



For Immediate Release:

April 3, 2024

The Bird City Maryland program was started in 2019 as a way to encourage communities in Maryland to enhance the environment for birds, and educate the public about the contributions birds make to a healthy community. It is an initiative of the Maryland Bird Conservation Partnership. In 2023 Bird City Maryland joined the National Bird City Network, a joint venture of the **American Bird Conservancy** and **Environment for the Americas**. The Network unites and connects independent Bird City programs throughout the hemisphere who work directly with local communities to envision and complete bird-friendly actions. Together they form a powerful collaborative force – connecting people and helping birds across the hemisphere.

The Maryland Bird Conservation Partnership is pleased to announce the recognition of Middletown, Maryland as a Bird City. Middletown is our first community in Frederick County to receive this recognition and they are adding it to their Tree City, Bee City, and Sustainable Maryland recognitions. Middletown is a historic small town with strong community spirit and is committed to controlling its own destiny as a distinct sustainable, sovereign entity. Stewardship of the environment and preservation of its heritage are embraced. Middletown encompasses 1,350 acres and has the sixth largest population of 12 incorporated towns in Frederick County with a population just over 5,000. It is largely a residential community within the agriculturally dominated Middletown Valley. In 2017, the Town commemorated its 250th anniversary of its official founding in 1767.

The Bird City application contains 4 categories: Habitat, Threats to Birds, Education and Engagement, and Sustainability. Communities must complete 8 actions over the 4 categories as well as committing to annually celebrating World Migratory Bird Day and passing a Bird City Resolution.

Application highlights include:

Buffer Zones:

Middletown staff has sent residents who have properties along streams and creeks information about the Backyard Buffers program and have encouraged them to plant those free tree seedlings. The

Middletown Municipal Code requires a 100-foot buffer from wetlands and streambanks. Stream restoration projects have been done along streams in Town which have included the planting of riparian buffers to improve habitat and infiltration capacity.

Birding Trails:

The Town of Middletown has many accessible bird watching trails. They have seen owls trying to beat the summer heat amid the trees along our Cone Branch Trail, and have had a Baltimore Oriole nest hanging above the walking trail at Wiles Branch Park.

Composting/solid waste management

Compost is the heaviest part of the waste stream and could be diverted to reduce about 30% of all waste going to the landfill. To facilitate its use, the Town offers compost bins to residents at a reduced cost, and the Town has seen an increase in the number of residents taking advantage of the program. In March 2022, the Town installed a community compost bin at Memorial Park for residents to use who do not have the space for a compost bin, like apartment dwellers. The bin is emptied every week and the usage to date has been impressive.

Solar Array:

Middletown has a live 836-kilowatt solar array on 6.4 acres of municipal land. This photovoltaic solar installation is directly adjacent to the East Wastewater Treatment Plant and delivers 1,143 MWh of electricity annually to fully power Middletown's water and wastewater facilities. 100% solar energy is used to power Middletown's water and wastewater treatment facility, which provides 300,000 gallons of clean drinking water a day to Town residents.

Visit Middletown's new Bird City webpage at birdcity.org/maryland/middletown to view all of their accomplishments.