



Growing Vibrant Communities™

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Guidelines and Information

The areas to be scored: All areas (municipal, commercial and residential) to be scored must be within the boundaries of the community/municipality (except as noted below) 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 community/municipality. When a property does not meet these requirements, but the community's volunteers significantly impact the areas with labor and/or funding, then include the property. Future projects and programs should not be scored. As they reach fruition they can be scored in future years.

Score your community in each metric using one of the six rating levels.

Metrics are noted with unique codes based on the seven criteria. Ratings include:

Not Applicable: Use when a metric is not scorable in your community. Here are a few examples of when "Not Applicable" may apply in a metric: commercial/business areas do not exist; state or county statutes prevent implementation of a metric.

Not Started: programs or procedures are **not in place**

Launching: programs or procedures are **under consideration**

Approaching: programs or procedures are **in place but not fully realized**

Achieved: programs or procedures are **implemented but need improvement**

Excelling: programs or procedures are implemented, and **no improvements are needed**

Name _____ Phone () _____ - _____

Community Vitality (CV) Criterion Definition	Metrics Ratings					
	Not Applicable	Not Started	Launching	Approaching	Achieved	Excelling
1. COMMUNITY VITALITY (CV): policies, programs, activities, and facilities that lead to a vibrant community and a sense of well-being. Includes libraries, community centers, parks, playgrounds, dog parks, sports fields, water activities, trails, and other outdoor recreational opportunities						
a. Leadership and Policy						
CV.a.01 - The municipality has volunteer boards for residents to participate in						
CV.a.02 – The municipality offers grants to neighborhood associations for enhancements						
CV.a.03 - A master plan is in place for public green spaces, green corridors, and parks						
CV.a.04 – ADA accessibility is provided in public outdoor areas including play equipment						
CV.a.05 – Transportation that does not require fuel (walking, bicycles, skateboards, etc.) is promoted and trails/lanes are provided to and from popular locations						
b. Facilities and Events						
CV.b.01 - Outdoor facilities meet community needs (ballfields, children play areas, splash pads, dog parks, kayak/canoe trails, public access to water bodies, etc.)						
CV.b.02 - Walking, biking, and exercise trails exist						
CV.b.03 –Events/performances are available that encourage community participation in art, dance, theater, music, drama, etc.						
CV.b.04 – Physical activity is encouraged through run/walk/bike/kayak/canoe events						
CV.b.05 - Benches and seating are available near walking, exercise, and playground areas						
CV.b.06 - Structures, shade sails, or trees provide shade for spectators and/or participants						
CV.b.07 – Playgrounds provide equipment appropriate to a range of ages from children to adults						
CV.b.08 - Public library/resources center is available						
CV.b.09 - Community center is available						
CV.b.10 – A farmers’ market providing fresh local food is offered regularly in the community						
c. Community Involvement						
CV.c.01 - Community garden site(s) are available for residents						
CV.c.02 – The community provides food for the hungry (food banks, community garden programs, “Plant a Row for the Hungry”, etc.)						
CV.c.03 – There is volunteer involvement in planning and implementing events such as organized runs/walks, Bike to Work Days, Walk to School Days, etc.						
CV.c.04 – There are voluntary (non-mandated HOA) neighborhood organizations in place						
CV.c.05 – The community recognizes and thanks their volunteers with certificates of appreciation, events, etc.						
Totals						

Community Vitality Remarks – if appropriate, please start each remark with the applicable metric code(s):

Flowers Criterion Definition	Metrics Ratings					
	Not Applicable	Not Started	Launching	Approaching	Achieved	Excelling
2. FLOWERS (FL): flowering annuals, perennials, bulbs, tropical plants, flowering topiaries, and colorful foliage and/or cut plant material for season-round interest in containers, hanging baskets, window boxes, raised planters, trellises, and in-ground beds						
a. Leadership and Policy						
FL.a.01 - A flower display program is in place						
b. Plan of Action						
FL.b.01 – An action plan is developed each year for procurement, scheduling, planting, and maintenance of flower displays						
FL.b.02 – There are recognition program(s) in place for attractively planted containers						
FL.b.03 - Demonstration/display garden(s) with labelled flowers in place and promoted						
FL.b.04 – There is effective communication about selection and care of flowers for beautification to the public						
c. Design						
FL.c.01 - Plant combinations create visual interest and dramatic effect while appearing coordinated to the eye						
FL.c.02 - Plants are selected for environmental conditions and are flourishing together						
FL.c.03 - Attractive hanging baskets, planters, and in-ground beds are found around the community						
FL.c.04 - Attractive hanging baskets, planters, and in-ground beds are located to serve as focal points						
FL.c.05 - There are seasonal displays for spring, summer, fall, and/or holidays						
FL.c.06 - If hanging baskets are in use, their size is in scale to their surroundings						
FL.c.07 - If containers are in use, their size is in scale to their surroundings						
F.L.c.08 –Flower displays are designed with mature plant heights in mind						
FL.c.09 - Pleasing color combinations (monochromatic, analogous, and/or complementary) are used						
FL.c.10 - Spiky, rounded, and/or cascading flower forms are used in pleasing combinations						
d. Maintenance						
FL.d.01 - A watering program to maintain growth is in place						
FL.d.02 - A fertilization program using slow-release, liquid fertilizers, and/or soil amendments is in place						
FL.d.03 – Pruning and dead-heading along with removal and replacement of dead plants takes place regularly						
FL.d.04 - Plant health programs such as IPM/Integrated Pest Management are in place to monitor and manage pests and diseases						
FL.d.05 – Plants are robust and floriferous						
e. Community Involvement						
FL.e.01 - Volunteers provide donations and/or funds and/or participate in the design, planting, and/or care of flower displays						

2. FLOWERS (FL): flowering annuals, perennials, bulbs, tropical plants, flowering topiaries, and colorful foliage and/or cut plant material for season-round interest in containers, hanging baskets, window boxes, raised planters, trellises, and in-ground beds	Not Applicable	Not Started	Launching	Approaching	Achieved	Excelling
FL.e.02 - Civic groups, garden clubs, Master Gardeners, school programs, etc., sponsor plant sales, plant swaps, provide information, or educational sessions that contribute to the quality and implementation of the community's flower displays						
Totals						

Flowers Remarks – if appropriate, please start each remark with the applicable metric code(s):

Landscaped Areas Definition	Metrics Ratings					
	Applicable Not	Not Started	Launching	Approaching	Achieved	Excelling
3. LANDSCAPED AREAS (LA): plants and related programs for the leadership, design, installation, and maintenance of landscape. Includes shrubs, ornamental grasses, vines, evergreen topiaries, turf, and groundcovers						
a. Leadership and Policy						
LA.a.01 – Public landscaped areas are attractive throughout the community						
LA.a.02 - Municipal landscape ordinance is in place and being enforced throughout the community						
b. Plan of Action						
LA.b.01 - Natural areas are identified and maintained						
LA.b.02— Invasive plants are identified, discouraged, and removed						
LA.b.03 - Demonstration gardens/display gardens/botanic gardens with interpretive signage (pollinator, wildlife, native, low-water use, etc.) encourage best practices						
LA.b.04 - Effective communication is provided to the community about recommended plants and practices						
LA.b.05 - Recognition programs are in place celebrating the most attractive and best maintained gardens						
c. Design						
LA.c.01 - Creativity and unique designs are used in a selection of landscaped areas						
LA.c.02 - Proper plants are selected for soil, climate, growth patterns, and watering needs						
LA.c.03 - Extra attention is given to plantings in public gathering places: parks, downtown, business/shopping districts, and/or entrances to the community and neighborhoods						
d. Maintenance						
LA.d.01 - Public and private landscapes are well maintained (properly pruned, dead plants removed)						
LA.d.02 - Environmentally responsible strategies such as IPM (Integrated Pest Management), appropriate irrigation, organic fertilization, proper pruning, etc. are in place to ensure plant health and vigor						
LA.d.03 – Organic mulch from renewable and sustainable sources is used by the municipality in appropriate places						
LA.d.04 - Groundcovers, mulches, and other environmentally responsible strategies are used effectively to control weeds						
LA.d.05 - Plants are healthy and robust.						
LA.d.06 - Turf is properly maintained – (watering, fertilizing, mowing, edging, replacement of dead turf, etc.)						
LA.d.07 - Turf is properly maintained with best environmental practices (IPM - Integrated Pest Management) to monitor and manage diseases, pests, and weeds						
e. Community Involvement						
LA.e.01 - Volunteers assist in funding, design, installation, and/or care of landscaped areas and/or turf in public areas						
Totals						

Landscaped Areas Remarks – if appropriate, please start each remark with the applicable metric code(s):

Urban Forestry Criterion Definition	Metrics Ratings					
4. URBAN FORESTRY (UF): trees and related programs for the leadership, management, design, installation, and maintenance on public and private lands	Not Applicable	Not Started	Launching	Approaching	Achieved	Excelling
a. Leadership and Policy						
UF.a.01 - Qualified personnel such as arborists and/or urban foresters are available for municipal tree work						
UF.a.02 - A Tree Board/Commission/Department is active and responsible for overall tree planting and care						
UF.a.03 - A municipal ordinance is in place to protect and preserve trees on public and/or private property						
UF.a.04 - A municipal ordinance is in place for protection of existing trees at construction sites						
UF.a.05 - Your community is a designated Tree City USA community						
b. Plan of Action						
UF.b.01 - A tree inventory has been completed in the past 10 years						
UF.b.02 - A tree planting program is in place for public areas						
UF.b.03 - There is a management strategy for removal of dead, imperiled, and invasive trees						
UF.b.04 - Heritage trees in both public and private areas are identified, protected, and recognized						
UF.b.05 - Education about trees is available to residents via brochures, seminars, and the municipal website regarding recommended trees, proper planting, maintenance, etc.						
c. Design						
UF.c.01 - The municipality currently practices "Right Tree in the Right Place" and chooses an appropriate selection of tree species to plant						
UF.c.02 - The municipality currently practices appropriate spacing and planting area for optimal root and canopy growth						
UF.c.03 - The municipality currently practices correct tree planting depth (trunk flare at or above grade)						
UF.c.04 - A collection of diverse tree species is available to the public with labels and descriptive signage (cemetery, park, campus, arboretum and/or botanic garden)						
d. Maintenance						
UF.d.01 - There are strategies in place to monitor and manage tree diseases and pests						
UF.d.02 - The municipality has a maintenance policy for new trees that includes proper watering, pruning, fertilization, and mulching						
UF.d.03 - The municipality has a maintenance policy for established trees that includes appropriate pruning, removal of dead limbs, and canopies raised adequately above vehicle and pedestrian areas						
e. Community Involvement						
UF.e.01 - A program for donations to tree planting in public areas is in place (memorial trees, dedications, Arbor Day, etc.)						
UF.e.02 - The community participates in Arbor Day activities						

Urban Forestry Criterion Definition	Metrics Ratings					
	Not Applicable	Not Started	Launching	Approaching	Achieved	Excelling
4. URBAN FORESTRY (UF): trees and related programs for the leadership, management, design, installation, and maintenance on public and private lands						
UF.e.03 - Volunteers are active in tree planting and/or care (Arbor Day, Tree City USA, etc.)						
Totals						

Urban Forestry Remarks – if appropriate, please start each remark with the applicable metric code(s):

Environmental Efforts Criterion Definition	Metrics Ratings					
	Not Applicable	Not Started	Launching	Approaching	Achieved	Excelling
5. ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORTS (EE): environmental leadership, policies, plans and programs for resource conservation; pollution control; trash, recycling, and reuse; and alternative fuel vehicles						
a. Leadership and Policy						
EE.a.01 - The municipality, businesses and/or schools take a leadership role in environmental efforts for the community through Environmental Advisory Boards/Departments and/or Green Teams						
EE.a.02 - Electric /alternative fuel vehicles are encouraged with the municipality having them in its fleet						
EE.a.03 – Electric vehicle charging stations are provided						
EE.a.04 - Stormwater management policies are in place and enforced						
EE.a.05 - Pet waste policies are in place and enforced						
b. Plan of Action						
EE.b.01 - Environmental initiatives and sustainability efforts are defined in stated municipal goals/action plan						
EE.b.02 - Educational opportunities are provided through Earth Day celebrations, planting pollinator habitats, and/or other environmental action efforts						
EE.b.03 - Litter and/or environmental clean-up procedures are in place						
c. Resource Conservation						
EE.c.01 - Bioswales and/or rain gardens are encouraged to reduce stormwater run-off pollution						
EE.c.02 - Energy conservation is encouraged through home audits and incentives (low-energy appliance rebates, energy management, financing, etc.)						
EE.c.03 - Water conservation is encouraged through low-flow water devices						
d. Trash, Recycling, and Reuse Management						
EE.d.01 - Residential curbside trash collection is available and/or required						
EE.d.02 - Curbside recycling and/or collection points are provided to residents						
EE.d.03 – There are standardized labels on trash/recycling bins/carts for businesses and residents						
EE.d.04 – There are standardized labels on trash/recycling receptacles in public areas						
EE.d.05 – Yard waste pick-up and/or drop off is available for composting with finished compost available to the community						
EE.d.06 – Facilities are available for prescription drug drop off						
EE.d.07 – Facilities or special days are available for hazardous waste/electronic waste collection						
EE.d.08 – Plastic bag and Styrofoam collection points are available to avoid these being placed in the waste stream						
EE.d.09 – Reuse opportunities and/or repair initiatives are available for clothing, books, household goods, etc.						
e. Community Involvement						
EE.e.01 - Residents actively participate in environmental events (Earth Day celebrations, Clean Up Days, etc.)						

Environmental Efforts Criterion Definition	Metrics Ratings					
5. ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORTS (EE): environmental leadership, policies, plans and programs for resource conservation; pollution control; trash, recycling, and reuse; and alternative fuel vehicles	Not Applicable	Not Started	Launching	Approaching	Achieved	Excelling
EE.e.02 – Garden clubs, master gardeners, school groups, conservation clubs, etc. provide educational opportunities for recycling, rain barrel usage, backyard habitats, and other environmental initiatives						
Totals						

Environmental Efforts Remarks – if appropriate, please start each remark with the applicable metric code(s):

Celebrating Heritage Criterion Definition	Metrics Ratings					
	Applicable Not	Not Started	Launching	Approaching	Achieved	Excelling
6. CELEBRATING HERITAGE (CH): recognition, designation, protection, commemoration, and celebration of historical, cultural, natural, agricultural, and industrial resources						
a. Leadership and Policy						
CH.a.01 - A historic preservation ordinance is in place and effectively provides for commercial and residential <u>district</u> designation and protection from demolition						
CH.a.02 - A historic preservation ordinance is in place and effectively provides for <u>individual</u> commercial and residential structures and protects them from demolition						
CH.a.03 - There are design guidelines in place to preserve the character of neighborhoods and/or structures that celebrate the history and/or heritage of your community						
CH.a.04 - Protective covenants are available and promoted to protect historic structures from demolition						
CH.a.05 - There are incentives in place to promote preservation (tax credits, waived permit fees, eased setbacks, rebates, etc.)						
CH.a.06 - Land trusts and/or conservation easements are available to protect important natural lands, open spaces and viewsheds						
CH.a.07 - There is an Historic Preservation Board or Architectural Review Board in place to review proposals and enforce preservation ordinances						
CH.a.08 - A historical society is active						
b. Plan of Action						
CH.b.01 - There is effective communication of preservation ordinances/policies and protection/restoration methods						
CH.b.02 - Buildings and districts of historic and cultural significance are listed on the National Register of Historic Places						
CH.b.03 - Natural and/or agricultural areas of cultural and historic importance are protected						
CH.b.04 - Historic documents, records, artifacts, and oral histories are properly maintained						
CH.b.05 - Historic information is available through publications, websites, interpretive signage, and educational programs						
c. Commemoration						
CH.c.01 - Signage for historic neighborhoods and structures is in place and attractive						
CH.c.02 - The history of the community is shared through museums and interpretive displays and are accessible to the public						
CH.c.03 - Cemeteries, monuments, historical markers, and plaques are in place and well maintained						
CH.c.04 - Communication to residents and visitors on historic features are available through walking tours, mobile apps, maps, websites, newsletters, etc.						
CH.c.05 - Parades, festivals, events, tours, educational programs, etc. are held to commemorate your community's heritage						
CH.c.06 - Your community celebrates National Preservation Month in May						

Celebrating Heritage Criterion Definition	Metrics Ratings					
6. CELEBRATING HERITAGE (CH): recognition, designation, protection, commemoration, and celebration of historical, cultural, natural, agricultural, and industrial resources	Not Applicable	Not Started	Launching	Approaching	Achieved	Excelling
d. Community Involvement						
CH.d.01 - Options are available for volunteer involvement in celebrating community heritage (parades, festivals, historic house tours, etc.)						
CH.d.02 - Volunteers participate in maintaining historical sites and structures						
Totals						

Celebrating Heritage Remarks – if appropriate, please start each remark with the applicable metric code(s):

Overall Impression (OI) Criterion Definition	Metrics Ratings					
	Applicable Not	Not Started	Launching	Approaching	Achieved	Excelling
7. OVERALL IMPRESSION (OI): adequate and effective amenities are provided in good condition, and the community is welcoming and attractive						
a. Leadership and Policy						
OI.a.01 - Ordinance in place to address signage (size, setbacks, height, lighting, etc.)						
OI.a.02 - Ordinances are in place to address overgrown lots, abandoned vehicles, unscreened dumpsters, unregulated garage sales, empty storefront windows, etc.						
OI.a.03 - There is a code compliance officer on municipal staff to ensure that all codes are enforced						
OI.a.04 - The design style of benches, planters, lamp posts, trash receptacles, banners, wayfinding signs, planters, etc. is such that there is an overall consistent character to the appearance of your community						
b. Amenities						
OI.b.01 - Site furnishings that make your community comfortable are in place (water features, lamp posts, benches, bicycle racks, drinking fountains, trash and recycling receptacles, planters, cigarette receptacles, etc.)						
OI.b.02 - Crosswalks are well marked						
OI.b.03 - Public restrooms are available						
OI.b.04 - Entrances to your community are attractive, well maintained, and welcoming						
OI.b.05 - Banners, murals, and public art are attractive and well placed						
OI.b.06 - Wayfinding signage is in place and helpful for visitors						
OI.b.07 - Non-plant seasonal decorations are used to enhance the overall sense of beauty and celebration (lights, banners, ornaments, etc.)						
c. Condition and Maintenance						
OI.c.01 - Buildings and structures are maintained in good condition without peeling paint, vandalism, graffiti, rust, etc.						
OI.c.02 - Sidewalks, curbs, medians, roadways, and road shoulders are well maintained - no weeds, litter, graffiti, pot holes, cracked/lifted concrete, etc.						
OI.c.03 - Outdoor amenities such as benches, water features, bicycle racks, lamp posts, trash receptacles, etc. are attractive and in good condition						
OI.c.04 - Vacant lots, storm water retention ponds, and swales are maintained and free of litter/trash						
OI.c.05 - The community is free of snipe/stake signs, posted flyers, billboards, etc.						
OI.c.06 - Roadways benefit from regularly scheduled street sweeping						
d. Community Involvement						
OI.d.01 - Volunteers are involved in community projects to improve overall appearance such as clean-up days, Adopt A Spot, Habitat for Humanity, River Sweep, home repair programs (CHIP), etc.						
OI.d.02 - There is a process either through a Community Foundation or other programs for residents to fund public amenities such as memorial benches, engraved bricks, etc.						
Totals						

Overall Impression Remarks – if appropriate, please start each remark with the applicable metric code(s):

