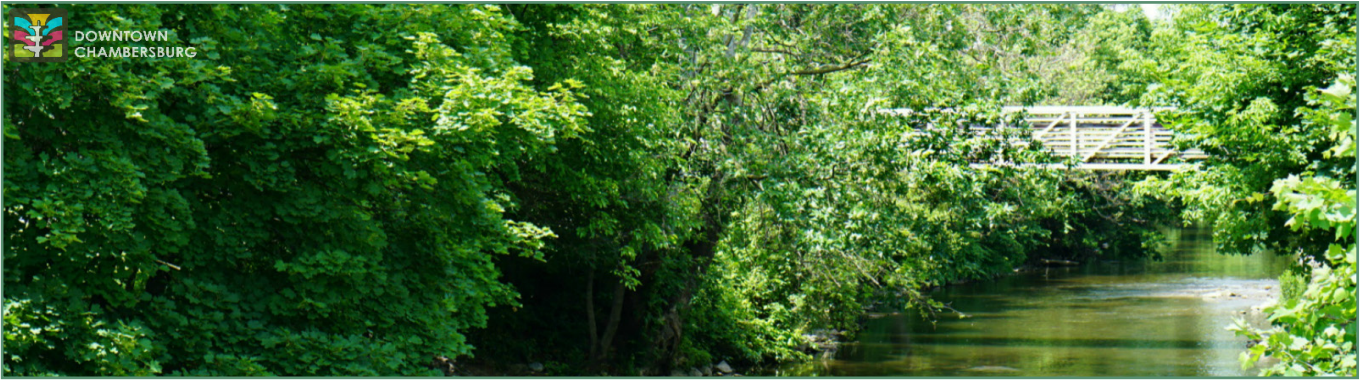
### Renewable Energy

The Borough receives at least 10% of its energy from renewable sources and the Chambersburg Borough purchases power from PPL Renewable Energy and the Blue Ridge Landfill to supplement their energy production.

#### Recommendations for the Future

- ✓ Provide at least 40% of municipal energy from renewable sources

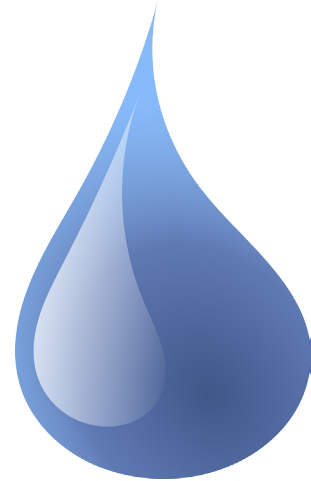




## #6. Environmental Stewardship

### Water Use, Conservation and Quality

The Borough actively encourages water conservation through reports like the Drop by Drop, Use Water Wisely, and a Water Conservation Practices report. The municipality has an Integrated Municipal Stormwater and Wastewater Planning Approach through the new MS4 department established in 2015. Infrastructure is routinely maintained and upgraded to improve service to existing developed areas such as Norland Avenue, where many businesses and medical facilities heavily depend on a reliable source of water. Cooperation with neighboring municipalities such as Greene Township and the Bear Valley Joint Municipal Authority is also in place to expand and manage water, sewer, and stormwater services.



### Air Quality

Air quality is addressed by adopting a burn ban as part of the fire prevention code. There are also ongoing negotiations to create a program between the Borough and IESI, a waste management company, to build and operate a compressed natural gas station for their vehicle fleet.

### Recommendations for the Future

- ✓ Create policies covering clean construction emissions for publicly subsidized projects
- ✓ Provide more public education about reducing air emissions

### Green Infrastructure

There are many aspects of green infrastructure within the Chambersburg Borough including policies to protect water ways and their buffers, trees and woodlands, and sustainable landscaping practices.

### Recommendations for the Future

- ✓ Conduct a natural resource inventory to easily manage and locate areas of interest
- ✓ Create written policies to include the conservation of a variety of different environmental or ecologically sensitive areas in order to protect public safety and natural resources
- ✓ Implement low impact and green development techniques for projects





## #7. Housing

### Affordability

The need and benefits of expanded housing is addressed in the Comprehensive Plan. The Borough's municipality zoning ordinances provide a variety of housing options throughout the community. The Borough also partnered with Habitat for Humanity to secure a grant to rehabilitate existing housing to provide low and moderate income families more housing options.

### Recommendations for the Future

- ✓ Create inclusionary housing incentives and include provisions in the zoning ordinances
- ✓ Track and report to the public on affordable housing for residents



### Sustainable Neighborhoods

Pennsylvania's Statewide Uniform Construction Code (UCC) is administered and enforced throughout the municipality and the International Property Maintenance Code has also been adopted.

In 2013, Town Council began to enforce PA Act 90 Neighborhood Blight Reclamation and Revitalization Act, which helps put blighted and abandoned properties back into use. The collection of delinquent taxes and fees are in place to help mitigate both blight and abandonment.

### Recommendations for the Future

- ✓ Create an inventory of vacant and blighted properties to be maintained and mapped





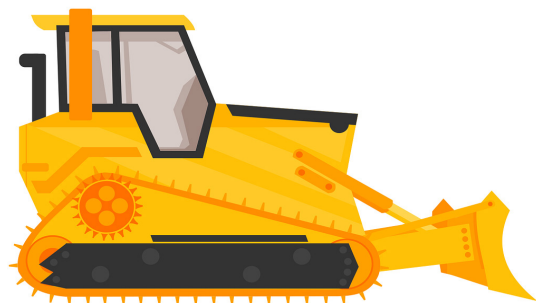
## #8. Land Use and Transportation

### Mobility

The Borough of Chambersburg offers many trails for walking and biking that are well-maintained. Alternate transportation options are being developed, such as the Contract Agreement between Johnson, Mirmiran & Thompson to prepare a Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements Plan, as well as including a 13 member advisory council for the new plan. Bike lanes are being developed and police are trained on the rights and responsibilities of bicyclists. A traffic calming program is also in place to encourage drivers to slow down and be more aware of their surroundings.

#### Recommendations for the Future

- ✓ Develop a program to encourage ride sharing or bike sharing



### Community

Sustainability and conservation principles are addressed in the Comprehensive Land Use Plan and up to date ordinances are in place, such as sidewalk ordinances that promote pedestrian friendly options and a “walkable” town. Land use and development decisions are also regularly evaluated to ensure that there are no impacts on neighboring communities.

#### Recommendations for the Future

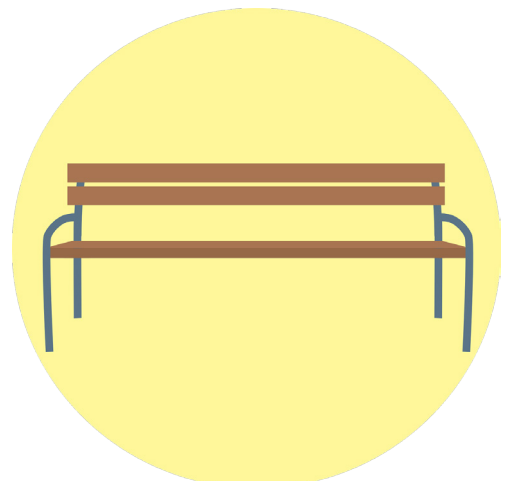
- ✓ A detailed fiscal impact analysis including long-term fiscal impacts to be required by developers

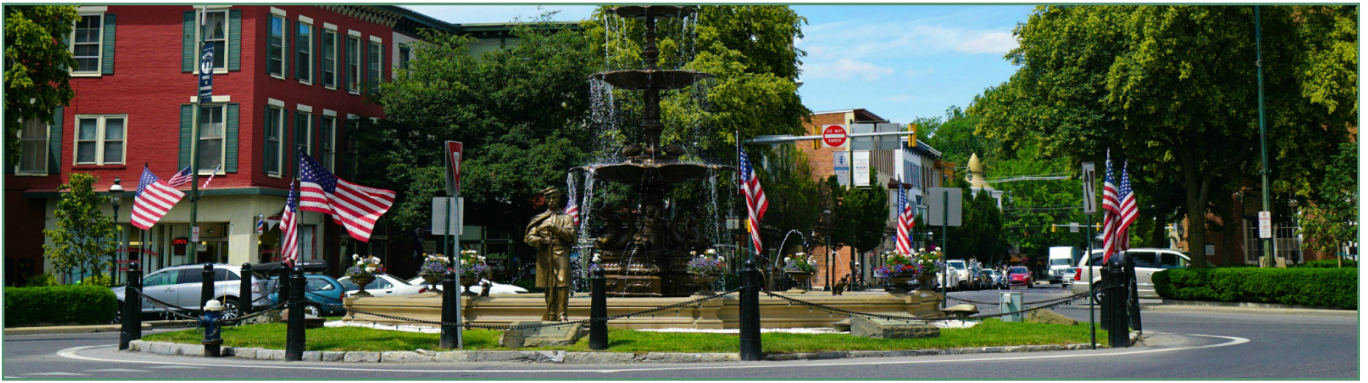
### Green Space

The Borough Comprehensive plan has goals to identify environmentally sensitive, ecologically significant, and historic places, as well as promoting gardens and greenspace. Parks and recreational places are promoted and include parks, trails, and greenways.

#### Recommendations for the Future

- ✓ Create an annual report for the public updating the improvements of greenspace or open space projects





## #9. Local Economy

### Thriving Local Green Business

The Chambersburg Borough has assessed Main Street program options and has implemented a program called the Elm Street Neighborhood Plan that focuses on neighborhood revitalization and strengthening historic neighborhoods. Local businesses are encouraged to keep attractive sidewalk areas.

#### Recommendations for the Future

- ✓ Create a larger focus for residents to buy locally
- ✓ Provide more encouragement for businesses to make more sustainable approaches and recognize innovative achievements



### Material Use, Waste and Recycling

All waste and recycling is in compliance with Act 101, and the Borough provides weekly curbside single stream recycling to all residential trash customers. Along with that, all municipal buildings with employees have recycling options available. Litter prevention and clean-up programs are conducted with community groups. The Borough also has a designated full-time employee for litter management. E-waste and green waste also has collection events or opportunities. Pharmaceutical drop-off points are available at the police station during scheduled times.

#### Recommendations for the Future

- ✓ Conduct a waste management assessment and provide the associated training for municipal employees
- ✓ Enhance the community-wide recycling program and maintain it at a goal of 40%

## Other Sustainability Innovation

In 2005 the Borough's long-standing partnership with Downtown Chambersburg, Inc. (DCI) was bolstered when the non-profit organization Building Our Pride In Chambersburg (BOPIC) joined to create an Elm Street Neighborhood Plan with the support of a \$25,000 grant from the PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED).

The five-year strategic plan outlines goals and objectives to enhance the neighborhood areas located to the east and south of downtown that are predominantly older residential uses

interspersed with commercial neighborhood uses. Southgate Shopping Center is a key component of the redevelopment strategy.

Beyond redevelopment, the plan outlines other community development initiatives such as opportunities for resident participation in the decision-making process, improved property maintenance code enforcement, affordable housing opportunities and neighborhood safety patrols.



## Conclusion

The Borough is proud to announce that through the sustainability certification assessment process, the Chambersburg Borough is expected to collect **179 criteria points** which could qualify as **Gold!**

This is an exciting feat and shows the progress and willingness of the Borough to implement and continue diverse and sustainable programs within the municipality.

The partnership between the Center for Land Use and Sustainability at Shippensburg University and the Chambersburg Borough has resulted in a comprehensive audit of Chambersburg's progress toward sustainability.

We note in this executive summary, and as can be seen in the full criteria check sheet (Appendix A), Chambersburg has already incorporated many of the core sustainability practices outlined by the Pennsylvania Municipal League into its day-to-day operations. While the Municipal League will make the final assessment based on Chambersburg's full application for Sustainable Pennsylvania Community Certification, based on our estimation, Chambersburg should be able to score within the 136-202 point range that would represent gold level certification.



## For More Information & References

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