



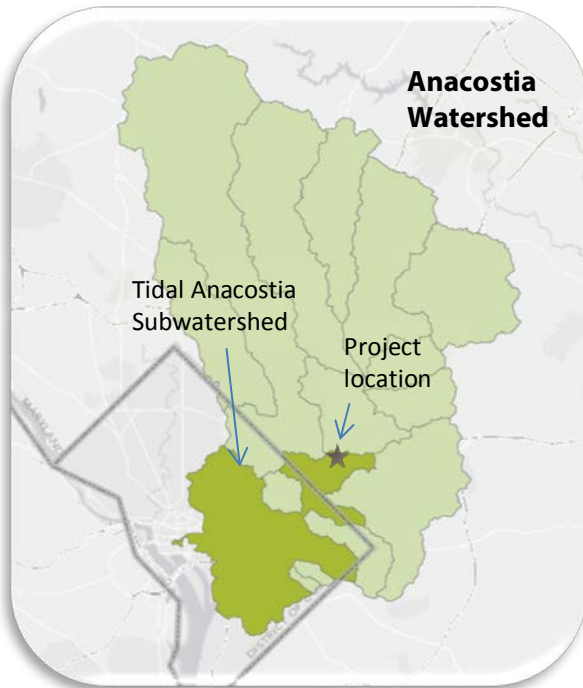
G3 GRANT

BLADENSBURG GREEN STREET FINANCING CHARRETTE

GREEN STREETS ● GREEN JOBS ● GREEN TOWNS

PROJECT INFORMATION:

Location:	Bladensburg, MD
Project Type:	White Paper
Restoration Practice:	Bioretention, permeable pavement, tree box filters, amended soils
Funding:	Chesapeake Bay Trust and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Amount Awarded:	\$20,000
Additional Funding Leveraged:	\$4 million
Status:	White paper completed; green street in design
Key words:	Green street, community revitalization, Anacostia, Chesapeake Bay



PROJECT OVERVIEW

Route 450 is a state road that runs through the center of the Town of Bladensburg in Prince George’s County, MD. In 2011, the Town partnered with a local nonprofit to apply for a Green Streets, Green Jobs, and Green Towns (G3) grant to evaluate the economic benefits of transforming Bladensburg’s main street into a green street.

TOWN OF BLADENSBURG BACKGROUND

The Town of Bladensburg is a residential suburb of Washington, D.C. on the Anacostia River. Once a colonial seaport, the small town transformed into a bedroom community in the 1910s – 1920s with the expansion of a streetcar system connecting it to Washington, D.C. The one-square mile town is now home to over 9,000 people.

Project Location: Tidal Anacostia Subwatershed (Anacostia River), Town of Bladensburg, Prince George’s County, MD

State Highway Route 450/Annapolis Road serves as modern day Bladensburg’s main thoroughfare. In 2007, the county approved a plan to target reinvestment and redevelopment efforts along Annapolis Road – the Town’s primary commercial corridor – and adjacent supporting areas. The plan pointed to the degraded roadway as an impediment to revitalization and urged its redesign as a significant aspect of future economic development.

RE-ENVISIONING THE MAIN STREET CORRIDOR

Much of Bladensburg was developed prior to the adoption of modern stormwater and floodplain management

regulations. Limited stormwater controls combined with a relatively high percentage of impervious surfaces and a low percentage of tree and forest coverage have resulted in very poor water quality for this area. Its road system consists of excessively wide streets with lots of impervious surfaces. Polluted runoff quickly makes its way to the Anacostia River when there's rain or snow melt.

The pattern of wide streets has also proved unhealthy for local commerce. Such is the case for MD 450/Annapolis Road. The road's current design is good for moving cars but not for pedestrian-friendly retail. Motorized traffic speeds are excessive; bike and foot access is poor; and crosswalks are inadequate. Both the Town and the County agree that for future economic redevelopment to occur, the road should be redesigned to be more walkable and bike friendly, complete with traffic calming measures, a planted median, and street trees – all of these common elements of a green street.



Participants. The green street charette in 2010 served as a forum for sharing insight and ideas.

In October 2010, the Town held a one-day workshop or “charette” with the help of EPA Region 3. Town residents, members of the business community, the State Highway Administration, and local and regional experts met to brainstorm issues, concerns, and opportunities related to redeveloping the road as a green street. The result was a concept for the green street’s design and an entry for future discussions with the State regarding the project’s full design and construction.

MD-450/ ANNAPOLIS ROAD GREEN STREET G3 REVITALIZATION STUDY

Because MD 450/Annapolis Road is a state road, its financing is primarily the responsibility of the State Highway Administration – and buy-in takes time. One issue identified through the green street charette was the need to garner State support and to better inform the State for how enhancement of the existing transportation network with green street elements would support local and regional economic revitalization. The Town partnered with a local nonprofit on a G3 grant to evaluate the potential for and next steps for utilizing the green street to catalyze its broader community revitalization and green infrastructure implementation efforts.

The G3 study showed that the widespread adoption of green infrastructure practices and a coordinated regional effort to restore and



Green Street Revitalization. Vision for redeveloping the Route 450 corridor.

protect a vibrant green infrastructure network would result in positive impacts on both the local and regional economy. The study highlighted the need for the Town to look beyond the green street project itself in order to develop a detailed inventory of priority green infrastructure projects.

The study identified three potential financing opportunities that the Town could utilize to implement green infrastructure projects at the local level:

- Financing with community-based revenue and funding stream;
- Leveraging other public-based financing from county, state, and federal governments; and
- Leveraging private investments, primarily through land and economic development projects.

The study also highlighted the need for Bladensburg – a relatively small community – to partner with surrounding municipalities and government to leverage existing or planned investments associated with other community development goals. Such steps provided the Town with action steps that could proceed now while continuing to engage the State on MD 450/Annapolis Road’s redevelopment.

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Large reconstruction projects take time. In the case of MD 450/Annapolis Road, two challenges early on were identifying how to effectively engage the State in understanding the impact and influence of the road’s redesign on the local economy, and how to simultaneously move forward community-led efforts to revitalize and transform the community. The green street charrette successfully served as an entryway for future discussions with the State on the Town’s desires to transform its existing main street into a holistic green street. The G3 revitalization study helped the Town make a case for how enhancing the existing transportation network would support economic revitalization, while also providing the Town with direction for identifying, prioritizing, and raising revenue for green infrastructure projects on Town and private property.

LEVERAGING RESOURCES AND ACTIONS

The State Highway Administration is now a key partner in the Town’s green infrastructure implementation process as a result of the Town’s continued leadership on the MD 450/Annapolis Road green street project. Current estimates just for engineering necessary upgrades along MD 450 are \$4.5 million, and must be prioritized alongside others through the State. So far, the State has approved \$4 million in funding; \$1.3 million of this was generated from various partners for in-kind services.

In Bladensburg, the community continues to move forward with its own efforts. The Town installed a new permeable paver system at its Town Hall site using community funds and is in the last stages of developing a green infrastructure community wayfinding project to target and connect green infrastructure projects throughout the community. Bladensburg is also involved in numerous other green infrastructure and sustainability projects, as identified on the Town’s website. Due to the Town’s continued efforts, they were honored by the State in 2013 with certification as a Sustainable Maryland Community.

For more information, visit: <http://www.townofbladensburg.com/>

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P. 2, charette participants, Low Impact Development Center.

P. 2, green street revitalization, Low Impact Development Center.