



A Guidebook and Toolkit for Gateway Community Heritage Tourism and Economic Development Capacity Building





CHESAPEAKE GATEWAYS

— Communities Initiative —

Version May 2026

ABOUT NATIONAL PARK SERVICE (NPS) CHESAPEAKE GATEWAYS

Established by Congress in 1998, Chesapeake Gateways is a partnership park convened by the National Park Service and consisting of a network of public and private sector places, experiences, communities, and partners within the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Headquartered in Annapolis, Maryland, the park serves the full 41-million-acre Chesapeake Bay watershed, investing in, supporting, and promoting authentic Chesapeake experiences for communities and visitors.

Please contact chesapeake_info@nps.gov or visit www.nps.gov/chesapeake for more information.



Guidebook

*The Concord Point Lighthouse in Havre de Grace, Maryland.
Credit: Brandon Kessler*

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Introduction

I'm excited to introduce you to the Chesapeake Gateways Communities Initiative.

This effort builds on the longstanding and renowned gateway community approach from across the country—a model that celebrates the towns and places that serve as front doors to America's historic sites and its public lands and waters.

NPS Chesapeake Gateways is bringing the gateway community model to the vast Chesapeake region. We are partnering with communities near the Bay and along its rivers and across the iconic

region. These communities are connecting people with unforgettable experiences in nature, history, and recreation—all while improving quality of life, fueling local businesses, revitalizing main streets, and strengthening outdoor economies.

Does your community celebrate its connections to public parks, trails, and historic sites? How does your town support local makers, outfitters, farmers, and watermen? Is your community known for its locally owned shops and restaurants and authentic experiences?

The Chesapeake Gateways Communities Initiative is designed to help your community thrive as a gateway—to grow local capacity, highlight your assets, ground in being great places to live, improve your visitor support services, connect people to their public lands and historic sites, and share what makes your hometown special.



Wendy O'Sullivan
Superintendent
NPS Chesapeake Gateways



Credit: NPS

Superintendent O'Sullivan

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National Park Service

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Pilot Communities

Teams from the following communities were involved in testing the process described in this guidebook and toolkit.

Annapolis, MD
Betterton, MD
Cambridge, MD
Cecil County, MD
Chestertown, MD
Crisfield, MD
Essex County/Tappahannock, VA
Galesville, MD
Hampton, VA
Jefferson County, WV

Kent Narrows/Matapeake, MD
Lower Susquehanna, MD
Masonville Cove (Baltimore), MD
Rock Hall, MD
Salisbury, MD
Solomons Island, MD
St. Mary’s County, MD
Talbot County, MD
Worcester County/Snow Hill, MD



Credit: NPS/E. Gonzalez

CGCI planning team debriefs after a pilot workshop.

Support for the development of this guidebook and toolkit came in part from a grant awarded to Visit Annapolis & Anne Arundel County from the Maryland Department of Commerce, Office of Tourism & Film and the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration’s American Rescue Plan: Travel, Tourism & Outdoor Recreation Program.

If you have feedback you’d like to share about the process or any of the information contained in this guidebook and toolkit, message us at Chesapeake_info@nps.gov with “Chesapeake Gateways Communities Initiative” in the subject line.

Background

Gateways Communities

From the beginning of the national park system, nearby towns and cities have played a vital role as entry points for visitors exploring public lands. Today, these gateway communities are essential partners in outdoor recreation and heritage tourism, supporting visitor needs, sustaining local economies, and reinforcing the connection between communities and the places they steward.

The [EXPLORE Act of 2025](#) defines a “gateway community” as a community that serves as an entry point, or is adjacent, to a recreation destination on Federal recreational lands and waters or non-Federal land at which there is consistently high seasonal or year-round visitation.

Put simply, a **gateway community** is a town or area near a national park, forest, or other public land or heritage resource that attracts visitors and locals. It provides places to stay, things to do, and services for exploring these natural, cultural, historical, and recreational sites.

There are well-known gateway communities of national parks that you may already be familiar with: Estes Park, CO (Rocky Mountain National Park); Bar Harbor, ME (Acadia National Park); Jackson, WY (Grand Teton National Park); Gettysburg, PA (Gettysburg National Military Park); Medora, ND (Theodore Roosevelt National Park); Front Royal, VA (Shenandoah National Park); Moab, UT (Arches National Park); and Flagstaff, AZ (Grand Canyon National Park).

Chesapeake Gateways Communities

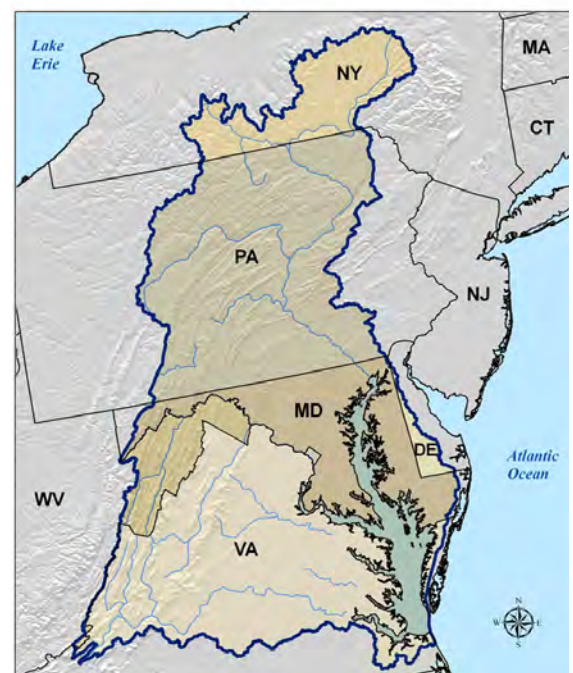
The Chesapeake Bay watershed is a nationally significant natural resource that spans parts of six states—Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia—as well as the District of Columbia. It includes a wide range of landscapes, such as forest, farms, rivers, streams, small towns, suburbs and large urban centers. The region attracts visitors who want to experience its natural environment, cultural and historical heritage, and recreational opportunities.

For NPS Chesapeake Gateways, any community in this region that connects people to the watershed can serve as a gateway to the Chesapeake.

Gateway communities attract people because of their location, places, and services, and they serve as entry points to the Chesapeake Bay watershed, helping both locals and visitors explore the region. They offer authentic Chesapeake experiences, share local history and culture, and connect nature and recreation with businesses that reflect the area’s heritage.

Chesapeake Gateways Communities

The [Chesapeake Gateways Communities Initiative](#) (CGCI) offers an opportunity for communities to assess their ability to serve as host and guide to residents and visitors and foster greater connections and experiences to the Chesapeake Bay.



The Chesapeake Bay watershed includes parts of six states—New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia—and Washington, DC. Map from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service

Through the process detailed in this guidebook, communities assess themselves based on **five primary elements** that NPS Chesapeake Gateways has determined are essential for a community to meaningfully serve those seeking to engage with Chesapeake.

At the end of the process, communities will have an action plan of prioritized needs across the five primary elements they can pursue to better capitalize on their outdoor recreation and heritage tourism.

The Five Primary Elements

The five primary elements of a Chesapeake Gateway Community are:

1. Assets & Amenities are visitor attractions in a community, such as: parks and public spaces, museums, water access points (for boat launching or viewing the Bay), trails, fishing piers, and other outdoor recreation, public art, cultural, and historical sites.



Credit: NPS/E. Gonzalez

2. Programming & Interpretation are activities associated with the assets and amenities that facilitate learning and awareness of the Chesapeake. Possible activities in this category include signage, walking and driving tours, scavenger hunts and geocaching, guided and unguided experiences, and events and festivals.



Credit: NPS/E. Gonzalez

3. Visitor Services are the basics that people need when visiting a community. This category includes things such as: lodging, food, restrooms, wayfinding, gear and equipment sales and rentals, retail shopping, transportation options and transfers, Wi-Fi or cell service, and parking and fueling options.



Credit: NPS/E. Gonzalez

4. Marketing & Communications involves how a community markets itself and the communication tools it uses, such as: digital and print media, radio and TV promotion, video, social media, site signage, online and onsite trip planning, multilingual materials, and public-facing products.



Credit: NPS/E. Gonzalez

5. Commitment & Capacity reflect a community's support for participating in this initiative and carrying out the resulting action plan. Considerations include the dedicated involvement and collaboration of local entities (government, private, nonprofit, and academic) who manage or influence assets and amenities, programming and interpretation, visitor services, and marketing and communications.



Credit: NPS/E. Gonzalez

Benefits to Participating

Why go through the Initiative?

Why assess your community?

Why identify strengths and gaps?

Why highlight your community's priority actions?

By going through the process, communities can:

- Strengthen relationships and collaborations within the community.
- Understand the most important needs and interests for the greatest impact.
- Develop community-wide support to implement priority projects and actions.
- Create compelling cases for charitable support of those projects and actions by highlighting need and community alignment.

The Initiative features [online](#) materials and resources, including self-assessment inventory forms, and frequently asked questions, that allow communities to participate in the process at their own pace.

Economic Impact of Heritage and Outdoor Recreation Tourism

There is economic value in helping visitors and residents connect to your community's authentic heritage and experiences.

A community's parks, heritage sites, and recreation areas not only protect and preserve the places they value most, but they generate economic impact for those communities. Outdoor recreation and heritage tourism can support a gateway community's economic growth through:

- Spending by visitors and residents.
- Local purchases of supplies and services for operations and maintenance.
- Employee payroll for the tourism workforce and the industries that sustain them.
- Local infrastructure investments by municipal, county, or state governments in response to defined needs.
- Philanthropic support of community priorities identified through a process like CGCI.



Credit: NPS

Since 2018, the Zimmerman Center in Wrightsville, PA has attracted 2,744 tourist visits coming from more than 10-miles away, helping to generate an estimated \$1,149,736 in consumer spending in the surrounding region. (From Firefly Outdoor + Economics)

To quantify the potential economic impact of increased outdoor recreation and heritage tourism in your area, see **Tool A** for economic data resources.

To learn more about visitor spending in gateway communities around national parks, visit: [Visitor Spending Effects - Economic Contributions of National Park Visitor Spending.](#)



Committing to the Process

Is the Chesapeake Gateways Communities Initiative for your community?

After reading through the overview of the initiative, communities should ask themselves the following questions before committing to the process.

Is your community a place...

- Where you can see, feel, and engage in a connection to the variety of landscapes that make up the Chesapeake Bay watershed (such as coastlines, forests, farms, rivers, or mountains) and represent an incredible assortment of places and stories?
- Where a combination of geography, location, transportation systems, economic uses, and services concentrate people at the Bay or along a major tributary?
- That provides an outstanding welcoming orientation for locals and visitors and offers a host of opportunities for people to experience a range of authentic Chesapeake resources and stories that encourage further exploration?
- That links nature, culture, history, and recreation-based tourism with economic initiatives and community sustainability, especially tied with sectors closely linked with Chesapeake heritage?

Does your community have...

- Opportunities to connect to the Chesapeake Bay, tributaries, or landscapes?
- Natural, cultural, historical, and recreational places, activities, and experiences?
- Interest in using local assets to enhance economic development?
- A desire to connect with similar communities in the watershed?
- Visitors or the desire to draw more visitors?
- Interest in data, trends, and best practices in tourism?

Does your community want to...

- Assess and prioritize across interests to increase the impact and value of implementation?
- Develop detailed implementation plans to advance projects?
- Build community-wide support for projects?
- Attract funders to projects that are vetted, supported, and impactful?
- Create connections within the community and to regional, state, and watershed partners?
- Connect and remain aware of data, trends, and best practices of relevance to Chesapeake communities?

Does your community have capacity to...

- Identify a team leader?
- Create a list of potential team members?
- Develop a team with members who cross over different sectors and interests?
- Assess and action plan without being impeded by competing efforts?

If the answers for your community to the above questions are predominantly “yes,” OR you would like them to be “yes,” then the Chesapeake Gateways Community Initiative is likely a good fit for your community and worth further exploration.

If the answers are mixed or you are unsure of your community’s capacity to devote the time and energy to the process, then the timing may not be right for your community. Because the process is self-directed, you can decide to use the process in the future when your community is ready.

Chesapeake Gateways Network

In addition to the intrinsic value of this effort, this initiative is intended to prepare communities for official Chesapeake Gateways Communities designation as part of the Chesapeake Gateways Network.

The [Chesapeake Gateways Network](#) is a system of places and experiences providing opportunities to enjoy, learn about, and help conserve the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed. Included in the network are natural, cultural, historical, and recreational sites, trails, museums, parks, refuges, interpretive and orientation facilities, and associated programs. These places, and Chesapeake Gateways as a whole, serve as entry points and the key guide for experiencing the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

As a requirement for Chesapeake Gateways Communities designation, individual institutions and organizations in your community representing key assets and services would first need to self-nominate to be designated as places or experiences in the Chesapeake Gateways Network.

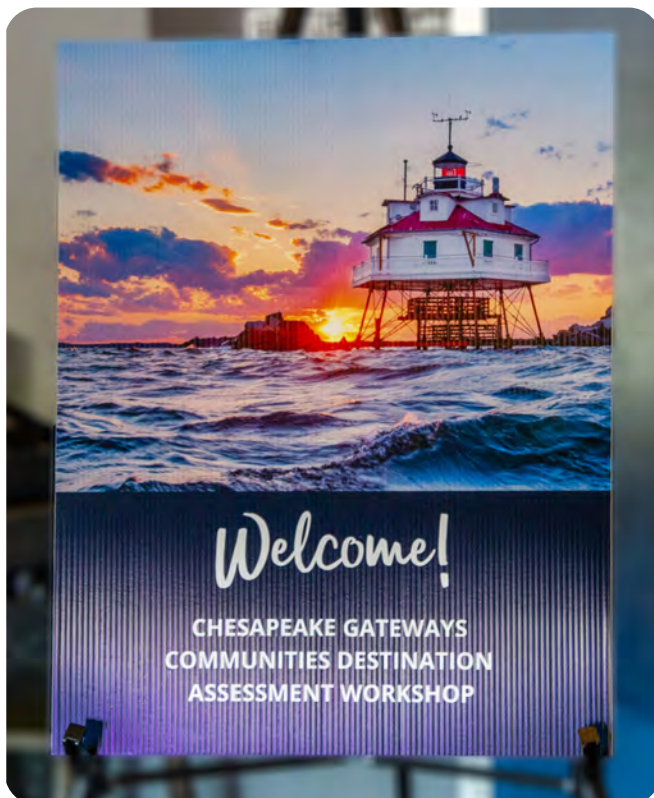
See **"Getting Officially Designated"** (page 30) for more details.

Ready to Begin?

If your community is ready to begin, this guidebook will help you through the process.

Contact NPS Chesapeake Gateways (Chesapeake_info@nps.gov) with "Chesapeake Gateways Communities Initiative" in the subject line if you have questions or concerns at any point in the process.

In 2024, NPS Chesapeake Gateways started with five pilot communities in Maryland and Virginia and added 13 more Maryland communities in 2025 in collaboration with Visit Annapolis & Anne Arundel County. Below are a few sample comments from those communities after completing the process.



Credit: NPS

"There's value in working with local partners, as they bring differing perspectives and alternative visions to a project."

"Very thought-provoking on how to increase our part in growing tourism."

"A plan that we agree we can work together on and that will be accepted by our internal and external communities."

"It allows us to better define who we are and how we want to showcase our community."

Overview

The process is composed of five steps outlined below. Each step requires coordination by a team that represents the community. This team will guide the community to develop an action plan that incorporates the community's assessment of gaps and opportunities and prioritizes them for implementation. These steps are:

1. **FORM:** Create a team that represents community stakeholders.
2. **IDENTIFY:** Inventory your community for the five primary elements.
3. **ASSESS:** Explore the strengths and gaps of your community.
4. **PRIORITIZE:** Establish the priorities for creating authentic and welcoming places, activities, and services for visitors that return value to your community.
5. **ACT:** Implement the priorities that foster community action and momentum



The sequence of activities can range six months to a year, depending on how quickly you pull together a team, conduct the self-assessment, and prioritize projects and actions for implementation.

Sequence of Steps

The sequence of steps is summarized below. Additional information and instructions for each step can be found in their individual sections (beginning on page 13). At any point in the process, you may request a site visit to be conducted by **NPS Chesapeake Gateways** by sending a note to Chesapeake_Info@nps.gov with "Chesapeake Gateways Communities Initiative Site Visit" in the subject line.

Step 1. FORM

The process begins with determining a **team leader** that will build a multi-disciplinary community team that represents the various perspectives and stakeholders of your community. The team will evaluate your community's current status and help plan for the future.

Ensuring that team members remain engaged throughout the process is essential. The energy and commitment of the team will be reflected in the final action plan.

Team Recruitment and Community Parameters

- Identify a Team Leader
- Identify Potential Team Members
- Recruit and Confirm Team Members
- Convene Your Representative Team
- Establish Your Community Boundary
- Establish Your Community Vision



Credit: NPS/E. Gonzalez

Community members from Tappahannock, VA meet to learn about the CGCI process as part of their team recruitment.

Step 2. IDENTIFY

Following the team's formation, the team will collect data through a baseline survey of the community and an inventory of the community's primary elements using the provided forms.

Teams can start by either collecting data from their team members and their networks or by distributing more widely across the community to get as much data as possible. As with any data-based process, the more data points the better the data will reflect the broad community.

Baseline Survey and Inventories

- Conduct Community Baseline Survey
- Conduct Elements Inventories



Hampton team members dive into the process.

Step 3. ASSESS

Once data from the baseline survey and inventories for each of the five primary elements have been collected and organized, the team will meet to analyze the data, assess strengths and gaps, create a list of potential projects and actions, and nominate community assets to be part of the Chesapeake Gateways Network.

Review the Data

- Map the Primary Elements
- Determine Strengths and Gaps
- Brainstorm Possible Projects and Actions
- Nominate community assets for the Chesapeake Gateways Network

Step 4. PRIORITIZE

Once you have a running list of projects and actions related to your strengths and gaps, prioritize them by what is practical for the community to invest its time and effort.

Prioritize Your List

- Project Vetting and Selection

Step 5. ACT

The last step involves turning priorities into an action plan by identifying needed resources, capacity, timelines, and benchmarks to achieve impact.

Implement Planned Actions

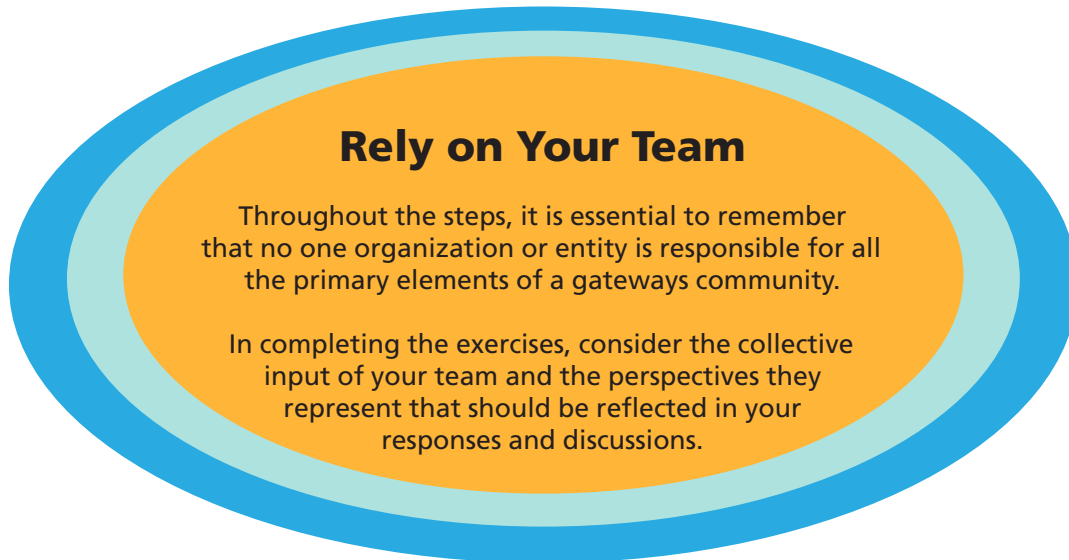
- Planning for Action
- Compile Your Action Plan

Nominate Places and Experiences to Join the Chesapeake Gateways Network

Findings from the inventories can be used to encourage institutions and organizations in your community to self-nominate for the Chesapeake Gateways Network and access its benefits. See **"Getting Officially Designated"** (page 30) for more details.

Engaging with the Community

Within the overall process, there are opportunities to share the work of the team and the progress in your action planning with the community more broadly. Guidance on how to engage beyond your team can be found in the **Sharing the Process** section (page 25). These opportunities can be a critical step in vetting inventory information, refining the team’s understanding of community needs and priorities, facilitating ongoing input from the community, and gaining support for the implementation of your prioritized projects and actions.



A fishing boat returns to the marina in downtown Crisfield, MD after a day on Tangier Sound (with Janes Island in the background). Fishing and sunset photography are two popular activities in Crisfield, but not necessarily by the same type of visitor or resident. When conducting destination planning, it’s a good idea to make sure you engage enough stakeholders to reflect a variety of perspectives and interests.

The Process

This section provides in-depth guidance to participating in the [Chesapeake Gateways Community Initiative](#). The process consists of different steps that each contain exercises for the team to complete. Detailed instructions for each step are found in the Toolkit and should be read by every team member prior to undertaking the exercises. Additional resources can be accessed online on the Chesapeake Gateways Communities Initiative landing page.

Step 1. FORM

Team Recruitment and Community Boundaries

Step 1 consists of six exercises.

Once your community has decided to undertake this process, you'll need to:

- Identify a Team Leader
- Identify Potential Team Members
- Recruit and Confirm Team Members
- Convene Your Representative Team
- Establish Your Community Boundary
- Establish Your Community Vision

The team leader will be active behind the scenes when the team gathers. To aid in team recruitment, refer to:

- **Tool B. Team Development Worksheet**—helps you contemplate team member candidates.
- **Tool C. About the Chesapeake Gateways Communities Initiative**—provides a one-page summary of the process you can send to prospective team members.
- **Tool D. Team Recruitment Email Template**—communicates the program and the request for a commitment to participate on the team.
- **Tool E. Confirmation of Team and Community Boundary/Vision (Team Meeting #1)**—provides an agenda for your first convening of your Chesapeake Gateways Communities Initiative team. As part of the agenda, you will conduct a discussion on confirming your community's boundary.
- **Frequently Ask Questions (FAQs)**—provides answers that may come from the team leader or team members. (Found on the [Chesapeake Gateways Communities Initiative](#) landing page.)

Identify a Team Leader

A team leader is needed to shepherd the team through the process. They should have a thorough understanding of the process and its value for their community. While recruiting a team leader that is well-known to the community is important, it is more important to select a team leader that has the availability and interest in leading the process.

Identify Potential Team Members

Success depends on bringing together a group of engaged people that represent the community to take part in the initiative. The community-based team is the foundation of the Chesapeake Gateways Communities Initiative, and the makeup of that team can heavily influence the outcomes of this process. Interested communities can use the **Team Development Worksheet (Tool B)** to help plan their team recruitment.

TEAM LEADER vs TEAM MEMBERS

The role of a Team Leader is more involved than a Team Member. FAQs are available for each role (Team Leader and Team Member) on the Chesapeake Gateways Communities Initiative [landing page](#). Information on team formation, team recruitment, facilitation during the process, and coordination with NPS Chesapeake Gateways is most applicable to the Team Leader, while information on Chesapeake Gateways Communities elements and the exercises is most applicable to all Team Members.

Recommended parameters for your community-based team:

- There should be a minimum of five (5) and maximum of nine (9) team members.
- Team members should be available for the full schedule of activities.
- The team should reflect a cross-section of the community – organizationally and demographically.
- Individuals may have overlapping roles.

There is no time limit for team formation, and your team should include a range of perspectives representative of your community. Your team could include members from:

- Government
 - Elected or appointed officials in local or regional government
 - Department directors, including planning or public works, economic development, tourism, and parks and recreation
 - Destination Marketing/Management Organizations
 - Main Street collaborations
 - Land management agencies (municipal, county, state, and/or federal)
- Community leadership
 - Education or service organizations
 - Environmental nonprofits
 - Indigenous communities
 - Hospitality representatives (lodging, restaurant, guide services)
 - Arts community/nonprofits
 - Foundations and philanthropic organizations
 - Cultural heritage organizations
 - Faith-based communities
 - Community clubs (Rotary, Lions, Ruritan, etc.)
- Private sector
 - Chamber of Commerce Board members or staff
 - Private business owners
 - Tour operators
 - Outfitters
- Representation from areas that reflect key stories from your communities should fill out the team, with consideration of representing the community as widely as possible. They include:
 - Residents-at large
 - Neighborhood association leaders
 - Hunting and fishing groups/clubs
 - Land trusts
 - Recreation groups/clubs
 - Health interests
 - Academic entities
 - Agricultural community

These roles are not required but give you the chance to get the widest variety of relevant input.

Recruit and Confirm Team Members

After drawing up the initial team list, consider who might be missing. Remember, your ideal team size is 5-9 people. Approach prospective team members to confirm their interest and participation until you have a representative team.

Making the Case for Participation

You may need to encourage others that their time and energy will be well spent in this process and that the value for the community will be worth their investment. In addition to sharing this guidebook and online resources, we have provided a one-page **Overview of the Chesapeake Gateways Communities Initiative (Tool C)** to share the process and benefits with others. A template email to use for team recruitment has also been developed to support your community's recruitment efforts. **See Team Recruitment Email Template (Tool D).**

Representing the Community

Gather representatives of the community who can inspire, influence, and implement in a collaborative setting and who can devote the necessary time and availability to contribute to the process. Use this process as an opportunity to include stakeholders that are not typically included in this type of effort. For example, a community-based team for a single town could include:

- Director of the county Destination Marketing/Management Organization
- Town Mayor (also a town resident)
- Manager of a local, county, state or federal park located near the town
- Manager of the Main Street organization that serves the town (also a member of the regional Chamber of Commerce)
- Director of an arts nonprofit that serves the town and county
- Education Director for a regional environmental nonprofit (also a town resident)
- Private Business Owner, providing recreation gear sales/rentals (also a town resident)
- Town Resident (also a member of a local civic organization and a faith-based community)

Convene Your Representative Team

Once you have your representative team, bring everyone together in virtual meeting to meet one another, confirm the community boundaries, reiterate the expectations of their participations, and outline the goals of this process. See **Tool E** for a template agenda for the first meeting.

Establish Your Community Boundary

Being clear on the geographic extent of the "community" that will be assessed is critical for keeping the process to a manageable scale.

- Options include a town/city, a pairing of towns/cities, countywide, or combination of adjacent counties into a regional scale.
- The geographic extent of the "gateways community" will influence the impact. A town/city will likely yield more depth to the assessment and with projects and actions focused within the town/city, while a multi-city or county focus will likely yield a broader assessment and projects and actions at a regional scale.
- The decision on the geographic extent for the community should not be finalized until the team membership has been explored and confirmed. Engaged team members, regardless of the geographic boundaries of the team, are essential.

Establish Your Community Vision

Establishing a vision is important to help guide decisions regarding what actions or projects are worth community investment. Failing to provide a clear vision for the community's identity will hamper your prioritization.

Outputs

- An identified team leader
- A team that represents the community
- Meeting #1 conducted
- A geographic definition of your "community"
- A vision that defines the community
- Deadline for returning Survey and Inventories
- Date and time for Meeting #2



Once your representative team is assembled, bring everyone together to meet one another, confirm community boundaries, review expectations, and outline the goals of the process.



A mural in downtown Buena Vista, VA conveys the town's identity to visitors and residents

Step 2. IDENTIFY

Baseline Survey and Inventories

This step focuses on surveying the community's view of itself (baseline survey) and inventorying each of the five elements of your community (elements inventories) to determine priorities for action planning. This step helps the team understand how their community presents itself as a gateway to the Chesapeake.

Your team will build on a baseline survey and elements inventories to better capitalize on your community's opportunities, build on strengths, address gaps, and prioritize their implementation through an action plan.

Before doing the survey and inventories, all team members should have a thorough understanding of the five primary elements referenced in the Overview (page 10).

This step consists of two separate exercises that should be completed by each individual on the team. For these exercises, the team will need to:

- Conduct a **Community Baseline Survey (Tool F)**
- Conduct **Element Inventories (Tool G)**

Conduct a Community Baseline Survey

The Community Baseline Survey is a 20-question worksheet that each team member completes on their own, indicating their level of agreement with each statement about their perception of their community today (**Tool F**).

Conduct Elements Inventories

These Elements Inventories are a deep dive for identifying and assessing the existing conditions and potential for each primary element (**Assets & Amenities; Programming & Interpretation; Visitor Services; Marketing & Communications; and Commitment & Capacity**) that will help your community determine priorities for action planning and best next steps. It will take approximately 2.5 hours to complete these inventories (**Tool G**).

Tool F and **Tool G** include pre-formatted worksheets to help collect team member responses to the survey and inventories. Entering the responses into a single excel spreadsheet can help team leaders easily compile the responses to calculate averages and create visual graphs to clearly present collective results.

To assist team leaders, electronic versions of the **Tool F** and **Tool G** worksheets can be found on the [Chesapeake Gateways Communities Initiative](#) landing page. This file is formatted to auto calculate data when team responses are entered.



Credit: NPS/E. Gonzalez

The Queen Anne's County Chesapeake Heritage and Visitors Center welcomes visitors and residents to Queen Anne's County and offers great information about local attractions and experiences. The Center also offers an opportunity to experience the Chesapeake with a 530-foot boardwalk, direct access to activities like kayaking and birding, and museum exhibits. It also serves as a trailhead for the Cross Island Trail.

Outputs

- Baseline survey of the community.
- Inventory of local Assets & Amenities.
- Inventory of local Programming & Interpretation.
- Inventory of local Visitor Services.
- Inventory of local Marketing & Communications.
- Inventory of local Commitment & Capacity.

Keeping the Momentum Going

The pace of the process will ebb and flow depending on the team's availability and how quickly you get through the different tools in the process. You are encouraged to meet as often as you need, either in-person or virtually, to keep your team engaged and focused on the next steps in the process. Once you get to the action plan, the work becomes more about planning how to implement the actions. See Sharing the Process (page 25).



Ongoing conversations help teams stay connected, aligned, and moving forward together.

To help with your analysis, turn the data into graphs or charts for easier review using the tools provided. Be on the lookout for any trends, consistencies, and variations. Are you surprised by what the data is telling you? Do any of the responses vary from your predetermined notions of your community?

Brainstorm Possible Projects and Actions

After reviewing the feedback and data, brainstorm projects and actions that can help your community link outdoor recreation and heritage tourism to economic impact that contributes to local resilience and community sustainability, especially tied with sectors closely linked with the Chesapeake, such as historical or cultural crafts and trades, working lands, or maritime activities.

Examples of General Projects and Actions (in no particular order):

- Ensuring access to adequate visitor services such as restrooms, parking, and multimodal transit options
- Enhancing visitor experience amenities and/or improving the overall visitor experience for your community
- Supporting Indigenous tourism development and/or connecting visitors to local Indigenous history and culture
- Enhancing local tourism and economic development capacity through trainings, workforce development, or strategic planning
- Facilitating visitor experiences that increase duration and depth of visit
- Commemorating and promoting local recreation, history, heritage, or culture
- Transforming main streets in advance of key events
- Making visitor experiences and facilities more physically and programmatically accessible for all ages and abilities
- Improving and/or promoting connectivity between outdoor spaces or facilities and communities, such as between waterways and land trails, parks, museums, main streets, and target neighborhoods
- Supporting local or regional visitor experiences through visitor outreach and/or tourism messaging
- Using art, including theater and music, to highlight the richness of the Chesapeake Bay watershed
- Highlighting local products or foods or food systems (farming, oystering, etc.) or trades that connect to the area's culture or history
- Activate public spaces (main streets, trails, waterfront walkways, etc.) with increased programming and interpretation

This is a sample list of generalized actions. **Step 4. PRIORITIZE** and **Step 5. ACT** will help you refine these ideas into an actionable plan. The greater the specificity of the identified project, the more likely it will advance through implementation to completion. The list of actions or projects your community brainstorms should reflect the community's strengths and gaps supported by data analysis from your baseline survey and inventories. **Step 4. PRIORITIZE** will help you determine where your time and efforts are most needed.

Nominate Places and Experiences to Join the Chesapeake Gateways Network

The Chesapeake Gateways Network is a system of places and experiences providing opportunities to enjoy, learn about, and help conserve the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed. Included in the network are natural, cultural, historical, and recreational sites, trails, museums, parks, refuges, interpretive and orientation facilities, and associated programs. These places, and Chesapeake Gateways as a whole, serve as entry points and the key guide for experiencing the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Findings from the inventories can be used to encourage institutions and organizations in your community to self-nominate for the Chesapeake Gateways Network and access its benefits. See “**Getting Officially Designated**” (page 30) for more details.

Outputs

- Map of the community’s primary elements
- Charts and graphs illustrating the survey and inventory results
- List of actions or projects within each primary element
- Nominations for Chesapeake Gateways Network

Step 4. PRIORITIZE

Prioritize Your List

This step helps communities understand what projects and actions are worth their immediate time and effort and what actions may need longer timeframes to address. Once your team has assembled a list of actions or projects, you will prioritize your brainstormed list.

This step is recommended to be completed through an in-person gathering of the full team. A virtual meeting can be substituted for an in-person gathering if the full team is comfortable with holding discussions and contributing ideas in a virtual setting.

Step 4 will consist of one exercise:

- Project Vetting and Selection

Step 3. ASSESS and **Step 4. PRIORITIZE** are combined into one meeting that is outlined in **Tool H. Assess and Prioritize**. Before starting the exercise, all team members should read through the full instructions for both steps.

Project Vetting and Selection

From the brainstormed list of projects and actions, teams will select 1–4 projects or actions they believe would have the greatest impact and are realistic for the team to pursue. Actions could be “low hanging fruit” projects that can be implemented immediately, or longer-term actions or projects to pursue.

Please note: teams may not have a priority project or action for each primary element. Prioritization decisions should be made based on team or community capacity to address the project or action, the cost and timeline, and the primary stakeholders that will be needed to advance the idea.

Output

- A prioritized list of actions or projects that reflect the community’s vision.

Please note...

Step 2: IDENTIFY, Step 3: ASSESS, and Step 4: PRIORITIZE of the Chesapeake Gateways Community Initiative process can be repeated to add more input into the baseline survey and primary elements inventories leading to more actions and project ideas and necessitating a reprioritization of your action plan. This is particularly useful when priority projects have been implemented, when key staff or elected official positions have changed in the community, and/or when new collaboration or partnerships necessitate new perspectives being added to the process. Carefully considering community capacity and energy is essential in undertaking a successful update to the initial effort.

Step 5. ACT

Implement Planned Actions

You've identified your priorities and resources, and your team is ready to implement! This step helps communities understand the individual steps of implementation, the needed resources (money, materials, etc.), capacity (project lead, volunteers, external partners), and benchmarks (key deliverables, timeframe, sequence) to advance specific projects.

Before starting the exercises, all team members should read through the full instructions. Detailed instructions are found in **Tool I. Planning for Action**.

Following prioritization of action or projects, convene as a team to determine the individual steps, capacity, resources, and benchmarks to implement each of your highest priority actions. The information generated through **Step 5. ACT** and **Tool I. Planning for Action** will collectively serve as your comprehensive "action plan," documenting the entire Chesapeake Gateways Communities Initiative process.

Step 5 consists of two exercises:

- Planning for Action
- Compile Your Action Plan

Planning for Action

Using the provided worksheet, determine the following parameters for **each priority action or project**:

Project/Action Title—Begin by defining a project title that helps differentiate it from other projects or actions.

Example: Increase community fishing and kayaking in our local waterways.

Description—Add a 2-3 sentence description that helps the team and the community understand the activities related to your project or action.

Example: This project will review current fishing and kayaking options along our community's waterways to determine where enhancements and additions can be made to increase the total number of fishing and kayaking options available in our community. The project will also examine the quality and extent of existing wayfinding and signage at current fishing and kayaking options to determine if improvements are needed to adequately convey their availability to visitors and residents. The project will collaborate with the local Parks and Recreation Authority, Public Works Authority, and the Office of Economic Development and the local chapter of Riverkeepers.

Goal—Goals are statements that reflect the long-term impact of your project or action related to what you intend to accomplish.

Example: The goal of this project is to ensure availability of community fishing and kayaking along our waterways for residents and visitors.

Coordinating Entity—Determine who will be responsible for coordinating the various partners and managing benchmarks for project completion.

Example: Parks and Recreation Authority

Benchmarks/Tasks, Timeline, & Leads— Determine key activities that are needed for project completion and then define how much time will be needed to implement each (when it will begin and conclude), and who is the lead. The timeline should also account for any planning, permitting, and fundraising that may be needed before you can implement.

Example:

<i>Total project term:</i>	<i>January 2027-January 2028</i>
<i>Benchmarks: January 2027</i>	<i>Initial planning meeting (Team Leader)</i>
<i>February-March 2027</i>	<i>Community surveys (Parks & Rec Manager)</i>
<i>April-June 2027</i>	<i>Data analysis (EDA Director)</i>
<i>July-August 2027</i>	<i>Compile recommendations (EDA Director)</i>
<i>September 2027</i>	<i>Present findings to community for input (Town Manager)</i>
<i>October-December 2027</i>	<i>Initiate improvement and enhancements (Parks & Rec Manager)</i>
<i>January 2028</i>	<i>Present final status of project to community (Team Leader)</i>

Resources—Identify the resources that will be needed to implement. This can include money, materials, equipment, staff, technical experts, or volunteers.

Example: \$22,000 to cover staff time and contractor to analyze collected data, volunteers to conduct community surveys, photography equipment to document site conditions, electronic tablets to be used in data collection. Office space to convene regular planning and progress meetings.

Stakeholders/Partners—List the stakeholder/partners that will be needed to implement this action or project. This should include specific entities and individuals who may contribute to the project, and whom to approach to confirm them. Many times, these will serve as your primary points of contact for the project or action.

Example: CGCI Team, Parks and Recreation Authority, Public Works Authority, the Office of Economic Development, and the local chapter of Riverkeepers.

Anticipated Obstacles—Brainstorm possible challenges and their potential solutions. Even with the right set of resources, stakeholders, and time, obstacles may arise that can impede progress toward your goal. Having a sense of these obstacles can help you develop contingencies to address them.

Examples:

1. Insufficient funding to achieve project goal
2. Lack of public access in some waterways
3. Critical habitats that may prevent increased or enhanced public access
4. Lack of volunteers to conduct sufficient surveys
5. Lack of availability of key municipal agencies needed to properly ensure public access

Indicators/Metrics—Define the indicators/metrics for success that you can expect at the completion of the action or project. Make sure they are clear and measurable and can demonstrate progress toward the goals and objectives. For each action or project, make sure you develop specific, measurable objectives such that their completion advances achievement of the goal.

Examples:

1. Number of fishing and kayaking options per community waterway that operate year-round
2. Percentage of community waterways that offer at least 5 distinct, publicly-accessible fishing and kayaking opportunities that are available year-round
3. Percentage of community waterways that offer year-round, on-demand public access within 10 minutes from the town center
4. Percentage of days per year that fishing and kayaking options are open and usable
5. Average travel time from town center for each publicly accessible fishing and kayaking option

Compile Your Action Plan

The individual Planning for Action worksheets help you plan the specifics of each project or action. Once you have thoroughly planned them, compile them into the Action Plan worksheet provided that will help the team and community understand the plan forward.

You will notice that the Action Plan worksheet has a pre-filled-in action:

Project Title: Submit self-nominations for Chesapeake Gateways Places or Experiences

Communities going through the CGCI process are encouraged to submit self-nominations to be part of the Chesapeake Gateways Network to highlight their **Assets & Amenities and Programming & Interpretation**. This action should be part of your priorities; however, you can reassign where it sits on your priority list based on your community's preparedness to submit and the other priorities the community defined. See "**Getting Officially Designated**" (page 30) for more details.

- You can then begin implementing your action plan to achieve your intended impact.
- Identify appropriate funding sources and submit proposals for projects from the action plan
- Inventory additional resources you'll need to acquire and secure them
- Recruit key stakeholders and confirm their commitment/roles to the project or action
- Measure your indicators and metrics at key points along your timeline
- Present your progress to your team and community
- Report on the final results in fulfillment of your goal

Outputs

- An action plan that reflects projects and actions prioritized by the community with identified next steps, resource needs, timelines, and metrics
- Additional Chesapeake Gateways Network Places and Experiences self-nominations



Congratulations on establishing an action plan for your community that supports heritage and outdoor recreation tourism of your community and contributes to local economic development!

Sharing the Process

Within the overall process, there are opportunities to share the work of the team and the progress in your action planning process with the community. These opportunities can be a critical step in vetting inventory information, refining the team's understanding of community needs and priorities, facilitating ongoing input from the community, and gaining support for the implementation of your prioritized projects and actions.

Getting Feedback from the Community

Two optional opportunities to share progress with the broader community are recommended: one after the **second team meeting** and another after the **Third team meeting**. These sessions provide a chance for residents and stakeholders to offer feedback on the team's preliminary conclusions, identify anything that may have been missed in earlier assessments, and help build broader understanding and buy-in for the process outcomes.

These sharing opportunities may take the form of a town hall, virtual meeting, or a segment of an existing community meeting. The goal is to communicate findings clearly, invite community input, and strengthen support for the final outcomes.

Aim for 10–15-minute presentations. Anticipate that the audience will have questions regarding the overall effort and the items in your presentation. Prepare to listen and respond to feedback, but also to potentially incorporate that feedback into your findings and planning.

Community Feedback Opportunity 1 (see Tool H.)

After the second team meeting, you will have an opportunity to present your project ideas. Consolidate information into a format that is easily shared. Pulling together several PowerPoint slides is one example. The idea is to convey the content as straightforward as possible, with photos and other images to help illustrate points.

Suggested slide content:

- A slide with the definition of a Chesapeake Gateways Community
- Map of the community generated by the team (digital version, photo of a hard copy, etc.)
- A slide to share the outcomes from the Community Baseline Survey (**Tool F**)
- A slide to share 4 – 5 primary or anchor assets (list/images)
- A slide to share 4 – 5 primary programming or interpretative features/events/activities (list/images)
- A slide to share 4 – 5 notable items from visitor services
- A slide to share something that surprised the team from **Tool G**

Additionally, at this point, the team members can go back to their organizations for review and vetting; however, the messaging still needs to be consistent among team members. Preparing to share is a way to make sure the team is on the same page regarding their findings from the survey and inventories.

Community Feedback Opportunity 2 (see Tool I.)

After the third team meeting, you should be prepared to explain your project to community leaders, organizations that are potential partners in implementation, residents, businesses, potential funders, etc. A direct way to consolidate information into a format that is easily shared is to develop several PowerPoint slides, so content is straightforward and supported with photos and other images. Select a team member or two to deliver your message and present an overview of the project and implementation steps in a manner that will refine the project and build support.

In the presentation, address the following:

- **WHAT:** Briefly describe the priority projects selected for implementation.
- **WHY:** Explain the reasoning for selection of these projects, i.e., how the selected projects will contribute positively, why it will matter, and how it will be impactful to the community.
- **HOW/WHO:** Note key steps in how the projects will advance and be implemented, addressing who will be needed to accomplish the projects, options for how the projects could be financed, other resources needed, and when the projects could be completed.
- **CONNECTIONS:** Briefly note how the projects relate to other activities and initiatives in your community, and how the projects contribute to and capitalize on related initiatives.

Facilitating a Group Process

The team leader plays a significant role in the overall process. Part administrator, facilitator, cheerleader, and event planner, the team leader may be the first person to engage with this initiative. (See FAQs for team leaders and team members on the [Chesapeake Gateways Communities Initiative](#) landing page.)

The team leader should have a thorough understanding of the process and the value such a process can have their community. They will convene the team as often as needed to work through the different steps to produce the necessary outputs that move them from step to step. For some team leaders, facilitation of a group or process may be a new role. This section provides overall guidance for facilitating your team meetings.



Credit: MSP/E. Gonzalez

Team members of the Snow Hill/Worcester County Team brief the community on prospective projects and actions to gauge community priorities in a town hall setting.

Facilitating the community-based team successfully through this initiative includes:

- Ensuring all team members' voices are heard
- Valuing team members' time (with scheduling and emails, and in keeping to allotted meeting times)
- Being organized and scheduling gatherings (virtual or in-person) well in advance
- Encouraging continued participation and completion of all activities

Tips for the Facilitator

- Facilitators should arrive (or log in) at least 15 minutes before the start of the meeting. Greet participants as they arrive and introduce meeting roles. Conduct a rollcall so everyone knows who is present.
- A brief check-in or icebreaker at the start of the meeting can help participants feel connected.
- Review the agenda, confirm desired outcomes, and establish meeting norms, such as staying on topic, minimizing distractions, and avoiding interruptions.
- Summarizing discussions regularly helps maintain focus and ensures shared understanding. Before ending the meeting, review all decisions, action items, and next steps. Providing a written recap shortly after the meeting reinforces clarity and accountability.

Choosing Online vs. In-Person Meetings

When planning a meeting, it is important to determine whether an in-person, online, or hybrid format (in-person meeting with a virtual option to join) best supports the goals of the activity.

- Research suggests that online meetings can be more inclusive and effective for brainstorming and innovation, while in-person meetings are often more energizing and relationship-building. In many cases, a hybrid approach works well—using in-person meetings early in a planning process and online meetings for follow-up work.
- Key considerations include travel costs, participant availability, technology needs, familiarity with the community, and overall project goals.

If meeting in person:

- Identify a location to hold your gatherings that is convenient to team members and provides appropriate space.
- Have necessary equipment (laptop, flipcharts, markers, sticky notes, whiteboard, etc.).
- Arrange in-person seating to be conducive to conversation and allow team members to see each other (round tables or similar)

If meeting online:

- Include connection instructions in your email invitation.
- Assign roles to other team members to help the meeting run smoothly. Someone will need to facilitate the meeting (usually the team leader but can be another member of the team). Team members can also monitor the chat, take notes (recording decisions and action items), or help troubleshoot any technical issues.
- Consider accessibility needs of your team members and community (such as live captioning, audio descriptions, etc.). Provide a short orientation to the technology at the beginning of the meeting to ensure everyone knows how to mute, use chat, and raise their hand.
- Conduct a practice run and technology check before the meeting to work out any issues or challenges.

Familiarization (FAM) Tours

Familiarization or FAM tours offer a great opportunity for your team to see your community up close. Because you are engaging with a wide representation of your community, not all of them will be familiar with all aspects of the community or the components that make up your primary elements.

FAM tours are commonly used in the travel industry to introduce tour operators, travel writers, and other professionals to a destination's offerings by providing a snapshot of what the place has to offer.

However, you don't need to be part of the travel industry to host a FAM tour for your own community team. At their core, FAM tours are simply opportunities for people to become familiar with a community's assets and experiences, and an excellent way for your team to get to know one another better. Tours can be informal and straightforward—such as touring anchor assets, participating in a program, or reviewing visitor services.

Helping your team better understand what your community offers can be a valuable foundation for future planning and decision-making.

When planning a FAM tour, consider inviting community leaders that are not a part of your team:

- Municipal government representatives
- Local press
- Local Chamber of Commerce
- Local donor/charitable organizations



The Hampton Team facilitated a FAM tour of Fort Monroe, VA for community stakeholders and partners during the pilot test of the process.

Next Steps and Additional Resources

NEXT STEPS

Is that the end of the Chesapeake Gateways Communities Initiative?

Yes and no. The formal process of this initiative is done; however, it is important to keep the momentum going. To do this, your team should establish regularly scheduled check-ins to track project progress, address obstacles, and celebrate successes. This could be a brief, virtual monthly meeting or longer, town-hall style updates to the community. Establishing this schedule will help to continue your team's great work.

Once your community inventories your assets & amenities, and programming & interpretation, you can consider self-nominating them as **Chesapeake Gateways Places or Experiences**. Once your community has a collection of Chesapeake Gateways Places or Experience, and has reached a high-caliber implementation of the five elements, you can then move to submitting a self-nomination to be **Chesapeake Gateways Community Designation** (see page 30).

- Based on the Chesapeake Gateways Communities designation criteria, determine whether your organization is ready to self-nominate to be an official Chesapeake Gateways Community. If so, self-nominate.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

In addition to the Chesapeake Gateways Communities Initiative process, there are other efforts that can help a community enhance their outdoor recreation and heritage tourism planning. The following resources can help you explore other aspects of community identity, gap analysis, and action planning:

[Appalachian Regional Commission](#)—"The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) is an economic development partnership entity of the federal government and 13 state governments focusing on 423 counties across the Appalachian Region. ARC's mission is to innovate, partner and invest to build community capacity and strengthen economic growth in Appalachia to help the region achieve socioeconomic parity with the nation."

[Canal Towns](#)—Canal Towns is a partnership of towns along the C&O Canal that have organized an alliance hosted by the C&O Canal Trust to "generate mutually beneficial economic activity in the towns. Each town sends representatives to monthly meetings to share information, offer advice and support to the National Park Service, and develop intertown projects."

[DIY Economic Impact](#)—Developed by the Wisconsin Office of Outdoor Recreation "to educate, support and encourage data collection by communities, organizations and constituents. This type of information can be used to catalyze public support and funding for projects or report on previous investments. The vision behind this guide is to help build the capacity of communities and organizations, equipping them with the knowledge and tools to produce solid research and demonstrate the value of outdoor recreation."

[Main Street America Thriving Communities Transportation Toolkit](#)—The Thriving Communities Transportation Toolkit was developed for "Main Street leaders and stakeholders across government levels who want to be more effective transportation partners to deliver transformative investments."

[NPCA Sourcebook for National Park Gateway](#)—The Sourcebook produced by the [National Parks Conservation Association](#) focuses on best practice models and successful approaches for gateway communities to engage local entrepreneurs, small businesses, civic groups, and governments in providing a distinctive, authentic visitor experience that highlight local culture and traditions and enhance sustainability and authentic visitor experiences.

[NPS Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program \(RTCA\) River Town Review Toolkit](#)—For river-based towns, the National Park Service has developed the River Town Review Toolkit to lead communities through an assessment of their town’s outdoor recreation resources. It also helps communities develop recommendations to enhance those resources, and in turn, bolster their local tourism economy.

[Our Trail Town Program](#)—Our Trail Town helps communities strategize the value of their trails. “There aren’t cash registers on the trail. So if you want cyclists to boost your local economy, you have to tap your town into that opportunity—actively. Pedal your whole community forward by transforming into a bike-friendly destination where people want to stay, explore and spend.”

[Outdoor Towns Toolkit](#)—“The Outdoor Town Toolkit lays out steps along a pathway to help make your town a great place to live, visit, and explore the outdoors. It is intended to be an entry-level website for use by self-motivated communities. It will encourage outdoor and nature-based community development by providing easy to access educational content, inspiring case studies, best practices, tools, templates, and links to available resources.”

[Placer.ai](#)—Placer.ai is a location analytics platform founded in 2018 that provides insight on trends based on visitor (tourist and local) foot traffic data. The fee-based application provides visibility into visitation patterns, areas of concentration, audience behavior, and demographics to aid in destination planning.

[TCF Activating the Natural Resource Economy](#)—The Conservation Fund works to “preserve and expand the mutually beneficial relationship between communities and nature. Through our Activating the Natural Resource Economy platform, we partner with rural communities on the frontline in decisions on the future of land, water and wildlife across the nation to align protecting nature with economic development and opportunity.”

[Thrive Outside Initiative](#)—“The Outdoor Foundation’s Thrive Outside Initiative awards multi-year, capacity-building grants to diverse communities to build and strengthen networks that provide children and families with repeat and reinforcing experiences in the outdoors. This community-led initiative is built with trusted local and national partners and is supported by three years of funding. Together, we’re working to create a more inclusive and accessible outdoor experience for all.”

[York County Trail Towns](#)—“York County Economic Alliance launched the Trail Towns Program to leverage the York Heritage Rail Trail as a platform and driver for economic development in towns located along or near the popular multi-use trail. Partnering with the York County Department of Parks, the York County Rail Trail Authority, Explore York, and our municipal partners, the Trail Towns Program is a collaborative process with outreach to local governments, residents and business owners in order for each town to reach its potential as a vibrant hub for trail users.”

[West Virginia University Smith Outdoor Economic Development Collaborative \(OEDC\)](#)—While focused on West Virginia, many of their projects and research are applicable to any community looking to enhance their outdoor recreation economy. “The mission of the OEDC is to utilize West Virginia’s outdoor assets to ignite the state’s economy and enhance quality of life for West Virginians through outdoor recreation. We envision West Virginia’s vibrant communities filled with a diverse workforce that enjoys both the outdoors and an innovative state, with a wide range of opportunities that enable the population to stay and thrive.”

Getting Officially Designated

The [Chesapeake Gateways Network](#) is a system of places and experiences providing opportunities to enjoy, learn about and help conserve the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed. Included in the Network are diverse natural, cultural, historical, and recreational sites, trails, museums, parks, refuges, interpretive and orientation facilities, and associated programs. These places and experiences, and Chesapeake Gateways as a whole, serve as entry points and the key guide for experiencing the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Communities that can demonstrate high-caliber implementation of the five primary elements can pursue a Chesapeake Gateways Communities designation. Seeking the designation is not a requirement of the Chesapeake Gateways Communities Initiative process, but the initiative can help those communities reach the caliber of primary elements needed to be considered. Similarly, if your community believes it has already implemented high-caliber assets, programming, and services to be designated as an official Chesapeake Gateways Community, you do not need to go through the Initiative process to be considered for the designation. Neither process is a requirement of the other, but the initiative can help prep communities for the designation.

Joining the Network

Whether joining as a place or experience, organizations and programs must meet the defining characteristics as outlined in the Chesapeake Gateways Framework. Available designations include Community, Network Place (Site, Network Trail, Network Watertrail, Network Heritage Area, Network Byway), and Network Experience. Each designation requires a self-nomination, submitted through the online forms linked below.

Becoming a Chesapeake Gateways Place

Any organization may nominate their place (site, trail, water trail, byway, and heritage area) to be considered for inclusion in the Chesapeake Gateways Network. However, the organization submitting the questionnaire must be the managing organization for the place. One questionnaire should be completed for each place proposed to join the Chesapeake Gateways Network. [Use this link](#) for detailed instructions on how to self-nominate your place.

Becoming a Chesapeake Gateways Experience

These opportunities provide access for people to have authentic experiences no matter their location in the watershed. Examples of eligible experiences include Chesapeake Gateways Storytellers, sailing excursions, water- or land-based tours, historic walking tours, and recreational paddling opportunities. Experiences should be nominated by the operating organization, and one questionnaire should be completed for each unique experience. [Use this link](#) for detailed instructions on how to self-nominate your experience.

Becoming a Chesapeake Gateways Community

Chesapeake Gateways Communities are where a combination of geography, location, transportation systems, economic uses, and services welcome people within the watershed. They provide a host of opportunities for people to experience multi-faceted Chesapeake resources and stories, and they encourage further exploration. Authorized organizations may nominate their community [using this link](#).

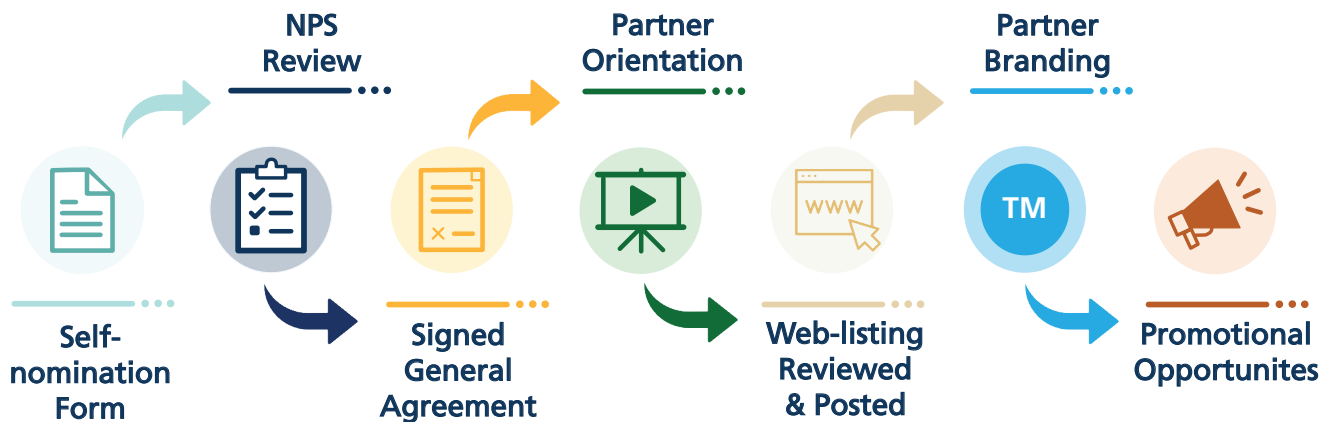
Benefits

- Eligibility for [Chesapeake Gateways Grants](#) & financial assistance
- Eligibility for [Chesapeake Gateways Technical Assistance](#)
- Orientation and training opportunities for partner staff
- Regular Network updates with resources and benefits
- Inclusion on www.NPS.gov/Chesapeake and the National Park Service Mobile Application
- Inclusion and access to NPS App Experiences and thematic trip ideas
- Use of the Chesapeake Gateways Branding Identity within agreement guidelines
- Inclusion in Chesapeake Gateways brand materials

The Review Process

NPS Chesapeake Gateways reviews self-nominations for inclusion in the network based upon the defining characteristics listed in the [Chesapeake Gateways Framework](#) and evaluation criteria listed on instructions pages linked below.

Communities interested in having their assets and programming designated as a Chesapeake Gateways Place or Experience or being designated as an official Chesapeake Gateways Community can learn more on the designation nomination page, [Join the Chesapeake Gateways Network](#).





Toolkit

The Toolkit

This section includes all the tools you will need to go through the process, including instructions, exercises, and worksheets as referenced in the narrative. Additionally, the initiative also features [online](#) materials and resources, including online versions of the self-assessment inventory forms, recorded trainings, and frequently asked questions, that allow communities to participate in the process at their own pace.

Tool A. Economic Data Resources

Tool B. Team Development Worksheet

Tool C. About the Chesapeake Gateways Communities Initiative

Tool D. Team Recruitment Email Template

Tool E. Confirmation of Team and Community Boundary/Vision – Team Meeting #1

Tool F. Community Baseline Survey

Tool G. Elements Inventories

Tool H. Assess and Prioritize—Team Meeting #2

Tool I. Planning for Action—Team Meeting #3

Tool A

Economic Data Resources

There is economic value in helping visitors and residents connect to your community's authentic heritage and experiences.

Nation-wide

[Visitor Spending Effects - Economic Contributions of National Park Visitor Spending](#)

[US Fish and Wildlife Service Banking on Nature 2017](#)

[Outdoor Recreation Roundtable National Recreation Economic Data by State](#)

[Outdoor Industry Association—The Outdoor Recreation Economy](#)

[Department of Commerce National Travel and Tourism Strategy](#)

[Bureau of Economic Analysis Outdoor Recreation Economy by State](#)

[Headwaters Economics—The Outdoor Recreation Economy by State](#)

Tribal Data

[Bureau of Indian Affairs Native American Tourism and Improving Visitor Experience \(NATIVE\) Act](#)

[FSC Indigenous Foundation Article: Indigenous-led Tourism Benefits Communities, Economies, and Mother Earth](#)

[American Indigenous Tourism Association—Economic Research & Reports](#)

Delaware

[Value of Tourism in Delaware](#)

[Delaware Department of Natural Resources & Environmental Control Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2025-2030](#)

District of Columbia

[Destination DC—2021 Visitor Statistics](#)

[Destination DC Announces Record Visitation to DC](#)

Maryland

[MD Office of Tourism--Economic Impact of Tourism in MD](#)

[MD Park Visitation and the Economic Impact of Outdoor Recreation](#)

New York

[Economic Impact of Visitors in New York 2020](#)

[NY State Comptroller—Economic Impact of the Great Outdoors](#)

Pennsylvania

[PA Tourism Office—Economic Impact of Travel](#)

[PA Downtown Center—PA's Outdoor Recreation Economy](#)

[Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership—Estimating the Economic Contributions of Outdoor Recreation in PA](#)

[PA Department of Conservation & Natural Resources](#)

Virginia

[VA Tourism Corporation--Economic Impact of Travel](#)

[VA Department of Conservation & Recreation—Economics and Tourism](#)

[VA Economic Council—Outdoor Recreation and the VA Economy](#)

West Virginia

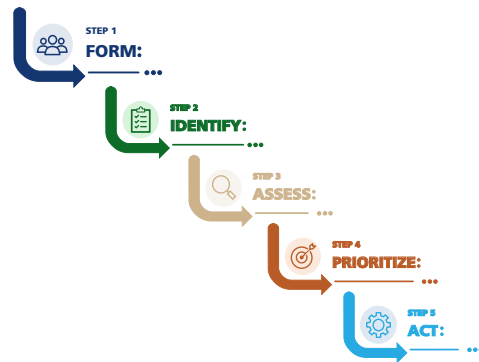
[WV Department of Tourism—Economic Impact of Tourism](#)

[West Virginia University Smith Outdoor Economic Development Collaborative—Outdoor Economy](#)

Tool C

About the Chesapeake Gateways Communities Initiative

The Chesapeake Gateways Communities Initiative (CGCI) assists communities in linking outdoor recreation and heritage tourism to support priorities that encourage local economic impact. Working through a team of community stakeholder representatives, this initiative guides a community through self-assessments that identify gaps and opportunities, and prioritizes them for future action, all to help visitors and residents create a stronger connection to the Chesapeake.



Teams will assess their community's:	Teams will work through:
<p>Assets & Amenities Public infrastructure, such as land and water trails, parks, recreation, cultural sites</p> <p>Programming & Interpretation Engagement and education opportunities</p> <p>Visitor Services Lodging, food, transportation options</p> <p>Marketing & Communications Digital, print, radio, TV, video, site signage</p> <p>Commitment & Capacity Investment of time and funding partners, policy and practice</p>	<p>FORM Who can represent your community?</p> <p>IDENTIFY What does your community offer?</p> <p>ASSESS What are strengths to build from and gaps to improve?</p> <p>PRIORITIZE What are the priorities that support a unique, authentic, and welcoming vision for visitors and residents that returns value to your community?</p> <p>ACT What are the steps to implement your team's priority projects? What partners and funding are needed? What is the schedule?</p>

BENEFITS

By going through the process, communities can:

- Strengthen relationships and collaborations within the community.
- Understand the most important needs and interests for the greatest impact.
- Develop community-wide support to implement priority projects and actions.
- Create compelling cases for charitable support of those projects and actions by highlighting need and community alignment.

To learn more, visit www.nps.gov/locations/chesapeakebaywatershed/cg-communities-initiative.htm or contact chesapeake_info@nps.gov.



Tool D

Team Recruitment

Subject: Join Us in Strengthening Our Community

Dear [Recipient's Name],

We're excited to share that our community is launching an assessment and capacity-building effort through the Chesapeake Gateways Communities Initiative and we would love for you or a representative from your organization to be part of it.

We will kick things off with a [virtual call/in-person meeting] on [date] to introduce the initiative and begin forming our community team.

This initiative, led by the National Park Service Chesapeake Gateways, helps communities strengthen connections to natural and cultural resources, enhance visitor experiences, and support greater economic impact. Together, we will assess key elements of our community—such as assets and amenities, programming, and visitor services—and identify priority projects that advance a shared vision and identity.

Participation includes collaborative discussions, access to expert guidance and resources, and the opportunity to help shape a community-driven action plan. The effort will take place over approximately 3–6 months, with an estimated time commitment of about 10 hours total.

We hope you'll consider joining us in this important effort. Please let us know by [RSVP deadline] if you're interested in participating or would like additional information. If you have questions, feel free to contact [contact person].

Thank you for your time and consideration—we look forward to the opportunity to work together to strengthen our community.

Best regards,
[Your Name]
[Your Organization]
[Your Contact Information]



Tool E

Confirmation of Team and Community Boundary/Vision – Team Meeting #1

Once you have established a team, we recommend scheduling a meeting to bring everyone together. The purpose of this first meeting is for team members to introduce one another and to establish the boundary of and vision for your community. **This meeting concludes Step 1. FORM and prepares teams for Step 2. IDENTIFY.**

Meeting Goals

At the conclusion of this initial meeting, team members should leave with an understanding of:

- The boundaries of their gateway community that they intend to examine.
- The vision of their gateway community that they intend to support.
- Instructions for the baseline survey and the five primary elements inventories (Tool F and Tool G).
- The due date for completing the survey and inventories.
- The date, time, and place of the next meeting.

Template Agenda for First Team Meeting

[Date]

[Time (approximately 90 minutes)]

[In-person meeting location or call-in link]

I. Introductions (15 minutes)

Team Leader and Members should provide name, affiliation, and reasons for involvement

Tip: asking leading questions can help team members get to know one another.

What's your favorite Chesapeake weekend trip?

What's the best guided experience you have experienced?

What's your favorite park or public space?

II. Our Community Boundary (15 minutes)

Discuss the geographic boundary that will be the focus of the process.

Define your team's community (geographic boundary) as appropriate to your landscape, jurisdictional boundaries, and the assets, challenges, and opportunities your participants would like to include as part of the team's overall work. The geographic area can be a town and adjacent areas, multiple towns, a county, or a multi-county region. Define a starting boundary that will guide your team's work and discussions – providing space for impactful projects and partnerships while setting limits to direct and focus the team's work. The community boundary should align with the knowledge, influence, and roles of team members.

Tip: Have a map available to provide a visual of the community.

III. Our Community Vision (30 minutes total)

Establishing a vision is important to help guide the Team's decisions for what actions or projects are worth community investment. Failing to provide a clear vision for the community's identity will hamper your prioritization.

Individual Reflection (5 minutes)

In silence, have each team member write down words, phrases, or concepts that describe their vision for the community's future (Post-it notes recommended).



Share & Capture (10 minutes)

Each participant shares their vision aloud while a note-taker records key ideas and phrases on a flipchart.

Identify Common Themes (15 minutes)

Review the ideas and identify shared concepts. Label a flipchart “Our Common Vision” and record areas of agreement.

A single vision statement is not required—focus on shared themes.

Tip: A vision describes a desired future condition—the end result once goals are achieved. It focuses on what will be, not how it will be done. Mission defines the path; vision defines the destination.

- IV. Chesapeake Gateways Community Primary Elements (20 minutes)
Review of the 5 primary element definitions and brainstorm local examples.

Five Primary Elements	Local Examples
Assets & Amenities	
Programming & Interpretation	
Visitor Services	
Marketing & Communications	
Commitment & Capacity	

Tip: Have flipcharts available to take notes of the examples that come up. A map can also help participants note where in the community the examples are located.

- V. Next Steps (10 minutes)

- A. Homework: Hand out copies of Tool F and Tool G to each team member with a due date for responses. Review instructions for both exercises with the team; both exercises should be done by each member individually.

To help your team answer the survey and inventories, ask them to think about:

- In your community...what do you recommend to your friends and family to experience when they visit? What should they see, do, and remember?
- When you have visited another community...What places left a lasting impression on you? What made those visits memorable?
- By reflecting on those moments, your team can discover ideas and inspiration for creating meaningful, memorable experiences that will help frame their answers to the baseline survey and inventories.

- B. Schedule next meeting after due date for responses. Ensure the team leader has ample time to collate responses.

We recommend that the next meeting is in person.

- VI. Adjourn

Tool F

Community Baseline Survey

The Community Baseline Survey is a 20-question worksheet **that each team member completes on their own**, indicating their level of agreement with each statement regarding their perception of their community today. It will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. This activity is part of **Step 2. IDENTIFY.**

The following survey should be distributed to the team. Responses should be sent to the team leader who will collect the data for discussions as part of the second team meeting.

Team leaders can also access an electronic version of the Community Baseline Survey on the [Chesapeake Gateways Communities Initiative](#) landing page that auto calculates the aggregated responses. The team leader will still need to input the collective responses from the team.

Points to remember

Please keep in mind that the two primary purposes for the survey (**Tool F**) and inventories (**Tool G**) are to:

- Gather data to inform discussions and decisions (this will allow communities to see strengths and gaps which will inform an action plan).
- Get all team members operating from a similar baseline understanding of their community.

The baseline community survey (Tool F) and elements inventories (Tool G) are foundational building blocks for the entire effort.



Tool F. Community Baseline Survey

Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement. Choose one answer for each question. Please return to your Team Leader when completed.

My community...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. ...is economically healthy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. ...will remain economically healthy in the long-term.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. ...offers economic opportunity and supports entrepreneurship.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. ...has a sphere of influence that extends beyond its borders.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. ...actively participates in regional affairs and collaborates with neighboring communities/ jurisdictions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. ...actively fosters new leaders and youth engagement within the community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. ...is socially diverse and welcoming.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. ...actively engages citizens of all ages, race, abilities and ethnicity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. ...has a defined sense of place and its own stories to tell.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. ...has a strong sense of civic pride.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. ...actively encourages engagement and involvement by interested parties/individuals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. ...has a positive relationship with major landowners (public or private).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. ...appreciates its proximity to public lands, community parks, or other outdoor areas.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. ...makes use of the surrounding outdoor areas and promotes recreation opportunities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. ...has an appreciation for its natural assets.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. ...is ecologically healthy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. ...has an appreciation for its arts and culture assets.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. ...supports the integration of arts and culture into community life and events.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. ...fosters active, healthy lifestyles.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. ...is able to adapt and evolve.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Once completed, return this document to your Team Leader.



Tool G

Elements Inventories

National Park Service Chesapeake Gateways identified **five primary elements** that are foundational to a vibrant Chesapeake Gateways Community (**Assets & Amenities, Programming & Interpretation, Visitor Services, Marketing & Communications, and Commitment & Capacity**).

These Elements Inventories are a deep dive for identifying and assessing the existing conditions and potential for each primary element that will help your community determine priorities for action planning and best next steps. It will take approximately 30 minutes to complete each of these inventories (approximately 2.5 hours total). **This activity is part of Step 2. IDENTIFY.**

Most questions in this tool use a rating scale of 1-4, with:

- 1 (indicating a weakness/significant gap)
- 2 (indicating neutral)
- 3 (indicating moderate strength/positive)
- 4 (indicating a significant strength/very positive presence in the community)

Each team member will fill out all five inventories on their own and submit their completed worksheets to the team leader to collate for discussion.

Team leaders can also access an electronic version of the Elements Inventories on the [Chesapeake Gateways Communities Initiative](#) landing page that auto calculates the aggregated responses. The team leader will still need to input the collective responses from the team.

Points to remember

- Please keep in mind that the two primary purposes for the survey (**Tool F**) and inventories (**Tool G**) are to:
 - Gather data to inform discussions and decisions (this will allow communities to see strengths and gaps which will inform an action plan).
 - Get all team members operating from a similar baseline understanding of their community.
- Some questions will ask you to rate a category as a whole, rather than on one specific thing. The final set of questions are a rating of an overarching topic across all primary elements, such as condition, price points, welcoming, etc.
- There may be components of the community that will overlap across the elements. That's okay! You count them in multiple elements. For example, a visitor center that also conducts interpretation and has bathrooms and a snack bar can be counted in the **Assets & Amenities** element, the **Programming & Interpretation** element, and the Visitor Services element.
- If a question is not applicable to your community or your knowledge of the community, please skip it.

The baseline community survey (Tool F) and elements inventories (Tool G) are foundational building blocks for the entire effort.



Assets & Amenities Inventory

To be filled out individually by team members

Assets & Amenities are visitor attractions in a potential gateway community, such as parks and public spaces, museums, water access points (for boat launching or viewing the Bay), trails, fishing piers, and other outdoor recreation, public art, cultural, and historical sites.

Use the 1–4 rating scale (1 = significant gap, 4 = significant strength), starting with overall asset categories (questions 1–11), and current or emerging anchor assets (questions 12-19), then rating community-wide qualities like condition, potential, cost, authenticity, and welcoming (questions 20-25).

Skip any questions that don't apply. There is space at the end of the inventory to record any notes you wish to share with the team. Once completed, return this document to your Team Leader.

Assets & Amenities	Score
1. Land-based trails <i>overall availability, condition, connections, ease of access</i>	_____
2. Water-based trails <i>overall availability, condition, connections, ease of access</i>	_____
3. Cultural sites <i>museums, interpretive centers, art galleries, history centers, etc. - availability, condition, ease of access</i>	_____
4. Historic sites <i>districts or individual structures, designated or otherwise identified, presence in community</i>	_____
5. Recreation options <i>availability, diversity of options, ease of access, condition, price points</i>	_____
6. Waterfront public space <i>walkways, gathering spaces, trails, seating - availability, condition, ease of access</i>	_____
7. Main street/downtown public space <i>walkways, gathering spaces, sidewalks, seating - availability, condition, ease of access</i>	_____
8. Land-based trailhead infrastructure <i>access points to public lands including parking, signage, and maps; consider ease of access and condition</i>	_____
9. Water-based trailhead infrastructure <i>access points to public waters including parking, signage, ramps, docks, and maps; consider ease of access and condition</i>	_____
10. Public art <i>presence, condition, interpretation</i>	_____
11. Aesthetic beauty	_____
List EXISTING significant or anchor assets/amenities in your community below and rate it individually on the scale	
12. Asset A (name and brief description)	_____
13. Asset B (name and brief description)	_____
14. Asset C (name and brief description)	_____
15. Asset D (name and brief description)	_____
16. Asset E (name and brief description)	_____



List EMERGING significant or anchor assets/amenities in your community below and rate it individually on the scale

17. **Asset F** (name and brief description)

18. **Asset G** (name and brief description)

19. **Asset H** (name and brief description)

Consider each prompt across all assets and amenities in your community and rate it as a whole

20. **CONDITION**

Is infrastructure cared for and maintained routinely?

21. **POTENTIAL**

Are there options and space to enhance or add to the assets and amenities in the community?

22. **COST/PRICE POINTS**

Are there options to explore the community across price points, including free and low-cost options?

23. **AUTHENTICITY** as a gateway to the Chesapeake

Are visitors experiencing the past, present, and future of the Chesapeake when visiting your community?

24. Being **WELCOMING** as a potential gateway community

Will visitors feel welcomed in visiting your community? Will they feel they belong in the community? Consider ADA access and adaptable access, neurodiversity accommodations, and creation of an atmosphere that is inclusive across race, gender, religion, age, and ethnicity.

25. Please add any notes applicable to the above rating questions or any other notes you have on this inventory.

Once completed, return this document to your Team Leader.



Programming & Interpretation Inventory

To be filled out individually by team members

Programming & Interpretation are activities associated with the assets and amenities that facilitate learning and awareness of the Chesapeake. Possible activities in this category include signage, walking and driving tours, scavenger hunts and geocaching, guided and unguided experiences, and events and festivals.

Use the 1–4 rating scale (1 = significant gap, 4 = significant strength), starting with overall programming and interpretation categories (questions 1–10), and current or emerging anchor activities (questions 11–18), then rating community-wide qualities like condition, potential, cost, authenticity, and welcoming (questions 19–24).

Skip any questions that don't apply. There is space at the end of the inventory to record any notes you wish to share with the team. Once completed, return this document to your Team Leader.

Programming & Interpretation Activities	Score
1. Interpretation of land-based trails <i>extent of presence, current with content, ease of access, authentic to place</i>	
2. Interpretation of water-based trails <i>extent of presence, current with content, ease of access, authentic to place</i>	
3. Engagement with public art <i>extent of presence, ease of access, authentic to place, how interactive (such as through activities such as scavenger hunts, etc.)</i>	
4. Programming and/or interpretation at cultural sites, such as museums and history centers <i>extent of presence, current with content, ease of access, authentic to place, how interactive</i>	
5. Guided recreation options such as fishing, boating, etc. <i>availability, diversity of options, ease of access, quality, price points</i>	
6. Interpretative walking tours in a main street/downtown area <i>availability, current with content, ease of access, authentic to place</i>	
7. Interpretative tours outside of the main street/downtown area <i>availability, current with content, ease of access, authentic to place</i>	
8. Events or festivals with a specific water/Chesapeake connection <i>extent of offerings, ease of access, authentic to place</i>	
9. Events or festivals without a specific water/Chesapeake connection <i>extent of offerings, ease of access, authentic to place</i>	
10. Other experiences/activities in the community that tell the community's story, online or in-person	
List EXISTING significant or anchor programming/interpretation opportunity in your community below and rate it individually on the scale	
11. Programming A (name and brief description)	
12. Programming B (name and brief description)	
13. Programming C (name and brief description)	
14. Programming D (name and brief description)	
15. Programming E (name and brief description)	



List an EMERGING significant or anchor programming/interpretation opportunity in your community and rate it individually on the scale

16. **Programming F** (name and brief description) _____

17. **Programming G** (name and brief description) _____

18. **Programming H** (name and brief description) _____

Consider each prompt across all programming and interpretation in your community and rate it as a whole.

19. CONDITION

Are interpretive materials cared for and updated? _____

20. POTENTIAL

Are there ways to enhance or add to the existing programming and interpretation in the community? _____

21. COST/PRICE POINTS

Are there options to explore and engage in the community across price points, including free and low-cost options? _____

22. AUTHENTICITY as a gateway to the Chesapeake

Are visitors engaging with the past, present, and future of the Chesapeake when visiting your community? Do sites and structures reinforce the stories shared through programming and interpretation? Is information provided full and faithful to the community's history, heritage, culture, and future vision? Are the National Park Service Chesapeake Gateways' established overarching and principal themes interpreted? _____

23. Being WELCOMING as a potential gateway community

Will visitors feel represented in the stories they hear in your community? Who is sharing these stories and from what perspective(s)? Will visitors feel they belong in the community? Is interpretation multi-lingual? In the context of programming (walking tours, supporting materials, events, location of interpretation, etc.) consider ADA access and adaptable access, neurodiversity accommodations, and creation of an atmosphere that is inclusive across race, gender, religion, age, and ethnicity. Are offerings designed to accommodate a range of physical conditions (visual, hearing, or mobility impairments) and neurodiversity (with respect to sensory elements)? _____

24. Please add any notes applicable to the above rating questions or any other notes you have on this inventory.

Once completed, return this document to your Team Leader.



Visitor Services Inventory

To be filled out individually by team members

Visitor Services are the basics that people need when visiting a potential gateway community. This category includes things such as lodging, food, restrooms, wayfinding, gear and equipment sales and rentals, retail shopping, transportation options and transfers, wifi or cell service, and parking and fueling options.

Use the 1–4 rating scale (1 = significant gap, 4 = significant strength), starting with overall visitor services categories (questions 1–14), and current or emerging anchor assets (questions 15-22), then rating community-wide qualities like condition, potential, cost, authenticity, and welcoming (questions 23-28).

Skip any questions that don't apply. There is space at the end of the inventory to record any notes you wish to share with the team. Once completed, return this document to your Team Leader.

Visitor Service	Score
1. Information to orient visitors such as digital or physical maps, wayfinding signage etc. <i>overall availability, for trip planning and on-site, condition, ease of access</i>	
2. Outfitters/Gear and equipment for purchase or rental, for land and water-based activities <i>overall availability, quality, price points, diversity of options, ease of access</i>	
3. Maritime-focused services <i>availability, quality, price points, ease of access</i>	
4. Visitor services within a walkable downtown area <i>to what extent, convenience, accessibility</i>	
5. Recreation/activity fee payment access such as for a fishing license or camping permit <i>availability, options for payment, convenience</i>	
6. Lodging options including resorts, hotels, inns, motels, cabins, BnBs, AirBnB/VRBO, campground/camping areas <i>availability, current with content, ease of access, authentic to place</i>	
7. Food access through restaurants, grocery stores, farmers markets, food trucks <i>overall availability, diversity in types of food, quality, price points, convenience</i>	
8. Public restrooms/comfort stations <i>availability, convenience, ease of access</i>	
9. Public spaces <i>picnic areas, play areas, waterfront, main streets) that serve multiple purposes, ages, physical conditions, and different types of users, such as children, seniors, families, individuals (availability, condition, ease of access)</i>	
10. Broadband connectivity/wi-fi/cell service <i>availability, convenience, reliability, ease of access</i>	
11. Transportation options and multi-modal connections <i>extent of options and connectivity, cost, ease of access, connections from ferry to bike or sidewalk/trail network, car to bike, etc.</i>	
12. Parking <i>availability, convenience, price points, proximity to assets and programming</i>	
13. Fuel/electric chargers <i>availability, convenience, ease of access</i>	



14. Gifts/Supplies - retail

extent of options, proximity to assets and programming, price points, locally-made products

List EXISTING significant or high profile, anchor individual visitor service or cluster of services in your community below and rate it individually on the scale

15. **Visitor Service A** (name and brief description) _____

16. **Visitor Service B** (name and brief description) _____

17. **Visitor Service C** (name and brief description) _____

18. **Visitor Service D** (name and brief description) _____

19. **Visitor Service E** (name and brief description) _____

List EMERGING visitor service with potential for growth in your community and rate it individually on the scale

20. **Visitor Service F** (name and brief description) _____

21. **Visitor Service G** (name and brief description) _____

22. **Visitor Service H** (name and brief description) _____

Consider each prompt across all programming and interpretation in your community and rate it as a whole.

23. CONDITION

Are infrastructure, materials and services cared for and maintained routinely?

24. POTENTIAL

Are there options and space to enhance or add to the visitor services in the community?

25. COST/PRICE POINTS

Are there options to visit and stay in the community across price points, including low-cost options?

26. AUTHENTICITY as a gateway to the Chesapeake

Are visitors experiencing the past, present, and future of the Chesapeake when interacting with the visitor services available in the community?

27. Being WELCOMING as a potential gateway community

Will visitors feel welcome when visiting your community? Will they feel they belong in the community? Consider ADA access and adaptable access, neurodiversity accommodations, and creation of an atmosphere that is inclusive across race, gender, religion, age, and ethnicity. Do services accommodate a range of physical conditions (visual, hearing, or mobility impairments) and neurodiversity (with respect to sensory elements)?

28. *Please add any notes applicable to the above rating questions or any other notes you have on this inventory.*



Marketing & Communications Inventory

To be filled out individually by team members

Marketing & Communications involve how a community markets itself and the communication tools it uses, such as digital and print media, radio and TV promotion, video, social media, site signage, online and onsite trip planning, multilingual materials, and public-facing products.

Use the 1–4 rating scale (1 = significant gap, 4 = significant strength), starting with overall marketing/communications categories (questions 1–12), and current or emerging anchor communications initiatives (questions 13-20), then rating community-wide qualities like condition, potential, cost, authenticity, and welcoming (questions 21-25).

Skip any questions that don't apply. There is space at the end of the inventory to record any notes you wish to share with the team. Once completed, return this document to your Team Leader.

Marketing & Communications Tools and Activities	Score
1. Digital media <i>extent of presence, current with content, ease of access, authentic to place</i>	
2. Print media <i>extent of presence, current with content, ease of access, authentic to place</i>	
3. Radio/TV media <i>extent of presence, current with content, authentic to place</i>	
4. Advance trip planning materials/content <i>current and accurate content, ease of access</i>	
5. Advance trip planning materials/content specific to ADA, accessibility, and adaptive accommodation <i>current and accurate content, ease of access, coverage across amenities, programming, and visitor services</i>	
6. On-site navigation materials/content <i>current and accurate content, ease of access</i>	
7. Food access through restaurants, grocery stores, farmers markets, food trucks <i>overall availability, diversity in types of food, quality, price points, convenience</i>	
8. Comprehensive strategy to direct marketing and communications	
9. Implementation of marketing and communications	
10. Comprehensive coverage of opportunities in the community <i>assets, programming, visitor services</i>	
11. Marketing products and outputs are multi-lingual	
12. Marketing products and outputs are current	
List an EXISTING significant or anchor marketing/communications product or initiative in your community and rate it individually on the scale	
13. Marketing/Communications A (name and brief description)	
14. Marketing/Communications B (name and brief description)	
15. Marketing/Communications C (name and brief description)	
16. Marketing/Communications D (name and brief description)	
17. Marketing/Communications E (name and brief description)	



List an EMERGING significant or anchor marketing/communications product or initiative in your community and rate it individually on the scale

18. **Marketing/Communications F** (name and brief description)

19. **Marketing/Communications G** (name and brief description)

20. **Marketing/Communications H** (name and brief description)

Consider each prompt across all programming and interpretation in your community and rate it as a whole.

21. **CONDITION**

Are marketing products aesthetically pleasing and updated?

22. **POTENTIAL**

Are there ways to enhance or add to the existing marketing and communications products and initiatives in the community?

23. **AUTHENTICITY** as a gateway to the Chesapeake

Are visitors presented with information that reflects the past, present, and future of the Chesapeake? Is information reflective of the community's history, heritage, culture, and future vision?

24. Being **WELCOMING** as a potential gateway community

Will visitors feel represented in the marketing materials regarding your community? Will marketing materials make visitors feel they belong in the community? Are marketing materials multi-lingual? In the context of marketing materials consider ADA access and adaptable access, neurodiversity accommodations, and creation of an atmosphere that is inclusive across race, gender, religion, age, and ethnicity. Are offerings designed to accommodate a range of physical conditions (visual or hearing impairments) and neurodiversity (with respect to sensory elements)?

25. Please add any notes applicable to the above rating questions or any other notes you have on this inventory.

Once completed, return this document to your Team Leader.



Commitment & Capacity Inventory

To be filled out individually by team members

Commitment & Capacity reflect a community's support for participating in this initiative and carrying out the resulting action plan. Considerations include the dedicated involvement and collaboration of local entities (government, private, nonprofit, and academic) who manage or influence assets and amenities, programming and interpretation, visitor services, and marketing and communications.

Use the 1–4 rating scale (1 = significant gap, 4 = significant strength). Questions 1–14 ask you to rate your community's overall level of commitment and capacity in each category.

Question 15 asks you to identify existing policies, actions, or initiatives while question 16 asks for suggestions on potential or new actions or initiatives that could strengthen best practices in the future.

Skip any questions that don't apply. There is space at the end of the inventory to record any notes you wish to share with the team. Once completed, return this document to your Team Leader.

Commitment & Capacity	Score
1. Supporting infrastructure <i>indoor and outdoor venues (those not previously identified as an asset that may support events, programming, etc.)</i>	
2. Supporting organizations <i>water-recreation-related industries and service providers (those not previously identified that may support water-related activities)</i>	
3. Supporting organizations <i>land recreation related industries and services providers (those not previously identified that may support land-based recreation opportunities)</i>	
4. Supporting organizations <i>tourism-related industries and service providers (those not previously identified that may support destination management and stewardship)</i>	
5. Local government <i>organizational capacity and support for your community (staffing, funding, policies, and operations)</i>	
6. Community, health and/or education organizations <i>organizational capacity for your community (staffing, funding, policies, and operations)</i>	
7. Conservation partners focused on land and water preservation and conservation <i>ability to address and impact natural resource conservation, stewardship, restoration, and management</i>	
8. Community valuation of natural resources as capital and assets	
9. Local government <i>stewardship ethic, regulatory controls, and restoration efforts</i>	
10. Nonprofits <i>stewardship ethic, and restoration efforts</i>	
11. Local government, nonprofit, and public <i>focus on environmental resilience and adaptive management</i>	
12. Demonstration of integration of cultural heritage, nature-based recreation, tourism, and economic activity	

13. **Demonstration of community-wide support** (government, nonprofits, civic and other partners, private sector, the public) such as policy, regulation, and operations, **for value-added economic development that leverages natural and cultural assets**

14. **Demonstration of community-wide support** (government, nonprofits, civic and other partners, private sector, the public) such as policy, regulation, and operations, **to remove obstacles or address concerns related to creating a welcoming and accessible atmosphere in the community**

15. From your community, IDENTIFY key policies, actions, or other initiatives that **CURRENTLY** demonstrate best practices in the areas of natural resource stewardship, environmental resilience, creating a welcoming community, or integrating economic opportunity with cultural and natural interests, whether from local government, nonprofits, civic and other partners, private sector, or the public

16. For your community, PROPOSE policies, actions, or other initiatives that could **POTENTIALLY** create best practices in the areas of natural resource stewardship, environmental resilience, creating a welcoming community, or integrating economic opportunity with cultural and natural interests, whether for local government, nonprofits, civic and other partners, private sector, or the public

17. Please add any notes applicable to **Commitment & Capacity**.

Once completed, return this document to your Team Leader.



Tool H

Assess and Prioritize —Team Meeting #2

This meeting involves the activities for Step 3. ASSESS and Step 4. PRIORITIZE and is the longer of the three meetings that are part of this process.

Once the team leader has had a chance to gather and collate all the responses to **Tool F. Community Baseline Survey** and **Tool G. Elements Inventories**, it is time to have the second team meeting. This meeting will bring the team together to identify the commonalities and differences in how the team perceives different aspects of the community in order to plan priorities and actions. You will analyze the findings from the survey and inventories to assess how the primary elements interact to reveal strengths, gaps, opportunities and challenges are present in the community.

During this second meeting, teams should identify 3-5 actions or projects within each primary element. Once a list of these actions or projects is created, the team will then need to prioritize the actions or projects based on the vision for the community, established in **Step 1. FORM**.

Meeting goals

At the conclusion of the second meeting, team members should leave:

- With a fuller understanding of their community’s strengths and weaknesses, gaps, opportunities, and potential projects and actions.
- With a prioritized list of projects and actions for the team to action that would advance their community.
- Knowing the date, time and place of the final meeting.

Points to remember

- There are often distinct knowledge differences in team members – one person knows one area, but not another, or isn’t current in a certain area. It’s important to get all team members in the same ballpark with understanding the community from the lens of a gateway community.
- Mapping the elements makes it easier to interpret data.
- Use tools like sticky notes to ensure everyone contributes—no single person is responsible for a complete answer.
- Generate multiple project ideas first, then vet and prioritize them later; keep the full list.
- Be specific when defining projects and actions; if details are unclear, the idea may need to be broken into smaller steps.
- Expect some iteration—new insights may require reprioritizing actions.
- Build from strengths, stay authentic, and think from a visitor’s perspective.
- Remember to pull together supplies; if your team is meeting virtually, this may be a laptop and online “white board” tool (such as Padlet). If meeting in-person, you may also want a flipchart, whiteboard, notepad, and/or laptop.

Template Agenda for Second Team Meeting

[Date]

[Time (approximately 2.5 hours)]

[In-person meeting location or call-in link]

- I. Introductions (10 minutes)
(Team Leader and Team Members; name, affiliation, reason for involvement)



If the team is familiar with each other, then introductions at this second gathering may not be needed, but full introductions can help “level the playing field” if any team member is less familiar with others; repeating (or adding in) an extra question can be a new use of this time (what’s your favorite Chesapeake weekend trip, what’s the best guided experience you’ve done, what’s your favorite Main Street, what’s your favorite park or public space?)

Tip: If any team members were unable to participate in prior activities, a more detailed recap should be provided by email prior to this team gathering.

It is recommended that the Team Leader appoints a:

- **Notetaker** to take notes, illustrate concepts, mark-up any maps as appropriate for your team, and document discussions and findings.
- **Timekeeper** to track your progress versus the time you have allotted.

BEGIN STEP 3. ASSESS

II. Distribute and discuss the consolidated responses to **Tool F. Baseline Community Survey and Tool G. Elements Inventories** (30 minutes)

This activity should be a review to see where there are similarities in team members’ responses, as well as any major differences among answers to any question. Opportunity should be made to allow time for team members to comment at this time. Displaying graphs or charts of the data can help teams understand the similarities and differences in responses.

Notetaker should document responses as a growing list of gaps and opportunities.

III. Map the Primary Elements (25 minutes)

Plot the entries submitted for the **Assets & Amenities, Programming & Interpretation,** and **Visitor Services** primary elements on a map. By seeing them visually represented in your community, you can examine the proximity of these elements to one another, noting gaps, opportunities, and challenges. If a team member developed a map in advance of the meeting, please use this time to review and edit that map.

IV. Determine Strengths and Gaps (45 minutes total)

With the maps in view, below are questions for the team to consider about the data for the primary elements. As you work through this exercise, keep in mind that not every question needs to be answered; the goal is to find key insights rather than provide exhaustive responses. Begin by brainstorming strengths and gaps broadly across all elements to identify overarching themes, then take time to review each element individually to ensure that important strengths and critical gaps are not overlooked. Focus on identifying the most significant “top three” strengths and gaps for each element rather than developing a comprehensive inventory, prioritizing major assets, challenges, and opportunities over minor details. The exercise is designed to be completed in approximately 45 minutes, which should be sufficient if the team remains focused on high-level findings and avoids getting bogged down in detail.

Notetaker should document responses as a growing list of gaps and opportunities.

For your **Assets & Amenities**, consider:

- What is their condition, functionality, and overall appeal?
- How well do they authentically connect to local places, culture, and outdoor resources?
- Are they welcoming, accessible, and affordable for a wide range of users?



- *Is information about them easy to find and understand?*
- *How do they reflect what makes your community unique—and what future assets could emerge with investment?*

For your **Programming & Interpretation**, consider:

- *How strong and effective are they in conveying the community's story and vision?*
- *Do they engage a wide range of audiences and learning styles in accessible and welcoming ways (in-person and digital)?*
- *What Chesapeake Gateways themes from the Chesapeake Gateways framework (scroll down to the bottom of the page) are reflected, and where could they be strengthened or enhanced?*
- *How distinctive are these programs, and what opportunities exist to expand or improve them?*

For your **Visitor Services**, consider:

- *What visitor services are available, and how well do they meet the needs of residents and visitors across different user groups?*
- *What is the overall condition and quality of visitor services, and what makes them distinctive or memorable?*
- *How accessible, welcoming, and easy to use are these services, and how well do they align with the community's character and policies?*

For your **Marketing & Communications**, consider:

- *Who manages or influences public-facing information, and how coordinated and consistent are messages across platforms? Does the information represent the breadth of the community's primary elements?*
- *Are communications timely, accurate, accessible, and welcoming for diverse audiences, including clear accessibility information?*
- *How well do marketing efforts reflect the community's unique identity and reach visitors before and during their visit?*
- *What opportunities exist for cross-promotion, themed itineraries, or regional connections to strengthen visibility and impact?*

For your **Commitment & Capacity**, consider:

- *Does your community have an Office of Economic Development, or Office of Tourism, or Office of Outdoor Recreation that provides guidance on tourism development?*
- *How well are cultural, natural, and economic priorities aligned through tourism development, partnerships, marketing, and supportive policies?*
- *How strong is the community's stewardship ethic and capacity?*
- *How welcoming and accessible is the community in policy, practice, public spaces, and communications, and is there willingness to address barriers and community-identified needs?*
- *To what extent does the community embrace—or aspire to embrace—its identity as a gateway to the Chesapeake, and what is the current capacity and future potential to support it?*

V. Brainstorm Possible Projects and Actions (20 minutes)

Brainstorm potential projects that could strengthen the community and advance the shared vision. Generate ideas across all five primary elements without evaluating feasibility. Capture all ideas on a flipchart.

During your discussion, remember to put yourself in the mindset of a visitor to your community to get a sense of where you might want to invest time and effort.

VI. Nominate Places and Experiences for Chesapeake Gateways Network



Discuss whether any individual institutions and organizations in your community representing key assets and services can self-nominate to be designated as a Chesapeake Gateways Place or Experience in the Chesapeake Gateways Network. If so, identify what should be nominated. See “**Getting Officially Designated**” (page 30) for more details.

BEGIN STEP 4. PRIORITIZE

Please note: *If time is limited, you can convene a second meeting to cover the rest of the agenda.*

VII. Project Vetting and Selection (30 minutes)

From the brainstormed list, select 1–4 projects you believe would have the greatest impact and are realistic for the team to pursue (Post-it notes work well). **Please note:** teams may not have a priority project or action for each primary element.

If consensus is difficult, consider:

- *Will this be a visible or quick win for the community? Is a quick win important for the community?*
- *What is the anticipated return relative to the needed investment of time, effort, and funding?*
- *What is the long-term value to people, place, and the local economy?*
- *Is this a short-term action or part of a longer-term effort with clear next steps?*
- *Does the team include the right partners to move this project forward?*

VIII. Next Steps (10 minutes)

1. Schedule the next meeting. The next meeting will cover **Step 5. Act**. Review the agenda on **Tool I**. It will involve identifying benchmarks, timelines, and funding opportunities to support your prioritized projects and actions. (What resources are needed? Who will pursue them? Who will lead the project or action?)

We recommend that the next meeting is in person.

2. Optional: Once you’ve determined a list of prioritized projects and actions, this is a good time to share the Team’s work with the broader community for their feedback and support in a town hall format. This would occur prior to your final team meeting. See **Sharing the Process** (page 25) for guidance on facilitating larger community feedback meetings.
3. Optional: If multiple team members are not familiar with the primary elements identified during the discussion (assets, programming, visitor services), conduct a familiarization (FAM) tour to orient your team. See **Sharing the Process** (page 25) for guidance on facilitating familiarization tours.

IX. Adjourn



Tool 1

Planning for Action—Team Meeting #3

With a prioritized list of projects, your team is now ready to implement your ideas! This will involve identifying benchmarks, timelines, and funding opportunities to support the team’s prioritized projects and actions. **This meeting involves activities for Step 5. ACT.**

Meeting Goals

At the conclusion of this third meeting, team members should leave:

- Feeling confident in their ability to explain the priority projects and actions for the team, especially when speaking about the projects to potential partners, supporters, and funders.
- Knowing the next steps to implement the projects and actions.
- Understanding the potential for a future team gathering or other steps for implementation.

Points to remember

- The following pages include worksheets for two exercises. Make copies of each and use one project per sheet.
- Remember to pull together supplies; if your team is meeting virtually, this may be a laptop and online “white board” tool (such as [Padlet](#)). If meeting in-person, you may also want a flipchart, whiteboard, notepad, and/or laptop.

Template Agenda for Third Team Meeting

[Date]

[Time (approximately 2 hours)]

[In-person meeting location or call-in link]

- I. Recap of previous meeting (brief review of takeaways) (10 minutes)
If any Team Members were unable to participate in prior activities, a more detailed recap should be provided by email prior to this team gathering.
- II. Planning for Action (90 minutes)

Using the Planning for Action worksheet as a guide, work as a team to map out your top projects on a flip chart or whiteboard. For each project, identify resources, stakeholders, obstacles, progress metrics, timelines, and responsible parties (roughly 30-45 minutes per project). Be specific and thorough—clear detail will strengthen project planning and execution. If there are more than three projects that the group wants to plan, an additional gathering may be needed to adequately address the project details.

- **Project/Action Title:** Create a project title that helps differentiate it from other projects or actions.
- **Description:** Briefly explain (2-3 sentences) the project so the team and the community understand the activities related to your project or action.
- **Goal:** Describe a broad, long-term impact that outlines what you want the project or action to achieve.
- **Coordinating Entity:** Who will be responsible for coordinating the various partners and managing benchmarks for project completion?
- **Benchmarks/Tasks, Timeline, & Task Leads:** Determine key activities, how much time will be needed to implement, when it will begin and conclude, and who is the lead. If an action step involves multiple deadlines or responsible parties, break it into separate steps.



- **Resources:** *Identify the funding, partners, expertise, volunteers, and other resources needed, along with potential sources.*
- **Stakeholders & Partners:** List individuals or organizations that could contribute, what they might offer, and how to engage them.
- **Anticipated Obstacles:** Brainstorm possible challenges and their potential solutions.
- **Indicators/Metrics:** Define how success will be measured and tracked over time.

Once the team has completed brainstorming using flip charts, they can organize the details of each project on the Planning for Action worksheet for easy sharing with the team. Use one sheet per project and make additional copies as needed.

Use the Action Plan worksheet to summarize the priority projects or actions identified during the discussion. This one-page document provides a concise overview of planned activities and can be easily shared with team members or the broader community.

You will notice that the Action Plan worksheet has a pre-filled in action:

Project Title: Submit self-nominations for Chesapeake Gateways Places or Experiences

III. Next Steps and Future Actions (20 minutes)

1. Continue meeting. Although the formal process of the initiative has concluded, sustaining momentum is essential. It is recommended that teams establish regular check-ins—such as brief monthly virtual meetings or periodic community updates—to track action plan progress, address challenges, and celebrate successes.
2. Optional: This is an opportune time to share the Team’s work with the broader community for their feedback and buy-in. See *Sharing the Process* (page 25) for guidance on facilitating larger community feedback meetings.
3. Once your community demonstrates strong implementation of the five core elements, it may consider pursuing Chesapeake Gateways Places or Experiences Designations. See *“Getting Officially Designated”* (page 30) for more details.

IV. Adjourn

Planning for Action

Complete one worksheet per project

Project/Action Title:

Description:

[Brief description of what the project is and what you hope to accomplish.]

Goal:

[What do you intend to accomplish?]

Coordinating Entity:

[Who will be responsible for coordinating the various partners and managing benchmarks for project completion?]

BENCHMARKS/TASKS, TIMELINE & LEADS <i>Timeline and deadlines of key benchmarks/tasks needed to achieve project. List the lead responsible for each.</i>	RESOURCES <i>Financial, partners, areas of expertise, staff, volunteers and the possible sources for each.</i>	STAKEHOLDERS & PARTNERS <i>Specific entities & individuals who may contribute to the project, and how/who to approach.</i>	ANTICIPATED OBSTACLES <i>Brainstorm possible challenges and their potential solutions.</i>	INDICATORS/METRICS <i>For project implementation and overall success.</i>
Benchmark/Task: Start/Completion Date: Lead:				
Benchmark/Task: Start/Completion Date: Lead:				
Benchmark/Task: Start/Completion Date: Lead:				
Benchmark/Task: Start/Completion Date: Lead:				
Benchmark/Task: Start/Completion Date: Lead:				
Benchmark/Task: Start/Completion Date: Lead:				
Benchmark/Task: Start/Completion Date: Lead:				



Action Plan

Combine the relevant information from your planning worksheets into one action plan. Add more rows if necessary.
Please note: This is a sample. Your compiled action plan can be as detailed as you need to adequately track your progress.

Project Title	Brief Description	Goal	Stakeholders	Timeline
Submit selfnominations for Chesapeake Gateways Places or Experiences	Submit selfnominations to be part of the Chesapeake Gateways Network to highlight their Assets & Amenities and Programming & Interpretation.	Foster greater visibility to community assets, amenities, programming, and interpretation.	County and municipal parks and recreation, local museums, local outfitters, local heritage and conservation organizations. Sites and program deliverers.	23 months

Chesapeake Gateways Communities

These communities are where a combination of geography, location, transportation systems, economic uses, and services welcome people within the watershed. They provide a host of opportunities for people to experience multi-faceted Chesapeake resources and stories, and they encourage further exploration.

- NPS Chesapeake Gateways Framework



To learn more, visit:

<https://www.nps.gov/locations/chesapeakebaywatershed/cg-communities-initiative.htm>



CHESAPEAKE
GATEWAYS

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