



Town of Berlin
Strategic Plan for FY 2025 – FY 2028

Adopted by Council 5/14/24

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Outreach Network at Salisbury University





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INTRODUCTION

This Strategic Plan, compiled by the Business, Economic, and Community Outreach Network at the Franklin P. Perdue School of Business and Salisbury University, was commissioned by the Town of Berlin. The contents of this plan were developed through a survey of the Town of Berlin residents and business owners, interviews with town employees and external stakeholders, two community listening sessions, and a series of strategic planning retreats facilitated by BEACON.

The Town of Berlin, Maryland, is distinguished as a charming and quaint small town, recognized for its distinctive ambiance featuring period architecture, antique shops, arts and crafts galleries, and a diverse selection of restaurants. Notably, Berlin has garnered popularity as an esteemed visitor destination, notably following its prominent feature in the movie "Runaway Bride", as well as earning the name "America's Coolest Small Town" by Budget Travel. The town seamlessly integrates a historical charm with a contemporary cultural vibrancy, rendering it an attractive locale for both residents and visitors. The fusion of small-town charm and cultural attractions contributes to Berlin's unique appeal, establishing it as a distinct and hospitable community within the state of Maryland.

TOWN OF BERLIN CHARACTERISTICS

As of July 1, 2022, the estimated population of Berlin stands at 5,259, based on data from the United States Census Bureau. The demographic profile indicates a distribution of age groups, with 3.1% of the population being under 5 years old, 28.4% under 18 years old, and 18.2% aged 65 years and over. The gender composition reveals 55.6% female individuals.

In terms of racial diversity, the majority of the population identifies as White alone, constituting 79.4%, followed by 13.9% as Black or African American alone, 0.3% as Asian alone, and 6.4% as Two or More Races. No reported individuals are identifying as American Indian and Alaska Native alone or Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone. Ethnically, 3.8% of the population identifies as Hispanic or Latino. It's important to note that the percentages for American Indian and Alaska Native alone, as well as Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders alone, are reported as 0.0%¹

The economic landscape of the region reveals significant trends from 2017 to 2021. The civilian labor force, comprising individuals aged 16 years and above, constituted 63.4% of the total population during this period. Among this workforce, females accounted for 57.3%. Key sectors contributing to the economy include accommodation and food services, with sales totaling \$16,043 (in thousands) in 2017, and health care and social assistance, reporting substantial receipts and revenue amounting to \$182,847 (in thousands) during the same year.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau. "Age and Sex." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S0101, 2022.



Additionally, the retail sector played a significant role, recording total sales of \$100,937 (in thousands) in 2017, with a per capita retail sales value of \$21,967 (in thousands).

In terms of health statistics, approximately 12.6% of individuals under the age of 65 reported having a disability between 2017 and 2021. The percentage of individuals under 65 years without health insurance was 7.6%.

Examining income and poverty, the median household income, adjusted for 2021 dollars, stood at \$69,955 from 2017 to 2021. Per capita income in the past 12 months, similarly adjusted, amounted to \$31,251 during the same period. The percentage of persons living in poverty was reported at 10.5%, providing insights into both the economic prosperity and social challenges within the community.

In 2022, the Town of Berlin sustained a workforce of 2,319 individuals aged 16 years and over, actively engaged in a variety of industries². The employment distribution across sectors paints a diverse economic landscape for the town. Notably, the construction industry employs 199 individuals, while manufacturing and wholesale trade provide opportunities for 69 and 10 workers, respectively. The retail sector contributes significantly with 259 employed individuals, followed by transportation and warehousing, and utilities employing 63, respectively. The town sees activity in information-related occupations with 38 individuals, and finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing sectors engage 126 workers. Furthermore, professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services collectively employ 175 individuals. The educational and healthcare sectors play a crucial role in the town's employment scene, with a combined total of 688 workers. Additionally, arts, entertainment, recreation, and accommodation, and food services provide jobs for 560 individuals. Other services, excluding public administration, account for 48 employees, while public administration employs 84 individuals.

OVERVIEW OF PROJECT AND STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The project is structured in three distinct phases from September 2023 through May 2024, each culminating in a collaborative review and adjustment session between BEACON and the Town of Berlin. The iterative approach ensured flexibility and alignment with evolving needs.

Phase 1 - Preliminary Assessment:

BEACON initiated the project by engaging with the leadership of the Town of Berlin to outline broad goals for the strategic plan. This phase involved the development of an initial survey for Berlin's citizens and businesses and the gathering of input from elected officials and department leaders. Telephone interviews with elected officials further enhanced BEACON's understanding of the Town. The outcome of Phase 1 was a summarized report that paved the way for Phase 2.

² U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Phase 2 - Constituent Engagement and Planning Retreat:

Leveraging the insights acquired in Phase 1, BEACON worked collaboratively with the Berlin Town Council to explore strategies for garnering additional community feedback. Two community listening sessions were conducted: the first session took place in the Worcester County Public Library—Berlin Branch on January 10, 2024, and the second session occurred in St. Paul United Methodist Church on January 17, 2024. Following these listening sessions, a second strategic planning retreat was facilitated on January 25, 2024, at the Berlin Town Hall. The community listening sessions and the second strategic planning retreat led to the analysis of findings and the preparation of a comprehensive report, setting the stage for Phase 3.

Phase 3 - Strategic Action Planning and Follow-up:

Phase 3 involved bringing together officials and constituents that made up the strategic planning committee for a third strategic planning meeting. This final planning session was split into two parts to help the committee members stay focused and reflect on their progress. It drew on insights gained from the initial retreats. Additionally, a final Zoom session was conducted after the two strategic planning sessions to ensure that feedback from all committee members and individuals who couldn't attend earlier sessions was considered. This virtual meeting was used to finalize and update the Tactical Action Plan. The final strategic plan was presented to the Council on April 8, 2024, to seek approval for the draft to be shared with the community for a public comment period before being finalized.

Community Feedback Sessions for Final Strategic Plan:

The goal of these community feedback sessions was to include all individuals who live and work in Berlin to ensure all feel included and heard in the town's plans for the future. Two community feedback sessions were held to gain community feedback on the final draft strategic plan: the first session took place in the Worcester County Public Library—Berlin Branch on April 15, 2024, and the second session occurred in St. Paul United Methodist Church on April 17, 2024. The feedback from these sessions will be shared with the Council and will be considered in the final Strategic Plan. There was also a survey in both paper and electronic formats that was shared with the citizens which provided additional feedback.

Report of Final Plan to Council:

The final draft plan was presented to Town council members in a working session and shared with the public in an open town session(s). Following this session, the draft strategic plan was subject to final edits and updates. The project will conclude with follow-up assistance during the after-care period, facilitating the integration of follow-up committee work and the tracking of progress. The comprehensive strategic action plan, delineating projects and initiatives, will be expanded upon in the following report based on the retreat findings.



PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The Strategic Plan for the Town of Berlin serves as the guiding framework for the Town Council's future activities and operations. In accordance with state law, the Council is entrusted with adopting policies that set the overall direction for the town. Strategic planning plays a vital role in offering clarity, direction, and focus, particularly in dynamic and high-growth environments. The plan conveys a clear message about the identity of the town and its aspirations for the future, outlining organizational priorities and corresponding objectives to achieve these goals.

The objectives of the Town of Berlin Strategic Plan are as follows:

- Establish priorities to set the focus for the town.
- Clearly define the town's actions and investments.
- Direct the accomplishment of short-term and long-term goals.

This strategic plan will be utilized to:

- Concentrate the town's organizational efforts and resources.
- Establish priorities for annual work plans.
- Evaluate progress towards realizing its vision.
- Adjust the town's direction in response to a changing environment.

The plan serves as the framework for activities and operations across all town departments. Key elements include the town's core values, vision and mission statements, areas of focus with defined objectives, and implementation strategies with associated responsibilities. Collectively, these components shape the overall direction of the Town of Berlin, contributing to the betterment of future generations.

MISSION, VISION, VALUES

The mission, vision, and values were developed through a series of discussions among the retreat participants. The mission statement should communicate what the Town of Berlin is (its reason for existence) while the vision outlines what the Town aspires to be in the coming years. The values identify the core principles that should guide and direct the town and its decision-making and actions.

COMMUNITY MISSION

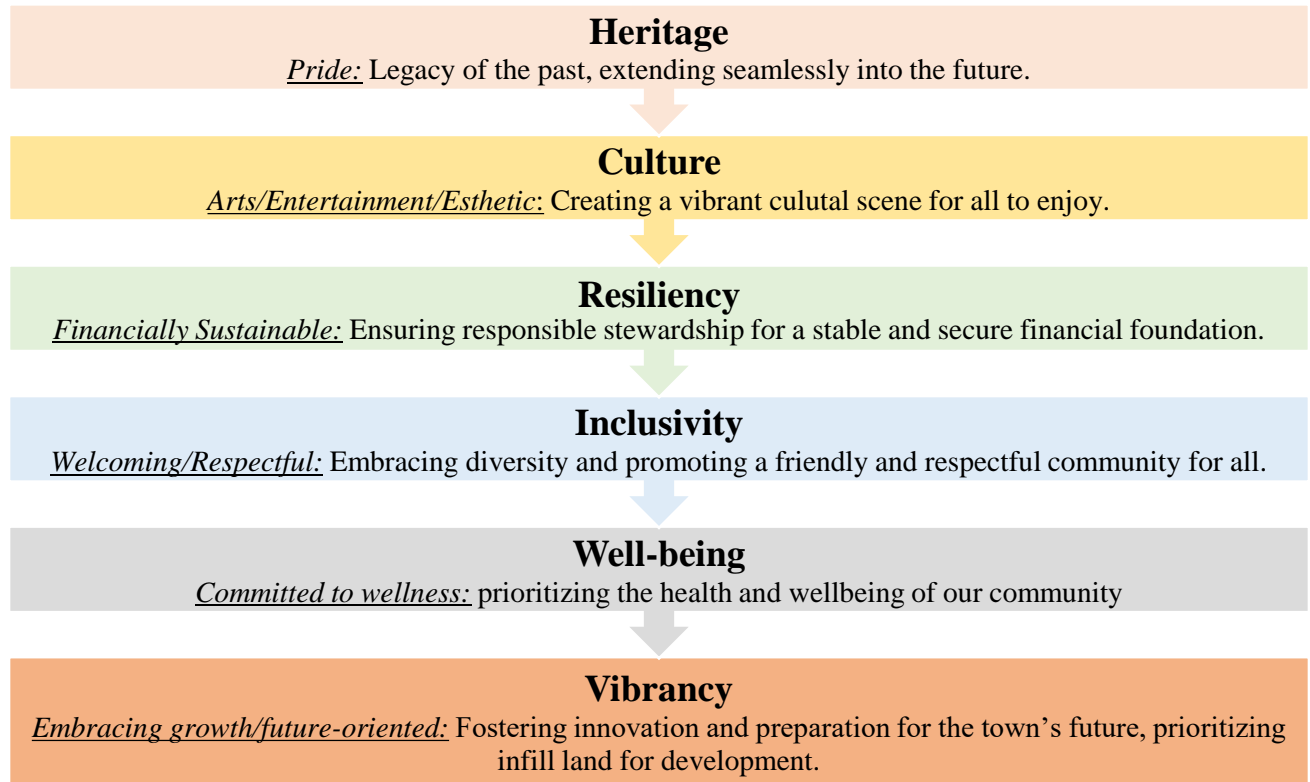
We envision a town where our heritage, culture, resilience, friendliness, and well-being serve as the guiding principles, fostering a vibrant and inclusive community.

COMMUNITY VISION

The heart of the Town of Berlin lies in our dedication to nurturing community pride, preserving heritage, and creating a clean, safe, enjoyable, and affordable environment for residents, workers, and visitors alike.



COMMUNITY VALUES



SWOT ANALYSIS

The following is a comprehensive analysis of the environment of The Town of Berlin. This was developed through a survey of The Town of Berlin residents and business owners to which 117 individuals responded, interviews with employees and external stakeholders as well as seven key informant interviews. The information was updated after the two listening sessions to reflect additional views. Outlined below are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) that must be considered in planning for the future of The Town of Berlin. The strengths and weaknesses focus on facets that are internal to the organization while the opportunities and threats are part of the external environment.

STRENGTHS

- Small town charm
- Community involvement
- Safety
- Local businesses
- Historic Downtown
- Tourism
- Events
- Environmentally friendly (green spaces and healthy living)
- Safe and clean



- Community events/community spirit and engagement
- Diverse and vibrant business community
- Affordable rent
- Proximity to major highways and metropolitan areas.
- People
- Cleanliness
- Friendliness
- Sense of community
- Small town atmosphere
- Businesses
- Location
- Historic character
- Volunteers
- Mayor
- Collecting money

WEAKNESSES

- Historic Preservation
- Environmental Conservation
- Fiscal Responsibility
- Community Development
- Infrastructure and Services
- Disproportional growth
- Limited workforce to fill positions in public services
- Parking
- Event succession planning
- Growth and Development
- Traffic and speeding
- Tax inequity
- Gentrification
- Affordable Housing
- Community Unity
- Youth and Recreation
- Economic Growth
- Education
- Transportation
- Property Development

OPPORTUNITY

- More Parking
- Affordable Housing and Biking Trails
- Repurposing the Chicken Plant
- Skate Park and Green Spaces



- Bike Path and Rail with a Trail
- Fiscal Responsibility and Town Foundation
- Balance Between Growth and Preservation
- Use of Heron Park
- More Sidewalks
- Affordable Living
- Evening and Sunday Activities
- Downtown Commercial Walkability
- Transportation
- Stormwater Management (SWM) Improvement
- YMCA
- Jobs and Employment
- Preserve Historic Victorian Aspect
- Community Swimming Pool and Year-round Activities
- Curbing Rentals and Enhancing Town Businesses
- More Walkability and Sidewalks
- Efficiency in Government
- Athletic Facilities and More Parking
- Support of Small Businesses
- Utilizing the Tyson Building
- Long-distance Bike Path and Outdoor Opportunities
- Open Spaces and Reasonable Rental Rates
- Enforcement of Town Codes and Growth Control
- Care for Tax-paying Residents
- Cautious Growth with Walkability and Nature Preservation
- Lower Electric Costs
- Development Along US 50 and US 113
- Variety of Businesses
- Christmas Lights Design
- Perusing Grants for Sewer Pipes
- Venue Similar to Freeman Stage
- Community Guide for Being the Best Small Town
- Lower Taxes
- Employee Parking Area
- Sell Tyson Plant
- Understanding the Two Groups in Town
- Multi-purpose Community Spaces
- Stop Over-development of Rural Land
- Solar Panels and More Parking
- ADUs for Affordable Housing



- Clean Up Stephen Decatur Park
- Education Demand Units (EDUs)

THREATS

- Overdevelopment
- Affordable housing
- Stormwater issues
- High tax rates
- Too much growth
- Lack of affordable housing
- Traffic
- Economic
- Town government
- Overbuilding
- Not enough housing
- Overgrowth
- Overdevelopment of housing
- Double taxes
- Competition
- Electric Bill
- Rising costs of living
- Downtown businesses
- Transportation
- Environmental issues
- Not enough employment opportunities
- Infrastructure issues
- Youth issues
- Rising taxes
- Race issues
- Community divisions
- Political agendas
- Woke DEI policies
- Drug use among the youth
- Small towns feel threatened
- Planning and zoning decisions
- Open space and land use planning
- Leadership



SUMMARY SWOT ANALYSIS

To develop the focused SWOT diagram below, BEACON facilitated a discussion between The Town of Berlin retreat participants concerning the full SWOT analysis from the previous pages. Included in the diagram are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats as identified and prioritized through the discussion.

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural and historical heritage • Diversity of people • Access to business and services • Environmentally friendly (green spaces and healthy living) • Safe and clean • Community events/community spirit and engagement • Diverse and vibrant business community • Affordable rent • Proximity to major highways and metropolitan areas. • Parks • Schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Infrastructure – Fiber Optic Internet; water and electricity costs; stormwater management • Affordable housing • Disproportional growth • Limited workforce to fill positions in public services • Parking • Event succession planning • Insufficient sidewalks and crosswalks • Lack of Community Center – Youth Activities • Traffic and speeding • Tax inequity • Gentrification
WEAKNESSES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event succession planning • Infrastructure and accessibility • Public art/murals/statues • Diversified town events • Affordable housing • Shuttles/Transportation for visitors • Proximity to major highways • Public Safety • Diversified town events • Control overdevelopment • Improve green space in public parks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inappropriate growth • Overdevelopment • Economic challenges • Ability to maintain workforce • Access to events/recreation for all ages • Housing/Affordability • Behavioral health and provider access • Public Safety • Loss of diversity



LINKAGES FROM SWOT ANALYSIS

Using the focused SWOT analysis above, the following linkages were developed between the four elements (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats). These linkages serve as the foundation for the organization's driving strategies. To take advantage of the opportunities identified, The Town of Berlin needs to fully use its related strengths. Furthermore, to prevent the identified threats from more significantly impacting the organization, any related weaknesses must be addressed. The linkages that were developed are as follows:

Linkages Between Strengths and Opportunities (Suggesting Potential Proactive Strategies)

Cultural and historical heritage → Event succession planning, Public art/murals/statues

Diversity of people → Diversified town events, Affordable Housing

Access to business and services → Infrastructure and accessibility, Shuttles/Transportation for visitors

Environmentally friendly (green spaces and healthy living) → Infrastructure and accessibility, Proximity to major highways

Safe and clean → Affordable Housing, Public Safety

Community events/community spirit and engagement → Event succession planning, Diversified town events

Diverse and vibrant business community → Infrastructure and accessibility, Diversified town events

Affordable rent → Affordable housing, Control overdevelopment

Proximity to tourist areas → Improve access and safety at highway crossings

Parks → Improve green space in public parks

Linkages Between Weaknesses and Threats (Suggesting Potential Reactive Strategies)

Communication → Ability to maintain workforce

Infrastructure → Economic challenges

Affordable housing → Housing/Affordability, Economic challenges, Overdevelopment

Disproportional growth → Economic challenges, Inappropriate growth, Overdevelopment

Limited workforce to fill positions in public services → Behavioral health and provider access, Ability to maintain workforce

Parking → Access to events/recreation for all ages

Event succession planning → Access to events/recreation for all ages

Insufficient sidewalks and crosswalks → Economic challenges

Not enough activities to keep youth engaged → Access to events/recreation for all ages

Traffic and speeding → Public Safety

Tax inequity → Economic challenges

Gentrification → Loss of diversity, Overdevelopment



DRIVING STRATEGIES

The following driving strategies flow from the SWOT analysis and associated linkages outlined above. They are focused on the areas of highest priority for the organization to successfully fulfill its vision. The driving strategies should direct the organization forward in a focused manner over the next several years and are broken down into three categories: short-term (1-3 years), medium-term (3-5 years), and long-term (5+ years).

Driving Strategy 1: Short-Term (1-3 years)	Foster a community where all are welcomed and valued.
Driving Strategy 2: Short-Term (1-3 years)	Focus on public safety needs, demands, and expectations.
Driving Strategy 3: Short-Term (1-3 years)	Improve and expand infrastructure focusing on reliability and safety.
Driving Strategy 4: Medium-Term (3-5 years)	Retain a small-town feel, enhance equity, and provide opportunities for our diverse community to live and thrive in Berlin.
Driving Strategy 5: Medium-Term (3-5 years)	Improve neighborhood connectivity and access to businesses and services by minimizing logistical obstacles.
Driving Strategy 6: Long-Term (5+ years)	Improve recreation facilities, public amenities, and green spaces including existing facilities and access for all.



TACTICAL ACTION PLAN

A tactical action plan is developed to highlight the action steps that are required for the driving strategy to be successful. The tactical action plan reveals what each action step is, who will be responsible for the action, when the action will be completed, the resources needed to complete the action, and how the success of the action will be measured through specific metrics. Policy and procedure documentation should be developed, as appropriate, for each action step to continue to guide the operation of the organization into the future.

The charts on the following pages contain a tactical action plan for each identified driving strategy.

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TACTICAL ACTION PLAN

Driving Strategy 1: Foster a community where all are welcomed and valued.

Action Steps	WHAT?	WHO?	WHEN?	WITH WHAT RESOURCES?	WHAT METRICS?
AS1:	Enhance the involvement of faith-based leaders, community organizations, and business community in sharing information with the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Faith-Based LeadersTown Staff - AdministrationCommunity MembersBusiness CommunityChamber of Commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none">July 2024Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">TimeStaff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Reach of information-sharing facilitated by faith-based leaders.# of faith-based leaders who actively participate in information sharing.
AS2:	Develop a calendar for meetings and forums that adhere to a rotating location schedule to improve participation by all citizens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Town LeadershipBoards and CommissionsTown Staff – AdministrationLocation Staff (TBD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">January 2025Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">TimeStaffTechnology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Attendance Rates.Venue Utilization.# of meetings at other venues.Feedback and sentiment of participants to gauge the feeling of value involvement.
AS3:	Create a campaign-themed "One Berlin" to unite and promote the diversity of all community members past and present.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Town staff - Administration, Economic DevelopmentCommunity MembersCommunity Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">January 2025 Initial Research.Campaign Launch April 2026.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">FundingTimeStaffData/ResearchTechnology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Creation of a “One Berlin” themed campaign.Surveys and feedback from community members on their perception of the campaign's message, impact, and effectiveness.
AS4:	Explore events that can take place in locations throughout Berlin, expanding beyond the downtown street footprint.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Town staff - Administration, Parks, Economic DevelopmentCommunity PartnersChamber of CommerceFaith-Based Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">January 2025Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">TimeStaffData/Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Percentage increase in events held in alternative locations compared to previous years.Attendance #'s at events held in alternative locations.Feedback from event organizers regarding the ease of accessing and utilizing alternative locations.

STRATEGIC PLANNING TEMPLATE DEVELOPED BY:



TACTICAL ACTION PLAN

Driving Strategy 2: Focus on public safety needs, demands, and expectations.

Action Steps	WHAT?	WHO?	WHEN?	WITH WHAT RESOURCES?	WHAT METRICS?
AS1:	Continue and enhance strategic police patrols and community engagement to address crime prevention and traffic regulation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing and deploying appropriate public reporting of incidents. Expand presence throughout the town and in neighborhoods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Berlin Police Town Leadership Partnerships – Worcester County Sheriff's Office, Maryland State Police, Public Safety Organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> March 2025 implementation for public reporting. Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Time Funding Technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Safety Needs Survey. Effectiveness of speed cameras. Incident response times. # of calls for service and category.
AS2:	Continue and enhance strategic fire and EMS activities and community engagement focused on fire prevention, improved patient outcomes, and emergency response. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing and deploying appropriate public reporting of emergency response activities. On-site emergency medical services for identified town events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Berlin Fire/EMS Town Leadership Partnerships with surrounding Fire and EMS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing March 2025 implementation for public reporting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteers Staff Time Funding Technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insurance Services Office (ISO) Grading System Rating. Fundraising. Billing collection rates. EMS attendance on-site at identified town events. Patient survival rates post-cardiac arrest.
AS3:	Launch a public awareness campaign to promote and enhance overall health and well-being.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town Leadership Local Health Officials Partnerships - Atlantic General Hospital, Worcester County Health Department, Faith-Based Organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch by June 2025 Bi-annual Campaign Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Time Promotional Material Funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive Health Data. Increase in attendance at health events. Increase in health and wellness-related events.
AS4:	Improve municipal Emergency Preparedness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town Leadership Berlin Fire/EMS Berlin Police Department Worcester County Emergency Services MD Department of Emergency Management Utilities Community Members Allied Agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> June 2025 – June 2028 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time Human Expertise Funding Volunteers Associations Other Government Organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement CERT Team. Municipal Emergency Operations Plans, Continuity of Operations Plans, Continuity of Government Plans. Municipal integration and role in Emergency Operations Center. Critical Infrastructure Assessment. Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment. Incident Command Training.

STRATEGIC PLANNING TEMPLATE DEVELOPED BY:

TACTICAL ACTION PLAN

					<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mutual Aid Agreements.• Project Code Cost Tracking for Reimbursement.• Training exercises.• Improve Municipal Preparedness.
AS5:	Involve public safety agencies in the assessment of town expansions and changes in building usage to ensure an understanding of capacity and accessibility, particularly regarding the provision of services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Town Leadership• Local Health Officials• Berlin Police• Berlin Fire Company/EMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff• Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• # Projects and feedback provided by public safety agencies to projects.

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STRATEGIC PLANNING TEMPLATE DEVELOPED BY:



TACTICAL ACTION PLAN

Driving Strategy 3: Improve and expand infrastructure focusing on reliability and safety.

Action Steps	WHAT?	WHO?	WHEN?	WITH WHAT RESOURCES?	WHAT METRICS?
AS1:	Enhance fiber optic connectivity for households and businesses by expanding the network infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning & Zoning Town Staff – Public Works, Economic Development, Electric Department Partners - Simple Fiber, Choptank, Maryland Broadband 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study- December 2024 Implement January 2025 Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time Human Expertise Financial (Grants) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The # of connected residents and businesses. Growth of service-based businesses. Cost competitiveness. Current download/upload speeds vs. fiber optic download/upload speeds.
AS2:	Engage the community through education initiatives focused on stormwater and runoff management, fostering awareness and participation in sustainable practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteers Town Staff - Admiration Horticultural Committee Parks Commission Partnerships - Faith-Based, Public / Private Schools, HOA's. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin - July 2025 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time Human Technology Programs Workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of implemented stormwater management techniques (rain gardens, rain barrels, etc.). # of Citizens participating. Chesapeake Bay Report Card.
AS3:	Improve water and sewer system efficiency: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water quality enhancement and reliability Sewer systems efficiency and optimization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental Protection Agency Maryland Department of Environment Town Staff – Water Resources Town Engineers Outside Engineer / Architect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study Improvements 2024-2025 Funding July 2025 Implementation July 2026 - Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time Human Expertise Financial (Grants & Town Enterprise Fund Budget) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved measures of water quality using MDE testing data against historical testing results. Efficiency, capacity/optimization, reliability, and compliance. Success of upcoming well water project. Best practice of water in the holding tanks. Infiltration and intrusion (I&I). Water Loss % against historical data.
AS4:	Enhance stormwater management and mitigate runoff through a comprehensive approach to plan and guide system improvements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maryland Department of Environment Water Resources Department Stormwater Utility Planning & Zoning Planning Commission Outside Consultants FEMA Other State and Local Partners (Coastal Bays, DNR) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> June 2026 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time Human Expertise Informational Financial (Grants & Town Enterprise Fund Budget) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efficient drainage. Measuring contaminants in runoff. Observable flooding. Number of times a roadway is determined to be impassable (year over year). Property loss trends (year over year). Grant funding obtained (year over year) vs town capital (leverage ratio).

STRATEGIC PLANNING TEMPLATE DEVELOPED BY:

TACTICAL ACTION PLAN

AS5:	Enhance vehicular and pedestrian safety through improvements to roads, sidewalks, and trail infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MD Legislature• Developers• State Highway Administration• Town Staff – Public Works	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Time• Human• Expertise• Informational• Financial (Town Budget)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• # of potholes repaired.• # Streets with new / repaired sidewalks.• # of roadway issues reported.• Time between roadway issue report and addressing the issue.• # of projects completed on the Town’s Consolidated Transportation Plan request to MDOT.• Miles of trails per capita.
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STRATEGIC PLANNING TEMPLATE DEVELOPED BY:



TACTICAL ACTION PLAN

Driving Strategy 4: Retain a small-town feel, enhance equity, and provide opportunities for our diverse community to live and thrive in Berlin.

Action Steps	WHAT?	WHO?	WHEN?	WITH WHAT RESOURCES ?	WHAT METRICS?
AS1:	Implement and expand design guidelines and proactive zoning enforcement to retain and preserve neighborhood characteristics and safety.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Staff - Planning and Zoning • Worcester County Planning Commission • HOA's • Planning and Zoning • Planning Commission • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September 2024 • May 2025 present implementation to Council. • FY26 Complete 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time • Staff • Volunteers • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of design guidelines implemented. • Compliance rate of new construction, renovations, and redevelopment. • Timeliness of resolution to reported zoning issues. • Proactive engagement with the community regarding zoning and property management.
AS2:	Study usage, availability, and limitations of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Staff – Water Resources • Planning & Zoning • Accessory Dwelling Unit Task Force 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January 2025 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time • Human • Technology • Financial (Grants & Town Budget) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of building permits issued. • % water and energy consumption associated with new ADU usage. • Impact of increased ADU usage on wastewater treatment infrastructure and capacity. • Evaluate the need for additional EDUs. • ADU impact on housing affordability. • Housing Stock #.
AS3:	Explore designations such as heritage areas to preserve existing affordable housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maryland Heritage Areas Authority • Economic and Community Development • Community Members • Town Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 2026 • Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time • Staff • Data/ Research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of designated areas. • # of properties rehabilitated. • Evaluation of the effectiveness of preservation policies. • # of properties on the national registry of historic places (identified with signage).
AS4:	Study affordability in Berlin concerning housing, taxes, and amenities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Staff – Finance, Economic Development, Planning • Community Members • Town Leadership • Nonprofit Entities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 2026 – March 2027 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time • Staff • Technology • Data/ Research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordability Measurement / Index. • Analysis of tax data to identify any disparities in tax rates or burdens. • Development and implementation of recommendations or policy changes based on the findings.

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AS5:	Develop a citizen academy initiative to help inform the community of respective town departments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respective Town Departments • Other Entities (as needed) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January 2027 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time • Staff • Technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-participation survey. • # of citizens involved in the academy.
AS6:	Explore the possibility of creating a development corporation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Staff – Public Works, Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 2028 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time • Staff • Data/ Research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure the financial viability of a development corporation.
AS7:	Implementation and financial sustainability of non-profit to help homeowners on fixed incomes afford changes in property assessment values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Staff – Finance, Economic Development, Planning • Community Members • Town Leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • October 2028 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time • Staff • Technology • Data/ Research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of individuals participating in the program. • Resource page added to Town of Berlin Webpage.

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Driving Strategy 5: Improve neighborhood connectivity and access to businesses and services by minimizing logistical obstacles.

Action Steps	WHAT?	WHO?	WHEN?	WITH WHAT RESOURCES?	WHAT METRICS?
AS1:	Develop parking management strategies, including shared parking arrangements, parking incentives, and the utilization of technology solutions, to optimize parking availability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town Staff – Public Works, Economic Development, Planning Local businesses Chamber of Commerce Property owners Community Stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning July 2024 Implementation July 2025 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time Staff Technology Data/ Research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased availability of parking. Reduction of parking congestion. Revenue from parking technology solutions (if pay to park implemented). Visitor satisfaction survey for parking.
AS2:	Develop an active transportation plan to improve accessibility between neighborhoods focusing on pedestrians, bikes, highway overpasses, and other options.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Highway Administration MDOT Bikeways Planning Commission Town Leadership Community Stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> October 2024 Report January 2025 Implementation 2026 - forward 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time Staff Funding Data/ Research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active Transportation plan created/implemented. Measure of safety improvements to roads for pedestrians and cyclists. Survey of Public Perception of improved access between neighborhoods. Acquiring Reconnecting Communities Grant.
AS3:	Review zoning and codes for business development in areas that may benefit from mixed-use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning & Zoning Planning Commission Town Leadership Worcester County Planning Commission State Department of Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin July 2026 Bi-annual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time Staff Data/ Research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of zoning and code revisions implemented to support business development. Increased # of new businesses established. Comparison of economic activity in areas before and after implementation of zoning and code revisions.
AS4:	Study walkability / bike-ability to town parks and amenities to improve access.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town Staff – Public Works, Parks Parks Commission Worcester County Bicycle and Pedestrian Coalition MDOT USDOT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin October 2026 Report Findings by October 2027 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time Staff Data/ Research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walkability / bike-ability scoring system to quantify accessibility to town parks and amenities. Measurement of the average distance individuals travel to reach the nearest park or amenity. Miles of trails per capita.

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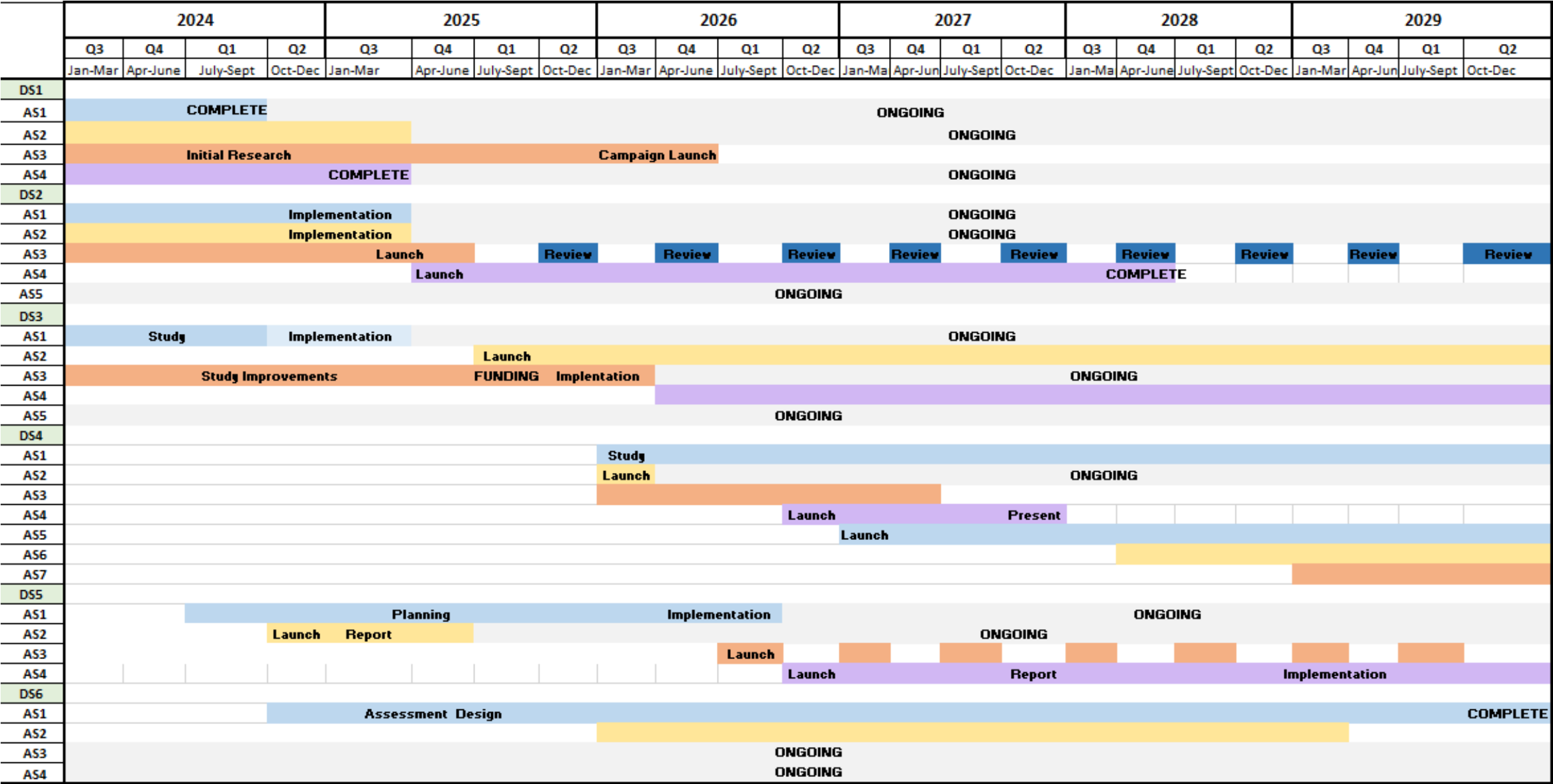
Driving Strategy 6: Improve recreation facilities, public amenities, and green spaces including existing facilities and access for all.

Action Steps	WHAT?	WHO?	WHEN?	WITH WHAT RESOURCES?	WHAT METRICS?
AS1:	Develop an indoor community/recreation center to address public needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Center Advisory Committee Berlin Community Improvement Association (BCIA) SHOREUP! Inc. Parks Commission Town staff - Planning & Zoning Berlin Police Berlin Fire Company/EMS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> December 2024 – assessment and design work. Completion by October 2029 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding Property Time Staff Data/Research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Amenities Assessment. Design. Feasibility. Grants. Capital Campaign Fundraising Received /Allocated. Community/recreation center created. Facility utilization rate. Programming.
AS2:	Develop a prioritized plan for enhancing existing facilities ensuring equitable access for all.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parks Commission Town staff – Public Works, Finance Planning & Zoning Berlin Police Berlin Fire Company/EMS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> January 2026 – January 2028 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding Time Staff Data/Research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percent of facilities that meet accessibility standards and regulations. Participation rate for facilities following enhancements. # of facilities enhanced/updated. Access to play facilities (inclusive playground).
AS3:	Develop engaging events to encourage community participation and utilization of recreation facilities and green spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town staff – Economic Development, Others Community Members Business/Civic Organizations Chamber of Commerce Worcester County Economic and Tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding Time Staff Technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of events developed. # of participants in attendance at events. Social Media engagement for scheduled events.
AS4:	Enhance community parks and programs including a skate park, splash pad, exercise equipment/outdoor gym, recreational fishing, interactive musical instruments, community gardens, and other identified needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parks Commission Town staff – Parks, Public Works Outside Consultants Community Partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open Space Project Funding Time Staff Data/Research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amount of funding allocated to community parks and programs through Project Open Space. # of community parks and programs identified for enhancement or improvement. Percentage increase in park usage following enhancements. Green Space acres per capita. Tree City Designation.

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Gantt Chart



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Appendix A: Berlin Community Sentiment Survey

Berlin Community Survey

Town of Berlin—Community Sentiment Survey

Dear Residents and Business Owners of Berlin, Maryland:

The Town of Berlin is working with BEACON at Salisbury University to collect information to assist with the Town's strategic planning process. All responses will be sent directly to BEACON, and no personal information will be shared. Your insights and opinions are essential for shaping the future of our vibrant community. As part of our ongoing efforts for strategic planning, we invite you to participate in this Community Sentiment Survey. The information you provide will play a pivotal role in guiding our town's growth and development. Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts. The survey should take less than three minutes.

Survey Instructions:

Please take a few moments to respond to the following questions. Your responses will remain confidential and will be used solely for the purpose of strategic planning. Please answer each question based on your experiences and perspectives. Your honest feedback is greatly appreciated.

1. How would you describe yourself? (Select only one.)
 - ☐ Berlin resident
 - ☐ Berlin business owner who also resides in Berlin
 - ☐ Berlin business owner who does not reside in Berlin
2. What values do you believe are most important to the town of Berlin? (Select up to three.)
 - ☐ Tradition (History, Events that have occurred in town)
 - ☐ Sustainability (Recycling program, renewable energy, water quality)
 - ☐ Diversity and Inclusion (Being supportive of individuals of all backgrounds)
 - ☐ Innovation (Finding new ways to impact the lives of citizens)
 - ☐ Safety (Protection of the general public)
 - ☐ Community Engagement (Opportunities for people to be involved in the community)
 - ☐ Other (please specify)

3. How satisfied are you with the quality of life in Berlin?

____ Not Satisfied

____ Satisfied

____ Very Satisfied

- 3a. Please describe the reason for your selection

4. Are there any specific community services or facilities that you feel are lacking? (Select up to three.)

- ☐ Recreational Facilities (Public Gym, Walk/Bike path, Public Pool)
- ☐ Healthcare Services (Youth/Adult Mental Health Services, Addiction Services/Housing)
- ☐ Educational Programs (Museums, Resources)
- ☐ Cultural and Arts Spaces (Murals, Cultural and Arts Centers)
- ☐ Public Transportation
- ☐ Affordable Housing
- ☐ Environmental Conservation Initiatives (Public Awareness, Waste Management)
- ☐ Community Meeting Spaces (Community Center, Park)
- ☐ N/A
- ☐ Other (please specify)

5. How well do you think the local government involves residents in decision-making processes?

___ Not Enough Involvement ___ Adequate Involvement ___ More than enough involvement

5a. Please describe the reason for your selection.

6. What do you believe are Berlin's top strengths? (Open-ended)

7. What main challenges or threats does Berlin face? (for example environment, economic, social, other)

8. What opportunities should Berlin pursue to enhance the town's growth and improvement?

9. What specific goals should the town prioritize in its strategic planning? (Open-ended)

Appendix B: Key Informant Call Questions

1. In your opinion, what are the Town of Berlin's strengths?
2. In your opinion, what are the Town of Berlin's weaknesses?
3. In your opinion, are there opportunities that the Town of Berlin should pursue, and if so, what are these opportunities?
4. In your opinion, are there threats that the Town of Berlin should be aware of, and if so, what are these threats?
5. Are there any initiatives that the Town of Berlin is working on that are important to you, and if so, what are these initiatives?
 - a. Are there any initiatives that the Town of Berlin should be working on that are important to you, and if so what are these initiatives?
6. In your opinion, are there any challenges that the Town of Berlin is currently facing, and if so, what are these challenges?
 - a. If you believe that the Town of Berlin is currently facing challenges, what do you believe the Town of Berlin should do to overcome these challenges?
7. Are there any challenges that you believe the Town of Berlin will be faced with in the future, and if so, what are these challenges?
 - a. If you believe that the Town of Berlin will be faced with challenges in the future, is there anything that the Town of Berlin can do now to avoid having to face these future challenges?
 - b. If you believe that the Town of Berlin will be faced with challenges in the future, what do you believe the Town of Berlin should do to overcome these challenges?
8. Is there anything you would like to add to the discussion or is there something we did not ask that we should?