Adopted
October 2026









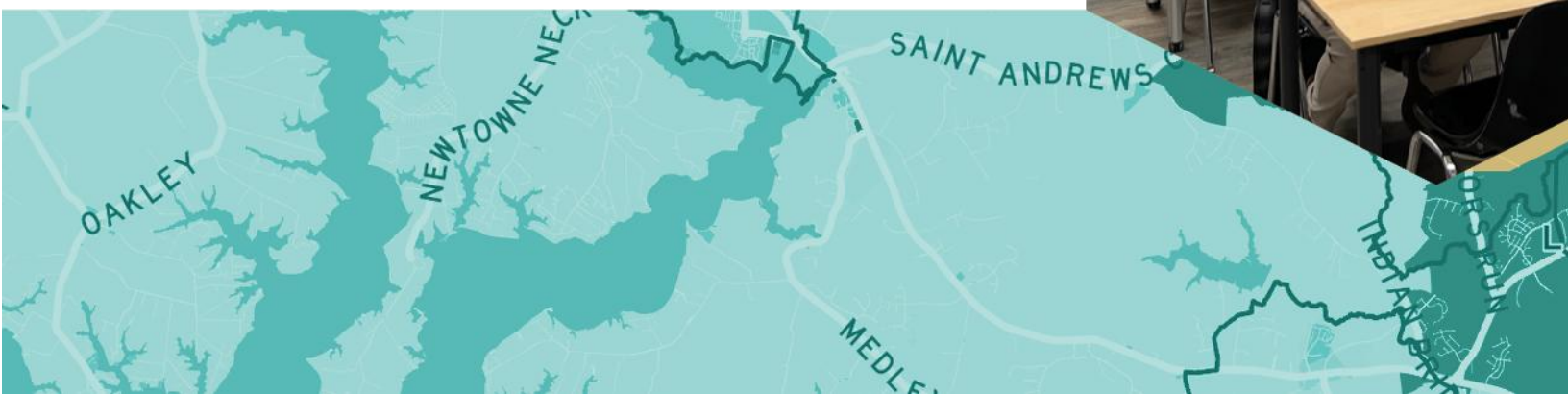


St. Mary's 2050

Charting Our Tomorrow

Comprehensive Plan for
St. Mary's County, Maryland





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LIBER 0032 FOLIO 054

RESOLUTION

TO UPDATE THE ST. MARY'S COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN BY ADOPTION OF ST. MARY'S 2050: CHARTING OUR TOMORROW

WHEREAS, Title 3 of the *Land Use Article* of the *Annotated Code of Maryland* empowers local jurisdictions to adopt and implement a comprehensive plan; and

WHEREAS, *St. Mary's County, Maryland Comprehensive Plan: Quality of Life in St. Mary's County, a Strategy for the 21st Century*, adopted by the Commissioners of St. Mary's County by Ordinance 2010-01 on March 23, 2010, as subsequently amended on February 9, 2016, February 15, 2022, April 26, 2022, April 8, 2025, May 13, 2025, and July 15, 2025, is the current comprehensive plan for St. Mary's County; and

WHEREAS, in October 2024, the Department of Land Use & Growth Management provided an overview of a Comprehensive Plan update entitled *St. Mary's County 2050: Charting Our Tomorrow* (herein referred to as the "draft plan") to the Commissioners of St. Mary's County, and received direction to proceed along the proposed path; and

WHEREAS, staff conducted two rounds of community engagement, in the winter and spring of 2025, to solicit public opinion to guide development of the elements, goals, policies, and actions of the draft plan; and

WHEREAS, the St. Mary's County Planning Commission held ten work sessions between September 12, 2025, and January 14, 2026, to discuss each element of the draft plan and the overall implementation; and

WHEREAS, a further round of community engagement occurred during February and March 2026, to solicit additional community input on the draft plan; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held two additional work sessions on April 20 and April 29, 2026, leading to the Planning Commission's approval to hold a public hearing on the draft plan, pursuant to *Land Use Article* § 3-203(b)(1); and

WHEREAS, pursuant to *Land Use Article* § 3-203(c), at least 60 days before the public hearing, a copy of the draft plan was sent, in its entirety, to all adjoining jurisdictions, including those adjacent by water, and all state units, regional units, and local jurisdictions responsible for financing or constructing public improvements necessary to implement the plan; and

WHEREAS, notice was mailed to each owner of property adjacent to a property for which a change in its land use designation was requested in the future land use maps contained in the draft plan; and

WHEREAS, public hearings, duly advertised in a newspaper of general circulation pursuant to *Land Use Article* § 3-203(b)(2), were conducted by the Planning Commission on June 29 and July 7, 2026; and

WHEREAS, on August 3, 2026, the Planning Commission moved to recommend approval of the draft plan, with certain amendments to the text and land use designations of certain properties, by a vote of 5-2; and

WHEREAS, on August 10, 2026, a majority of the Planning Commission members approved a formal resolution recommending adoption of the draft plan and an attested copy of the draft plan was forwarded to the Commissioners of St. Mary's County; and

WHEREAS, the Commissioners of St. Mary's County held a work session on September 15, 2026, and authorized the Department of Land Use & Growth Management to conduct a public hearing on October 6, 2026, on the draft plan; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to *Land Use Article* § 3-204, public notice containing the date, time, location, and purpose of the public hearing was published in *The Southern Maryland News*, a newspaper of general circulation in St. Mary's County, on September 18, 2026, and September 25, 2026, and a public hearing was held on the evening of October 6, 2026, with the record left open until October 13, 2026; and

WHEREAS, the Commissioners of St. Mary's County find that it is in the best interest of the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of St. Mary's County to repeal *St. Mary's County, Maryland Comprehensive Plan: Quality of Life in St. Mary's County, a Strategy for the 21st Century*, and adopt *St. Mary's 2050: Charting Our Tomorrow*, as revised by the Commissioners of St. Mary's County, and incorporated by reference as the comprehensive plan for St. Mary's County; and

WHEREAS, all area plans and functional plans which are components of the comprehensive plan, including but not limited to the Lexington Park Development District Master Plan, Comprehensive Water and Sewerage Plan (CWSP), Transportation Plan, Solid Waste Management Plan, and Aeropark Innovation District Master Plan, will not be modified or replaced by this resolution and are included in *St. Mary's 2050* by reference, with the exception of the service maps shown in the CWSP, which are now available online through the St. Mary's County GIS interactive map.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Commissioners of St. Mary's County, pursuant to § 3-204 of the *Land Use Article* of the *Annotated Code of Maryland*, that:

SECTION I. That *St. Mary's County, Maryland Comprehensive Plan: Quality of Life in St. Mary's County, a Strategy for the 21st Century*, adopted on March 23, 2010, and subsequently amended from time to time as described above, be repealed.

SECTION II. That *St. Mary's 2050: Charting Our Tomorrow*, substantially in the form attached hereto as Attachment A, be adopted as the comprehensive plan for St. Mary's County, with the following refinements to Figure 2 in the Growth Management Element labeled "Land Use Map" and also as shown on the St. Mary's County GIS map:

A. Change in the land use designation from Rural Preservation to Rural Commerce for the property shown on Tax Map 14 as Parcel 31, whose property tax identification number is 06-013546, and address is 26510 Three Notch Road, Mechanicsville, Maryland, 20659; and

B. Change in the land use designation from Rural Preservation to Rural Commerce for the property shown on Tax Map 46, Parcel 132, whose property tax identification number is 07-023081, and address is 0 Abell Road, Avenue, Maryland, 20609; and

C. Change in the land use designation from Rural Preservation to Rural Commerce for the property own on Tax Map 46, Parcel 362, whose property tax identification number is 07-018983, whose address is 0 Abell Road, Avenue, Maryland, 20609.

SECTION III. That all functional and area plans adopted and made part of *St. Mary's County, Maryland Comprehensive Plan: Quality of Life in St. Mary's County, a Strategy for the 21st Century* shall be considered components of *St. Mary's 2050: Charting Our Tomorrow* until subsequently amended, except insofar as any individual provision of a functional or area plan may be inconsistent with an express provision of *St. Mary's 2050: Charting Our Tomorrow*, in which case *St. Mary's 2050: Charting Our Tomorrow* shall supersede.

SECTION IV. That in the event any portion of this Resolution is found to be unconstitutional, illegal, null or void by a court of competent jurisdiction, it is the intent of the Commissioners of St. Mary's County to sever only the invalid portion or provision, and that the remainder of the Resolution shall be enforceable and valid, unless deletion of the invalid portion would defeat the clear purpose of the Resolution, or unless deletion of the invalid portion would produce a result inconsistent with the purposes of the Commissioners of St. Mary's County in enacting this Resolution.

SECTION V. The Director of the Department of Land Use and Growth Management may correct clear clerical errors, capitalization, spelling, grammar, headings and similar matters within Attachment A by administrative action, and may publish Attachment A by adding or amending covers, title pages, a table of contents, and graphics to improve readability or presentation. Nothing in this section may be construed to allow the Director to make a substantive change to Attachment A.

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SECTION VI. The sections, divisions, and provisions of this Resolution may be renumbered or re-lettered as deemed appropriate by the Code codifier. Typographical, clerical, and scrivener's errors that do not affect the intent of this Resolution, as determined by the County Attorney, may be corrected with the endorsement of the County Administrator or County Administrator's designee without the need for formal action by the Commissioners of St. Mary's County in an open session.

This Resolution shall be effective upon the date written below.

Those voting Aye: 4

Those voting Nay: 1

Those Abstaining: 0

Date of Adoption: October 20, 2026

Effective Date: November 3, 2026

ATTEST:

David A. Weiskopf
County Administrator

APPROVED AS TO FORM
AND LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

Buffy Giddens
County Attorney

COMMISSIONERS OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY

James R. Guy, Commissioner President

Eric Colvin, Commissioner

Michael L. Hewitt, Commissioner

-NO-
Scott Ostrow, Commissioner

Mike Alderson, Commissioner

LIBER 0532 FOLIO 058

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project would not have been possible without guidance and direction provided by the members of the Technical Review Committee:

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(Review of Land Use Designation Changes)

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St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office
Captain Stephen Simonds, Commander,
Patrol Community Services

St. Mary's County Public Information Office
Jenna Guzman, Fmr. Communications Director
(Branding, Styling Guide, News Releases)

A special "thank you" to the translation team at the **St. Mary's County Health Department** for making our community visioning sessions and informational materials accessible to our Spanish-speaking population:

Noel Cabrera, Bilingual Care Coordinator

Alissa Gamberg, Language Srvcs. Team Lead

Andrea Hamilton, Asst. Director of Community Engagement and Policy

Lidia Alvarez, Community Health Worker & Bilingual Health Professional

---

Community engagement and feedback would not have been possible without the assistance of the staff of the **Department of Land Use & Growth Management** who printed, assembled, and delivered flyers, surveys, and drafts of the plan throughout the County, and organized and attended numerous County-sponsored and non-profit organized community events.

Planning Commission Members
J. Howard Thompson, Chair
Joesph VanKirk, Vice Chair
Patricia Robrecht, Member
Lynn Delahay, Member
Gerald "Jay" Cousineau III, Member
Conor Loughran, Member
Judith Fillius, Member
Joseph St. Clair, Alternate Member

Commissioners of St. Mary's County
James R. Guy, Commissioner President
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Michael L. Hewitt, Commissioner
Mike Alderson, Jr., Commissioner
Scott R. Ostrow, Commissioner

David A. Weiskopf, County Administrator
David M. Yingling, Deputy County Administrator

Consultant Team

CLARION

IRG

BURNS McDONNELL

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Introduction

In This Section

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St. Mary's 2050: Our Vision
Engaging the Public
Alignment with Maryland State Requirements
How to Use the Plan
Plan Framework
Plan Monitoring Process



Elms Beach

Background

Situated along the Chesapeake Bay, St. Mary's County is a vibrant community rooted in traditions of agricultural stewardship and maritime economies alongside modern defense industries. Water-based recreation and maritime economies along with the Naval Air Station Patuxent River (NAS PAX) attract new residents and visitors alike. The resulting high quality of life and natural beauty found here has manifested in an identity of St. Mary's as an excellent historic peninsula county.

Relatively isolated from the pressures of growth experienced in the Baltimore and Washington D.C. metropolitan areas, visitors from these areas are drawn to St. Mary's County's rural farms and forests, waterfront property, and recreational access along the creeks, rivers, and coves that stretch along the county.

Thousands of new residents have been attracted to this quality of life, causing population to grow by 45% between 1995 and 2020. With a projected population increase of 34% from 2020 to 2045, this plan serves as a guide to planning for intentional growth while maintaining our community character.

This chapter provides an overview of the development of the plan, the vision themes to achieve to ensure St. Mary's County continues as an excellent place to live for current and future residents.

About the Plan

Purpose of the Plan

The St. Mary's 2050 Plan establishes a countywide comprehensive vision for the future of the community that reflects resident input and considers the needs of the county's future population. This plan is an update to the comprehensive plan that was adopted in 2010 and is required by Title 3 of the Land Use Article for the *Annotated Code of Maryland*.

The Comprehensive Plan is a long-range (20+ years) policy document centered around physical planning, including land use, natural resource conservation, public infrastructure, housing, and economic development.

It is built from extensive community engagement and serves as a guide to direct growth and support preservation efforts in the county. Implementation of the plan takes place through:

- Leveraging its policy guidance to inform decisions on proposed developments;
- Preparing updates to the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance (CZO) and related ordinances;
- Coordination with other important entities that influence growth, such as NAS PAX, MetCom, and the Town of Leonardtown; and
- Other actions that identify projects and programs that help implement the vision for St. Mary's County included in the Implementation Chapter.

The Plan Process

All communities change over time, and the community planning framework is a continuous cycle that begins with identifying a long-term vision and developing policy guidance through the Comprehensive Plan. Following this, the community identifies shorter-term priorities such as strategic plans and departmental work plans to support established long-term visions and policies.

Using these plans, the County can identify funding priorities to support implementation of the Comprehensive Plan through the County's annual budget and capital improvement plan (CIP). Implementation can come in the form of new planning initiatives, projects, and regulatory updates that align with policies identified in the Comprehensive Plan. The County can then assess implementation efforts to measure and evaluate progress and identify where headway is being made and priorities that are falling short. The framework then starts again with an update to the comprehensive plan every 10 years.



Plan Phases & Key Deliverables

This Comprehensive Plan was developed through a systematic four-phase planning framework spanning approximately 22 months. The framework was a collaboration between the County, community residents, and partner agencies to identify key issues, evaluate required planning topics, and establish a shared vision for the community's future.

Phase One: Launch Project (Months 1-2)

The initial phase established the foundation for the planning framework by organizing project resources, gathering baseline information, and preparing for public engagement. The project team established the project framework and created accessible branding and communication materials.

Phase Two: Establish Vision & Goals (Months 3-5)

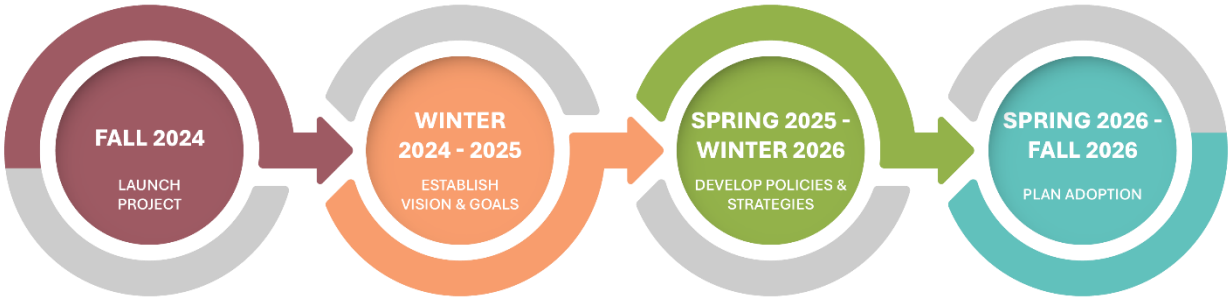
Phase Two focused on understanding current conditions and trends while launching the first major community engagement effort. The planning team analyzed existing policies, developed projections for future growth and needs (which were published in the 2025 Trends and Projections Report, which is incorporated by reference into this plan), and supported Community Engagement Window #1 to gather public input on community values and priorities for the future.

Phase Three: Develop Policies & Strategies (Months 6-18)

The longest and most intensive phase translated community vision and technical analysis into concrete goals, policies, and implementation actions. It kicked off with Community Engagement Window #2 that provided an opportunity for residents to share their opinions on key policy choices. Draft plan chapters were then developed, and a final Community Engagement Window #3 provided the opportunity for public review and refinement prior to the formal adoption process.

Phase Four: Adopt the Plan (Months 19-22)

The final phase of the project included formal adoption through structured



review and public hearings conducted by the Planning Commission and the Commissioners of St. Mary's County. This phase included public hearings providing opportunities for final public comment and official action.

Throughout all phases, the planning framework emphasized transparency, thorough analysis, and meaningful public participation. Over 1,000 community members participated in engagement activities, and the plan benefited from input from diverse participants including residents, business owners, community organizations, and public agencies. The result is a comprehensive plan that reflects the community's priorities.



Community Engagement Event at U.S. Colored Troops Interpretive Center

St. Mary's 2050: Our Vision

Leveraging the community conversations and feedback provided during the St. Mary's 2050 planning framework, three vision themes emerged.

Vision Theme 1: Guiding Our Growth Through 2050

Through the creation of the St. Mary's 2050 plan, St. Mary's County seeks to reinforce the balance between preserving important environmental and agricultural resources, and growing intentionally to create attractive, walkable, and connected places within designated Growth Areas. This balance will continue to provide living, working, and recreating environments for a variety of lifestyles. St. Mary's 2050 identifies areas where certain development types are appropriate and desirable, such as areas for high-tech business parks and mixed-use centers, traditional neighborhoods, retirement communities, rural farmsteads, and waterfront areas. Creating these distinct spaces helps to ensure the sustainability of St. Mary's County by providing a diverse economic base with job opportunities at all income levels, and by encouraging investments in housing to serve the diverse needs of the community.

Vision Theme 2: Protecting Our Environmental & Agricultural Resources

The County's wealth of natural assets are critical elements of its heritage, economy, and quality of life. The St. Mary's 2050 Plan prioritizes protection of land and water resources that support multiple community planning objectives. Implementation of these objectives will protect lands to maintain natural ecosystem functions. It will also protect the County's unique rural character and strengthen its agricultural economy. Investments in parks and open spaces will enhance livability for residents and visitors, and shoreline resiliency efforts will address vulnerability to hazards such as erosion, storm surge mitigation, and nuisance flooding.

Vision Theme 3: Serving Our Community

Maintaining a high quality of life means ensuring residents have access to effective and efficient County facilities and services. The St. Mary's 2050 plan envisions that resources are available to all residents in a manner that is consistent with the urban, suburban, or rural context where they are located. New or enhanced services and facilities should support a healthy fiscal bottom line for the County. Core services, such as public water and sewer, should be

prioritized within Growth Areas. The County's transportation network should be improved to support priority multimodal access needs (drive, bike, walk, transit, etc.) of the community.

Human services, public health, public safety, and other public services should be enhanced through strategic improvements that promote the wellbeing of all County residents.



Barns at New Market in Charlotte Hall

Engaging the Public

The comprehensive planning framework prioritized meaningful community engagement to ensure residents' voices shaped the County's future vision. Three distinct Community Engagement Windows (CEW) provided multiple opportunities for participation throughout the project.

Community Engagement Window #1 took place from Mid-January to the beginning of March 2025, inviting all community members to participate in shaping their county's future. This initial engagement phase centered around 12 Community Visioning Sessions, with ten held in-person and two conducted virtually. During these sessions, participants completed comprehensive surveys, engaged in small group discussions, and participated in hands-on mapping activities to identify priorities and concerns. For those unable to attend the sessions, online visioning activities were available.

Community Engagement Window #2 ran from Mid-May through the end of June. This phase focused on gathering feedback through three targeted surveys, made available both online and in person at 15 community events. These events included established gatherings such as the Southern Maryland Heritage Festival at Historic Sotterley and the Community, Culture and Cuisine event in Lexington Park, bringing the planning framework directly to residents in familiar community settings.

Community Engagement Window #3

Community Engagement Window #3 took place in February and March of 2026. At 11 open house-style events and through an online engagement portal, participants evaluated the draft goals of the plan, gave feedback on the draft Land Use Map, and shared their thoughts about the future of land use, growth, and economic opportunity in the county.

Key Planning Themes

The community engagement activities revealed consistent priorities and concerns that emerged as central planning themes. Community Engagement Window #1 identified six primary areas of focus that resonated strongly with participants:

- Environmental Protection and Rural Preservation
- Housing and Growth Management
- Transportation and Infrastructure
- Economic Diversification and Small Business Support
- Community Services and Quality of Life
- Public Safety and Governance

In addition to these themes, specific community priorities within each major area were identified. Rural heritage emerged as a particularly strong value, with residents expressing both appreciation for and determination to preserve the county's agricultural landscapes, scenic views, and cultural identity. Environmental stewardship priorities focused specifically on protecting vulnerable shoreline areas, wetlands, and other sensitive natural resources from inappropriate development pressures.

Balanced growth management emerged as a community priority, with residents supporting strategic redevelopment and new development in designated Growth Areas while simultaneously protecting rural areas from sprawl. This balanced approach reflects the community's understanding that growth can be beneficial when properly managed and located.



Community Engagement Event at Leonardtown Library



A St. Mary's Transit System (STS) bus

Transportation improvements represented both immediate needs and long-term vision, with community members identifying several specific priorities:

- Enhanced walking and biking infrastructure, including both destination connectivity and recreational trails;
- Improved public transportation options for both local trips and regional connections; and
- Strategic roadway network improvements to address existing safety concerns and traffic congestion.

Housing diversity and affordability emerged as challenges requiring comprehensive solutions. The community recognized the need for attainable housing options that serve residents throughout all their life stages. Participants emphasized the importance of providing varied housing types within Growth Areas, understanding that housing diversity supports workforce attraction and retention, including essential employees who serve the community.

Infrastructure capacity, particularly wastewater treatment expansion and improvement in specific county areas, was identified as foundational for supporting appropriate growth while maintaining environmental protection standards.

Alignment with Maryland State Requirements

Alignment with Maryland's Sustainable Growth Planning Principles

In April 2025, Governor Wes Moore signed into law the eight Sustainable Growth Planning Principles for Maryland. These principles update and consolidate the previous 12 Planning Visions, outlined in Maryland's 2009 Planning Visions law, marking the state's transition from Smart Growth to Sustainable Growth approaches. This updated framework emphasizes a more holistic approach to land use and development by balancing economic, social, and environmental considerations across generations.

St. Mary's 2050 aligns with the Sustainable Growth approach. Each principle is listed below with an explanation of how this plan supports it.

Land: St. Mary's 2050 promotes the preservation of agricultural lands and forests while directing growth toward established communities with adequate infrastructure already in place.

Transportation: St. Mary's 2050 emphasizes developing transportation systems that provide efficient and affordable access to employment centers, residential areas, and essential services.



Photo taken at Myrtle Point Park

Housing: St. Mary's 2050 encourages diverse housing options at various price points to meet the needs of residents across all income levels.

Economy : St. Mary's 2050 facilitates flexible development approaches, including repurposing existing structures and supporting mixed-use projects that adapt to evolving economic conditions.

Equity: St. Mary's 2050 has prioritized inclusive community engagement, ensuring that marginalized populations have meaningful input in shaping the county's future, and will continue this commitment throughout the implementation process.

Resilience: St. Mary's 2050 incorporates strategies to prepare for and mitigate both environmental hazards and human-caused disruptions that could affect local communities.

Place: St. Mary's 2050 values the creation and maintenance of community gathering spaces while protecting the county's historic sites and natural landscapes.

Ecology: St. Mary's 2050 commits to safeguarding environmentally sensitive areas and maintaining the health of the county's forests, farms, waterfront and riparian areas, and water resources.



The Sustainable Growth Planning Principles. Image from the Maryland Department of Planning.

Plan Element Compliance

Title 3 of the Land Use Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland requires comprehensive plans to address specific topics to guide local growth and development. St. Mary's 2050 incorporates all required topics, organized into elements that reflect the County's planning priorities and local context. Table 1 below demonstrates how the Plan's elements align with state requirements.

Table 1: Plan Element Compliance

Requirement	Chapter(s) in St. Mary's 2050
Community Facilities	Public Facilities and Infrastructure Element
Areas of Critical State Concern	Environment and Natural Resources Element (Sensitive Areas & Critical Areas of State Concern subsection)
Goals and Objectives	Integrated throughout all elements
Housing	Housing Element
Land Use	Growth Management Element
Development Regulations	Growth Management Element
Sensitive Areas	Environment & Natural Resources Element (Sensitive Areas & Critical Areas of State Concern subsection)
Transportation	Transportation Element
Water Resources Element	Public Infrastructure & Facilities Element (Water, Wastewater, and Stormwater subsection) Environment & Natural Resources Element (Water Resources subsection)
Mineral Resources	Economic Development Element (Mineral Resources subsection)
Fisheries	Economic Development Element (Fisheries subsection)

How to Use the Plan

The Plan is organized into eight elements:

- Growth Management
- Housing
- Economic Development
- Environment and Natural Resources
- Transportation
- Public Facilities and Infrastructure
- Public Health and Community Services
- Natural Hazards, Vulnerability, and Resiliency Element

Each planning element has its own Goals, Policies, and Actions in the following chapters.

The **Glossary of Planning Terms** is provided in Appendix A: Glossary.



Plan Framework

Each chapter is organized into three components: Goals, Policies, and Actions.

Goals describe desired outcomes. Guided by the Vision Themes, they articulate a more specific result to be achieved.

Policies are statements of commitment and direction aimed at achieving corresponding Goals. These describe positions to inform decision-making either by the County or a partner agency.

Actions are specific tasks that will be taken to achieve the Vision.



Not all the written Policies presented in this plan have corresponding Actions associated with them. Instead, many of the Polices are reflected in the creation and/or revision of other complementary plans (e.g., Transportation Plan, Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, etc.) or corresponding ordinances (e.g., CZO, Road Ordinance, etc.).

Plan Monitoring Process

Monitoring and reporting of the St. Mary's 2050 Plan should be an ongoing process that includes status updates on plan implementation to the public at regular intervals. It is good planning practice to report on implementation on a regular basis, as required by §§ 1-207 and 1-208 of the Land Use Article of the *Annotated Code of Maryland*.

2

Growth Management Element

In This Section

Planning for Balanced Growth
Planning Areas Framework
Land Use Map
Goals, Policies, & Actions



Planning for Balanced Growth

For generations, St. Mary's County has balanced growth with preservation, maintaining its distinctive blend of thriving communities, working farms and shorelines, natural beauty, and small-town character. The County's rural heritage, connection to early American history, waterfront access, strong sense of place, and high-paying employment opportunities generated by defense and related industries have made it an attractive location for families, businesses, and visitors alike. Data, maps, graphics, and other details about local and regional trends can be found in the Trends and Projections report that was developed as part of the community engagement process. The increasing costs of providing local public services and desired new quality of life amenities such as parks and trails require additional tax revenue, which can be generated through growth. Maintaining balanced growth in a desirable community like St. Mary's County is an ever-increasing challenge influenced by national, regional, and local trends.

National & Regional Trends

Exurban Growth Pressure & Population Trends

Nationally, exurban communities (places on the outskirts of major metropolitan areas) are among the fastest growing communities in the nation. With remote working, living preferences that took hold during the COVID-19 pandemic, and increasing housing affordability challenges, suburban and even rural communities are now seeing more growth pressure than in previous decades. St. Mary's County, located within a one-to-two-hour commute from both the Washington, DC and Baltimore metropolitan areas, is experiencing this exurban growth pressure as evidenced by the new development occurring at the northern end and other parts of the county.

While St. Mary's County is experiencing population growth, Maryland as a whole is slowly losing residents. According to the Comptroller of Maryland's Housing & The Economy Report, Maryland has lost 2.5 million residents since 2010 as a result of out-migration to several key states: Florida, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Texas, Virginia, South Carolina, West Virginia, and Delaware. Many communities in these states provide more affordable housing options than are found in Maryland. The share of domestic out-migration from residents making less than $50K has increased substantially since 2020, from 2% of the net migration loss 2011-2019 to 27% of the net migration loss 2020-2022. While natural population growth and immigrants coming to Maryland from outside the U.S. are largely filling the population gap created by domestic out-migration, Maryland is still ranked in the top 10

states across the nation for largest net loss of residents to domestic migration. This results in a reduction of the local workforce and impacts economic and business development efforts across the state.

Attainable Housing Challenge

In recent years, the national housing crisis has challenged the ability of states and local governments to achieve balanced growth, and this housing challenge is also impacting St. Mary's County. While the median household income in 2023 for the County ($114,580) was higher than the state's ($101,652), a large proportion of local workers earn low wages that make it unaffordable to own or rent a home in St. Mary's County. This not only affects households earning the lowest incomes, but also aging residents on fixed incomes, younger workers, and families wanting to relocate to the area. Public service workers, such as teachers, firefighters, police, and nurses, are finding it ever more challenging to afford to live near where they work. This is further exacerbated by older generations of homeowners that are living longer in their homes and not selling to new homebuyers, the conversion of houses to short-term rentals that reduce year-round housing stock, and the increasing costs of land and construction to build new units. These challenges with the cost and supply of local housing impact the community's ability to support housing for local workers and families.

Intentional Growth Approach

As the County grows, an intentional approach is needed to address national and regional growth trends and preserve what residents value most about the county. This chapter establishes a framework for directing growth to locations where infrastructure and services can efficiently support new homes and businesses. At the same time, it protects agricultural lands, environmental resources, and the rural character that define St. Mary's County.

It is also important to be intentional about the fiscal impacts of new development. Currently, the County's private property tax generation is 85% residential and 15% nonresidential. Supporting development of commercial and industrial development in appropriately zoned lands in Growth Areas can help generate revenues needed to address the growing costs to provide public services and maintain public facilities.

The policies and actions that follow reflect community priorities and provide guidance for land use decisions, capital investments, and development patterns that will sustain the County's quality of life for generations to come. It will be important to review and update existing zoning regulations to limit and/or prohibit uses with potentially high impacts to ensure neighboring properties and communities are protected from harmful secondary effects of these land uses.

Existing Growth Areas

The 2010 Comprehensive Plan established a three-tiered approach to managing growth: Growth Areas, Rural Areas, and Protected Areas. Growth Areas include the Development Districts, Town Centers, and Village Centers. These locations are designated to accommodate the majority of new residential and commercial development. Rural areas include Rural Preservation, Rural Service Center, and Rural Commercial Limited designations, designed to maintain agricultural land and low-density development. Protected Areas include the Resource Protection Area and Neighborhood Conservation Districts, maintaining these areas as environmentally sensitive lands and established neighborhoods.

During the St. Mary's 2050 planning framework, residents shared strong support (91%) for continuing this tiered approach to managing growth. The challenge is finding the right balance between protecting rural character and marine-based assets, supporting economic and housing development, and maintaining community character, while ensuring infrastructure keeps pace with new growth.

Key Findings from Public Engagement

The growth management policies and actions in this chapter were developed through community engagement and analysis of current conditions in St. Mary's County.

The following key findings from the engagement activity have informed the policies and actions that follow in this section.

Growth & Rural Preservation

The County's Identity and Development Pressure

St. Mary's County's identity is deeply rooted in its rural character that distinguishes it from the more urbanized areas of the region, including the working farms, open spaces, waterfront access, and small-town atmosphere. At the same time, the county faces development pressure and the need to provide housing and economic opportunities for current and future residents. When asked what was important to protect about the county's rural and agricultural landscape, respondents identified agricultural land preservation, preserving historic barns and incentivizing their reuse, promoting agritourism and farm experiences, and limiting encroachment from development to maintain agriculture as a viable industry in St. Mary's County.

Focusing Growth in Appropriate Locations

The community vision emphasized responsible growth that maintains rural character by focusing development within existing Growth Areas instead of sprawling into rural areas. Participants called for limiting large subdivisions and high-density housing in rural zones, prioritizing revitalization of underutilized properties in Growth Areas rather than new development, and investing in infrastructure improvements without over-urbanizing the county. While some residents expressed concerns about growth happening anywhere, and others felt that the county cannot accommodate more growth and development than has already occurred, most participants supported a measured and intentional approach to growth in specific areas, particularly the Development Districts and Town Centers. Efforts to curb development of repetitive commercial uses, such as convenience retail centers and gas stations, are also important to the community. The key is ensuring that growth does not compromise the qualities that make St. Mary's County distinctive.

Concerns About Growth Rates and Locations

Interactive mapping activities revealed concerns about ongoing levels of residential and commercial growth, especially in Charlotte Hall and Lexington Park. Some participants called to halt new development in specific areas like Lexington Park, Leonardtown, and Myrtle Point Peninsula, while others suggested focusing on infill and redevelopment rather than new construction in rural areas. On the contrary, other community members expressed a desire to see growth concentrated in the Lexington Park, Leonardtown, and California areas to limit growth in rural areas. The majority of respondents (78%) identified growth within the designated Growth Areas, particularly the Development Districts and Town Centers, as appropriate places for future development and redevelopment. The consistent theme was balancing growth with adequate infrastructure investments and preserving the county's local character.

Preventing Sprawl

Community participants emphasized the importance of preventing suburban sprawl and maintaining open spaces, farmland, and rural character. There was strong support for maintaining low-density housing and minimizing light and noise pollution in rural areas, with clear desire to keep rural areas rural.

Environmental Protection & Rural Character

Core Community Values

Environmental protection and rural preservation emerged as core values in the community's vision for 2050. When asked what they value about St. Mary's County and what aspects of rural

character are most important to protect, participants emphasized preserving rural character, open spaces, and farmland; protecting waterways, shorelines, and the Chesapeake Bay from pollution; and maintaining and expanding public access to water and shore areas. Community members also emphasized the importance of keeping farmland and natural landscapes that are part of the heritage and unique tourist appeal of the county.

Agricultural Support

Agriculture was recognized as fundamental to the county's identity and economy. Participants strongly supported retaining and expanding support for agriculture including all aspects of the farming industries such as Amish and Mennonite farms, oyster farming and watermen, small organic farms, and traditional/conventional agriculture.

Climate Resilience

The community highlighted the importance of climate resilience strategies, including shoreline preservation and protection of wetlands, smart growth policies to limit development in flood-prone areas, and calls for solar panel installations on public buildings and parking lots as part of the County's sustainability efforts.

Redevelopment & Infrastructure

Support for Revitalization

Several areas of the county, particularly Lexington Park, have aging commercial development and housing stock that would benefit from reinvestment. These established communities contain existing infrastructure investments that could support redevelopment more efficiently than extending services to undeveloped areas. Community members voiced strong support for redevelopment in areas like Lexington Park, with emphasis on improving the quality of the housing stock and commercial development. They also support the concept of redeveloping and replacing aging commercial centers with moderately dense housing and mixing residential uses with commercial and office uses. This redevelopment focus reflects both a desire to revitalize established communities and a recognition that making better use of existing infrastructure is preferable to expanding development into new areas.

Openness to Revitalization and Intensification in Strategic Areas

The community demonstrated openness to redevelopment and intensification in appropriate locations. When asked about redeveloping aging commercial areas with the understanding that financial feasibility may require more intensive development than originally existed, 81% of respondents were supportive or potentially supportive of strategic redevelopment, recognizing that revitalizing aging areas may require some increased intensity.

Development Quality and Context

The community vision emphasized mixed-use developments, walkable communities, and support for local businesses and entrepreneurs as alternatives to sprawl and big-box development. Participants called for focusing on redevelopment and reuse of existing structures, when possible, especially in older areas of the county, and encouraging mixed-use developments with walkable community design.

Housing Diversity & Attainability

Need for Diverse Housing Options

The community clearly articulated the need for increased housing options to support residents at all income levels. Participants called for workforce housing, alternative housing types, and addressing homelessness and housing insecurity through increased County support.

Location Preferences for Different Housing Types

Community participants indicated their support for diverse housing types in established communities like Lexington Park, California, Hollywood, Mechanicsville, and Charlotte Hall, with more mixed support for Leonardtown. Depending on the planning area, residents supported the idea of adding diverse housing types, such as multi-story mixed-use buildings (with retail or offices on the ground floor and housing or offices on upper floors), starter homes and townhomes, and multi-family housing (apartments or condominiums) to the county's housing inventory. The strongest support was for new, smaller starter homes and townhouses. These housing choices can increase the attainability for younger workers and families, aging seniors, and critical public service employees to live and work in St. Mary's County.

Access to Green Spaces

Community participants called for maintaining and expanding access to green spaces, parks, and trails. There was emphasis on encouraging mixed-use developments with integrated green spaces as part of the overall development pattern.

Planning Areas Framework

Overview

St. Mary's County Planning Areas are designated geographic areas that guide growth, development, and preservation decisions throughout its planning jurisdiction. This plan divides the County into growth areas and preservation areas to concentrate growth in suitable areas, while maintaining resources and rural character elsewhere.

Background

Following an assessment of the Planning Areas, the designations follow the same framework as outlined in the 2010 Plan. Growth areas are intended to receive a majority of residential, commercial, and industrial development, and are served or proposed to be served with public water and sewer (with some exceptions) and other infrastructure to meet the needs of current and future residents. These planning areas are divided into three categories – Development Districts, Town Centers, and Village Centers (see Figure 1: Planning Areas Map).

These Growth Areas are designated as receiving areas for Transferrable Development Rights (TDRs). The Rural areas support agricultural and working lands and waters operations, and the Protected areas support protection of the County's important natural assets.

Relationship to Countywide Planning

The Planning Areas Framework guides capital investment decisions, infrastructure planning, zoning decisions, and development review processes throughout the county. This framework directs priorities based on designated growth areas and the Land Use Map (LUM), creating focused opportunities for targeted policies and implementation strategies for each planning area type.

Development Districts

The primary growth centers are concentrated in Development Districts, which are urban in pattern and form; designated for intensive residential, commercial, and industrial development; and are the priority locations for community facilities, services, and amenities. There are two Development Districts: **Lexington Park and Leonardtown**. The County has an adopted Lexington Park Development District (LPDD) Master Plan that provides the land use guidance within that area along with the Innovation District Master Plan that applies to the Aeropark Innovation District, a subarea of the LPDD. The Air Installations Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ) supports the mission of Naval Air Station Patuxent River (NAS PAX), which is located within the LPDD.

Large portions of the Leonardtown Development District are currently included in the Town of Leonardtown's future municipal growth area as designated in the Leonardtown Comprehensive Plan (2025). See Appendix C: Development Capacity Analysis for more information on development capacity in the Leonardtown Development District.

Development Districts are designated as receiving areas for Transferrable Development Rights (TDRs) and are planned to support medium and high-density residential development with densities greater than five units per acre. The plan delineates and encourages development of a central core with mixed uses surrounded by larger inter-mixed blocks of residential, commercial, and industrial uses. This promotes creative and carefully designed commercial areas, avoiding the inefficiencies and negative visual impacts of strip commercial development.

Infrastructure provision is prioritized in Development Districts to support urban development patterns and design. Visual and functional qualities of development are maintained through adherence to site standards for landscaping, architectural design, access, lot coverage and open space, and buffering from adjacent developments and transportation corridors.

Town Centers

Town Centers are secondary growth centers that are urban in pattern and form; designated for moderately intense residential, commercial, and industrial development; and are supported by the provision of community facilities and services. These areas are **Charlotte Hall, Hollywood, Mechanicsville, New Market, and Piney Point**.

Town Centers are designated as receiving areas for Transferrable Development Rights (TDRs) and should be provided with infrastructure that supports densities of up to five units per acre. Mixed use development is encouraged in these areas, and planning best practices suggest that master plans should be generated for each of the town centers to ensure that visual and functional qualities of development adhere to standards for landscaping, architectural design, on-site and off-site advertising, access, lot coverage and open space, and buffering from adjacent developments and transportation corridors.

Development in Town Centers should discourage strip development and restrict direct access onto major transportation corridors. If master plans are prepared for individual town centers, the service areas of public facilities should be mapped to assist in establishing growth patterns and identifying infrastructure needs.

Village Centers

After Development Districts and Town Centers, the tertiary and final type of growth centers are Village Centers, which are intended to serve as the focus for rural community facilities, services, and activities. These areas are **Callaway, Chaptico, Clements, Loveville, Ridge, St. Inigoes, and Valley Lee**.

Village Centers should be provided with infrastructure that supports densities of up to 5 dwelling units per acre. Traditional village development patterns and design should be fostered, with master plans prepared for each Village Center.

Compact development patterns should be encouraged by clustering septic easements to create open space. Infill development and redevelopment should provide pedestrian connections to adjacent properties. Village Centers should promote use of development rights transferred from rural preservation districts and encourage expansion of rural services within these designated areas.

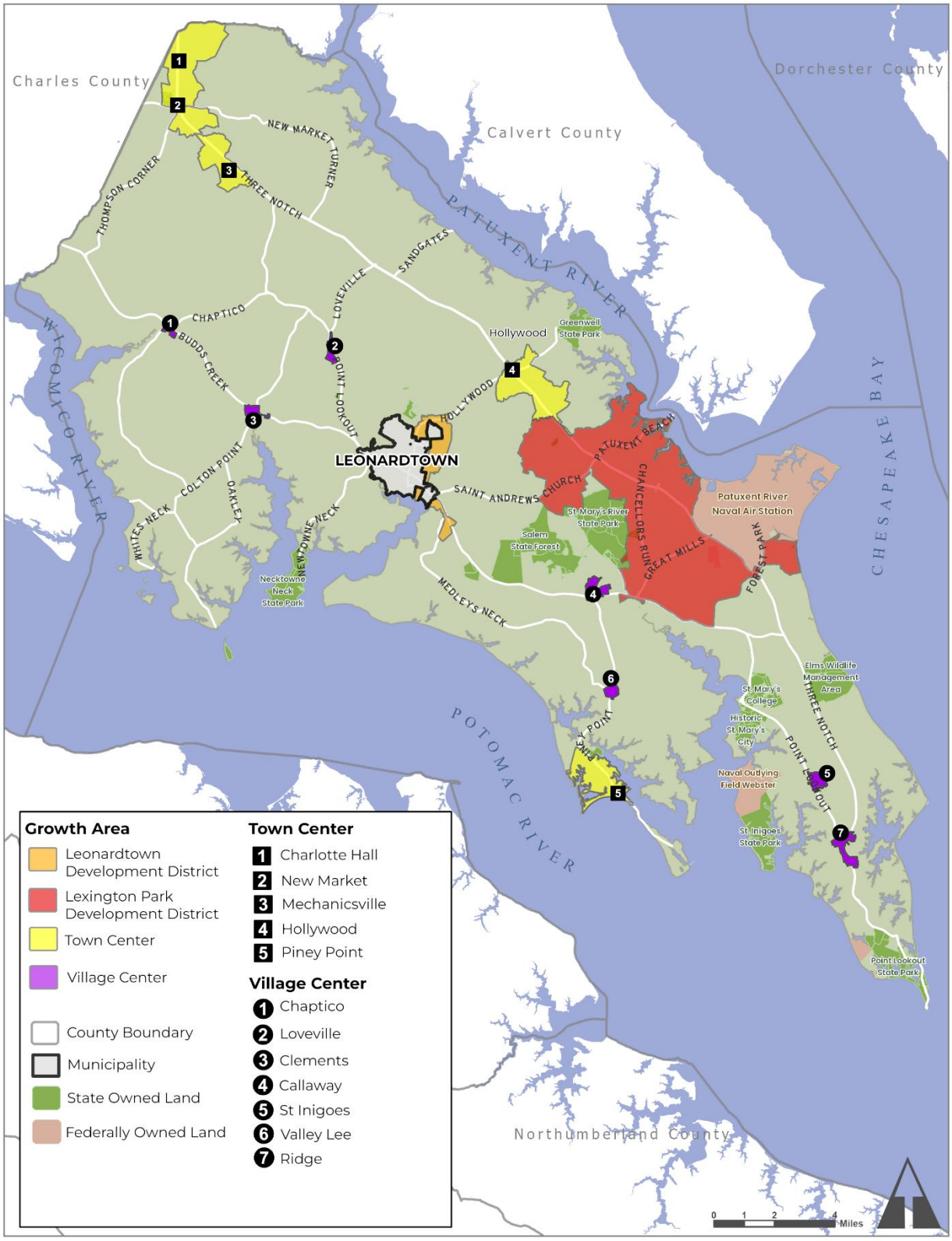
Planning Areas Map

The Planning Areas Map (Figure 1) identifies the locations of the Development Districts, Town Centers, and Village Centers.



Community Engagement Event at Charlotte Hall Library

Figure 1: Planning Areas Map



Land Use Map

Understanding the Land Use Map

The 2010 Plan envisioned a holistic approach to land use planning through the adoption of the 2030 Land Use Concept Plan (and its 22 Land Use Categories) as amended by Ordinance 2018-12 for the Lexington Park Development District Master Plan.

The St. Mary's 2050 Plan includes an updated Land Use Map (see Figure 2: Land Use Map) and a consolidated list of 9 Land Use Categories (see Table 2: Summary of Land Use Category Changes).

How to Use the Land Use Map

The Land Use Map and categories, combined with the Policies and Actions in this plan, guide coordinated and sustainable land use decisions in St. Mary's County. The Land Use Map also informs decisions relating to preservation of natural and rural areas, future economic development opportunities, infrastructure investment, and zoning.

Upon the adoption of the St. Mary's 2050 plan, the *Official Zoning Maps* (as adopted by Ordinance No. Z-10-02) may need to be updated to reflect changes in policy and vision.

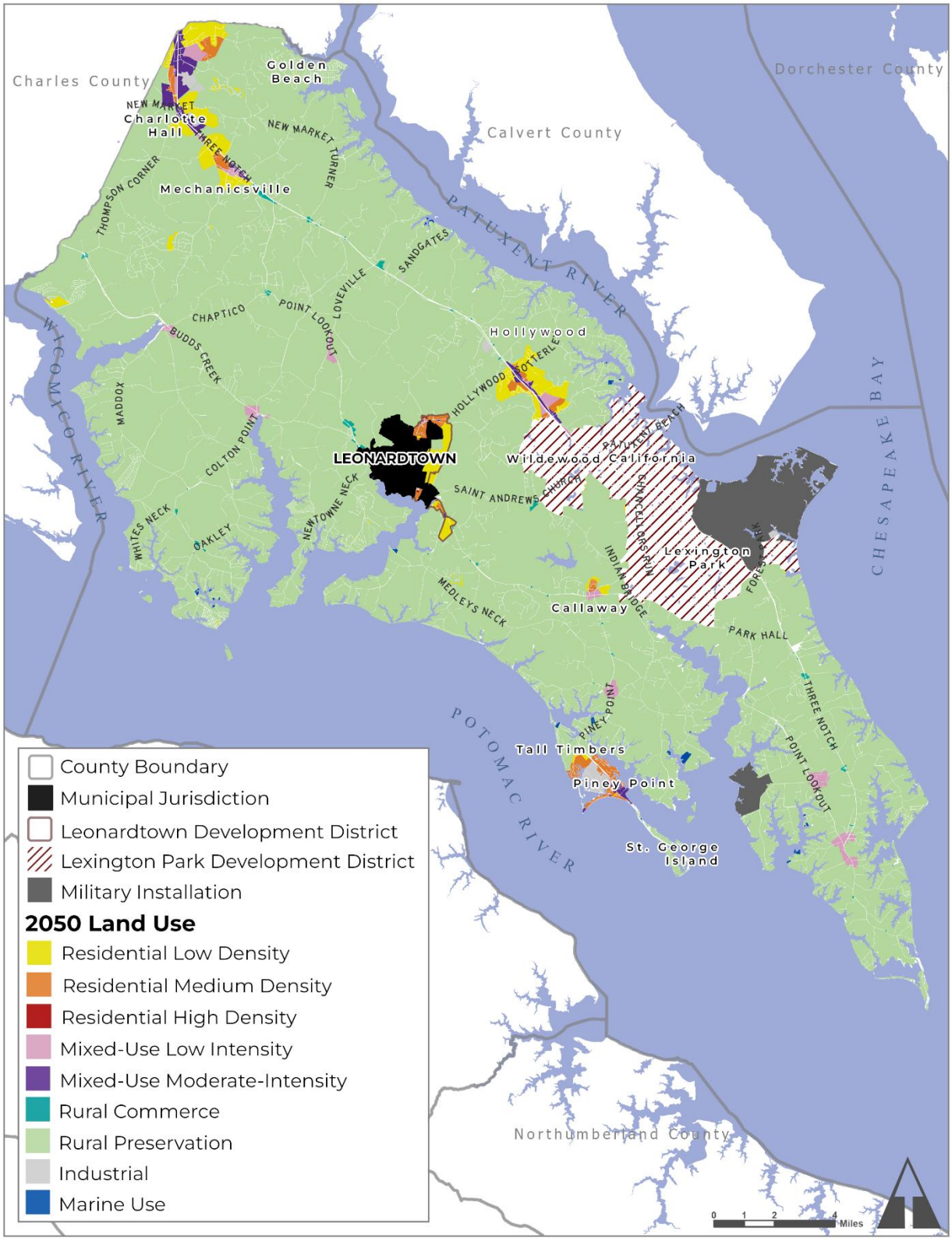
The Land Use Map provides broad policy guidance, while the *Official Zoning Maps* and *Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance* provide specific rules and development requirements to achieve the vision established by this plan.

Table 2 : Summary of Land Use Category Changes

2010 Plan	St. Mary's 2050 Plan
Residential Low Density Transitional	Residential Low Density
Residential Low Density	
Residential Medium Density	Residential Medium Density
Residential High Density	Residential High Density
Mixed-Uses Low Intensity	Mixed-Use Low Intensity
Residential Mixed-Use	
Mixed-Use Moderate-Intensity	Mixed-Use Moderate Intensity
Mixed Use Medium Intensity	
Rural Commerce	Rural Commerce
Crossroads Commercial	
Rural Preservation	Rural Preservation
Rural Residential	
Industrial	Industrial
Marine Use	Marine Use
Publicly-Used Lands	*Deleted*
Protected Open Space	*Deleted*
Military Installation	*Deleted*
Municipal Jurisdiction	*Deleted*
Corridor Mixed-Use	*Removed as part of LPDDMP*
Community Commercial	*Removed as part of LPDDMP*
Downtown Mixed-Use	*Removed as part of LPDDMP*
Employment Center	*Removed as part of LPDDMP*
Transportation	*Deleted*

Note: Land Use Categories located solely within the LPDD can be found in the LPDDMP.

Figure 2: Land Use Map



Note: Land Use Categories located solely within the LPDD can be found in the LPDDMP.

2050 Land Use Categories

Each Land Use Category is described in detail on the following pages. Each category includes a general description of the land use, primary uses, secondary uses, infrastructure, applicable zoning districts, residential density, and jurisdictional collaboration. The purpose is to illustrate the desired development type and features within each Land Use Category.

The following are key terms used to describe the Land Use Category characteristics:

- **General Description of Land Use:** A high-level description of the type of development appropriate in the Land Use Category.
- **Primary Uses:** The dominant land uses in that Land Use Category that inform the character of the area.
- **Secondary Uses:** The supporting and complementary land uses that are compatible with the primary uses but are not the primary focus of the area.
- **Infrastructure to Serve Development**: The form of water, wastewater, and road ownership types appropriate for the Land Use Category.
- **Applicable Zoning Districts:** The Zoning Districts in the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance (CZO) that are appropriate in the Land Use Category.
- **General Residential Density:** On average, the number of housing units per acre that are envisioned for the Land Use Category.
- **Jurisdictional Collaboration:** Other jurisdictions whose collaboration may be warranted for development in the Land Use Category.

Residential Low Density

General Description of Land Use

Low density residential development. A strong focus is on maintenance of preserved open space and sensitive areas through clustering of lots and protected natural areas.

Primary Land Uses

- Single-family residential
- Multi-family residential

Secondary Land Uses

- Neighborhood scale civic/public uses

Infrastructure to Serve Development

- Public water and/or sewer
- Private well and/or septic
- Public and private roads

Applicable Zoning

- Residential, Low-Density – Transitional (RL-T)
- Residential, Low-Density (RL)
- Residential Neighborhood Conservation District (RNC)

General Residential Density

- 1–5 dwelling units per acre (with TDRs)

Jurisdictional Collaboration

- Coordination with Naval Air Station Patuxent River (NAS PAX) for areas near military installation





Residential Medium Density

General Description of Land Use

Medium density residential development and accessory services that support clustered development, with a focus on preservation of open space.

Primary Land Uses

- Single-family residential
- Multi-family residential

Secondary Land Uses

- Neighborhood scale civic/public uses

Infrastructure to Serve Development

- Public water and/or sewer
- Public and private roads

Applicable Zoning

- Residential, Low-Density District (RL)
- Residential, Medium Density District (RM)

General Residential Density

- 1–10 dwelling units per acre (with TDRs)

Jurisdictional Collaboration

- Coordination with Naval Air Station Patuxent River (NAS PAX) for areas near military installation





Residential High Density

General Description of Land Use

High density residential development and accessory services that support clustered development.

Primary Land Uses

- Multi-family residential

Secondary Land Uses

- Civic/public uses

Infrastructure to Serve Development

- Public water and/or sewer
- Public and private roads

Applicable Zoning

- Residential, High-Density District (RH)

General Residential Density

- 10–20 dwelling units per acre (with TDRs)

Jurisdictional Collaboration

- Coordination with Naval Air Station Patuxent River (NAS PAX) for areas near military installation





Mixed-Use Low Intensity

General Description of Land Use

Neighborhood-scale development with primarily residential uses and limited compatible commercial and residential uses along auto corridors.

Primary Land Uses

- Residential
- Commercial
  - Office
  - Retail
  - Restaurant



Secondary Land Uses

- Civic/public uses

Infrastructure to Serve Development

- Public water and/or sewer
- Private well and/or septic
- Public and private roads

Applicable Zoning

- Village Center Mixed Use District (VMX)
- Residential Mixed Use District (RMX)



General Residential Density

- 1–5 dwelling units per acre (with TDRs)

Jurisdictional Collaboration

- Coordination with Naval Air Station Patuxent River (NAS PAX) for areas near military installation

Mixed-Use Moderate Intensity

General Description of Land Use

Moderate-density/intensity developments blending residential, office, and retail uses in urban-suburban transition areas, designed to balance auto and pedestrian access.

Primary Land Uses

- Residential
- Commercial
  - Office
  - Retail
  - Restaurant



Secondary Land Uses

- Office
- Civic/public uses

Infrastructure to Serve Development

- Public water and/or sewer
- Private well and/or septic
- Public and private roads

Applicable Zoning

- Town Center Mixed Use District (TMX)
- Corridor Mixed Use District (CMX)



General Residential Density

- 5–15 dwelling units per acre (with TDRs)

Jurisdictional Collaboration

- Coordination with Naval Air Station Patuxent River (NAS PAX) for areas near military installation

Rural Commerce

General Description of Land Use

Small-scale commercial development located at rural crossroads nodes that serve rural communities. These areas maintain low-intensity developments and rural community character and prohibit strip development.

Primary Land Uses

- Commercial
  - Office
  - Retail
  - Restaurant

Secondary Land Uses

- Residential

Infrastructure to Serve Development

- Private well (possibly public water if included in service area)
- Private septic system (possibly public sewer if included in service area)
- Public and private roads

Applicable Zoning

- Rural Service Center (RSC)
- Rural Commercial Limited (RCL)

General Residential Density

- Residential density shall not extend one dwelling unit detached

Jurisdictional Collaboration

- Coordination with Leonardtown for areas near municipal limits





Rural Preservation

General Description of Land Use

Area designated for preservation in support of the land and water resource base necessary for the maintenance of agriculture, forestry, and fisheries.

Primary Land Uses

- Farmlands
- Forests
- Fisheries
- Very low-density residential

Secondary Land Uses

- Agritourism

Infrastructure to Serve Development

- Private well and septic system
- Public and private roads

Applicable Zoning

- Rural Preservation District (RPD)
- Residential Neighborhood Conservation District (RNC)

General Residential Density

- 1 dwelling unit per 5 acres on average

Jurisdictional Collaboration

- Coordination with Leonardtown for areas near municipal limits
- Coordination with Naval Air Station Patuxent River (NAS PAX) for areas near military installation





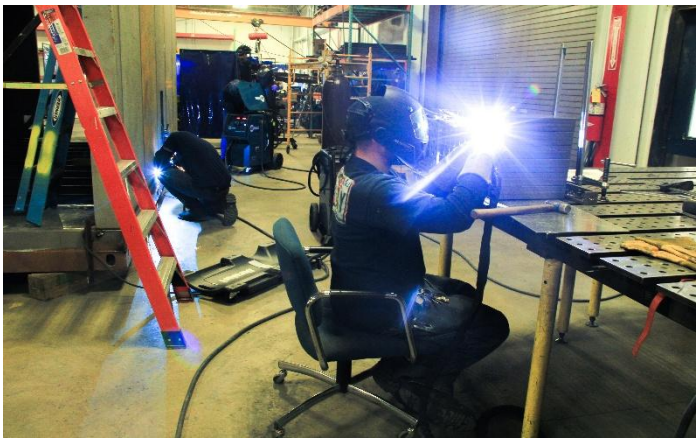
Industrial

General Description of Land Use

Designated for manufacturing, warehousing, and technology industry with a focus on the preservation of sensitive areas.

Primary Land Uses

- Manufacturing/processing facilities
- Research and development centers
- Warehousing/distribution
- Airport facilities



Secondary Land Uses

- Office

Infrastructure to Serve Development

- Public water and/or sewer
- Private well and/or septic
- Public and private roads



Applicable Zoning

- Industrial (I)

General Residential Density

- Not applicable

Jurisdictional Collaboration

- Coordination with Naval Air Station Patuxent River (NAS PAX) for areas near military installation

Marine Use

General Description of Land Use

Water-dependent commercial activities that protect shoreline resources while supporting fisheries, aquaculture, marine-commerce, and public access.

Primary Land Uses

- Marine-related commercial
- Office
- Tourist-related facilities

Secondary Land Uses

- Residential
- Tourist-related facilities

Infrastructure to Serve Development

- Public water and/or sewer
- Private well and/or septic
- Public and private roads

Applicable Zoning

- Commercial Marine (CM)

General Residential Density

- One single-family dwelling is permitted per site

Jurisdictional Collaboration

- Coordination with Naval Air Station Patuxent River (NAS PAX) for areas near military installation





GOALS, POLICIES, & ACTIONS

To achieve intentional managed growth in St. Mary's County, the following goals and policies should be used to guide decision-making on future development initiatives. The corresponding actions identify specific implementation strategies to further accomplish the growth management goals.

GOAL GM-1: UTILIZE THE LAND USE MAP & GROWTH AREAS TO GUIDE DEVELOPMENT

Use the Planning Areas and Land Use Map for land development and capital investment decision making to prevent sprawl and protect the County's agricultural and natural resources.

Policy GM-1.1: Guide New Development to Growth Areas

Guide growth in the county to Growth Areas (Development Districts, Town Centers, and Village Centers).

Action GM-1.1.1: Update the Countywide Priority Funding Area (PFA) Boundaries

Update the countywide Priority Funding Area boundaries. Keeping these boundaries current helps to enable those areas to be eligible for State funding when needed.

Policy GM-1.2: Concentrate Development Activity in Areas Served by Public Water and Sewer

Concentrate development activity in areas served or proposed to be served with public water and sewer, primarily the Development Districts and secondarily in the Town Centers.

Action GM-1.2.1: Evaluate and Amend CZO as Necessary

Assess the CZO and identify any needed updates to the zoning districts, development standards, and permitted uses to better implement the goals and policies of this plan, and particularly the Land Use Map and associated categories.

Policy GM-1.3: Protect Naval Flight Operations through Land Use Planning

Protect the air operations of NAS PAX by using Air Installations Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ) to guide land use and development intensity decisions.

Action GM-1.3.1: Coordinate with NAS Pax on Development of New Compatible Use Plan (CUP)

Coordinate with NAS PAX on development of a new Compatible Use Plan to develop recommendations for future land use maps and development regulations.

GOAL GM-2: CONCENTRATE THE MAJORITY OF GROWTH IN DEVELOPMENT DISTRICTS

Most of the growth in St. Mary's County should be concentrated in the development districts outlined in the Planning Areas Framework to maximize existing infrastructure, promote sustainable communities, and preserve rural areas.

Policy GM-2.1: Support Implementation of the Lexington Park Development District Master Plan

The County will support the implementation of the Lexington Park Development District Master Plan through the development review process and implementation of master plan strategies.

Action GM-2.1.1: Update Planning for Lexington Park Development District

Update planning for Three Notch Road and FDR Boulevard expansion in the Lexington Park development district as needed.

Policy GM-2.2: Consider the Town of Leonardtown's Plans for Municipal Growth Areas

When making land use decisions on lands within the Leonardtown Development District, the County will consider the Town of Leonardtown's plans for municipal Growth Areas within the County's planning and zoning jurisdiction.

Figure 3 shows Leonardtown's Municipal Growth Areas.

Policy GM-2.3: Concentrate Commercial Uses in Development Districts

Concentrate commercial uses primarily in the County's development districts, and secondarily in the town and village centers.

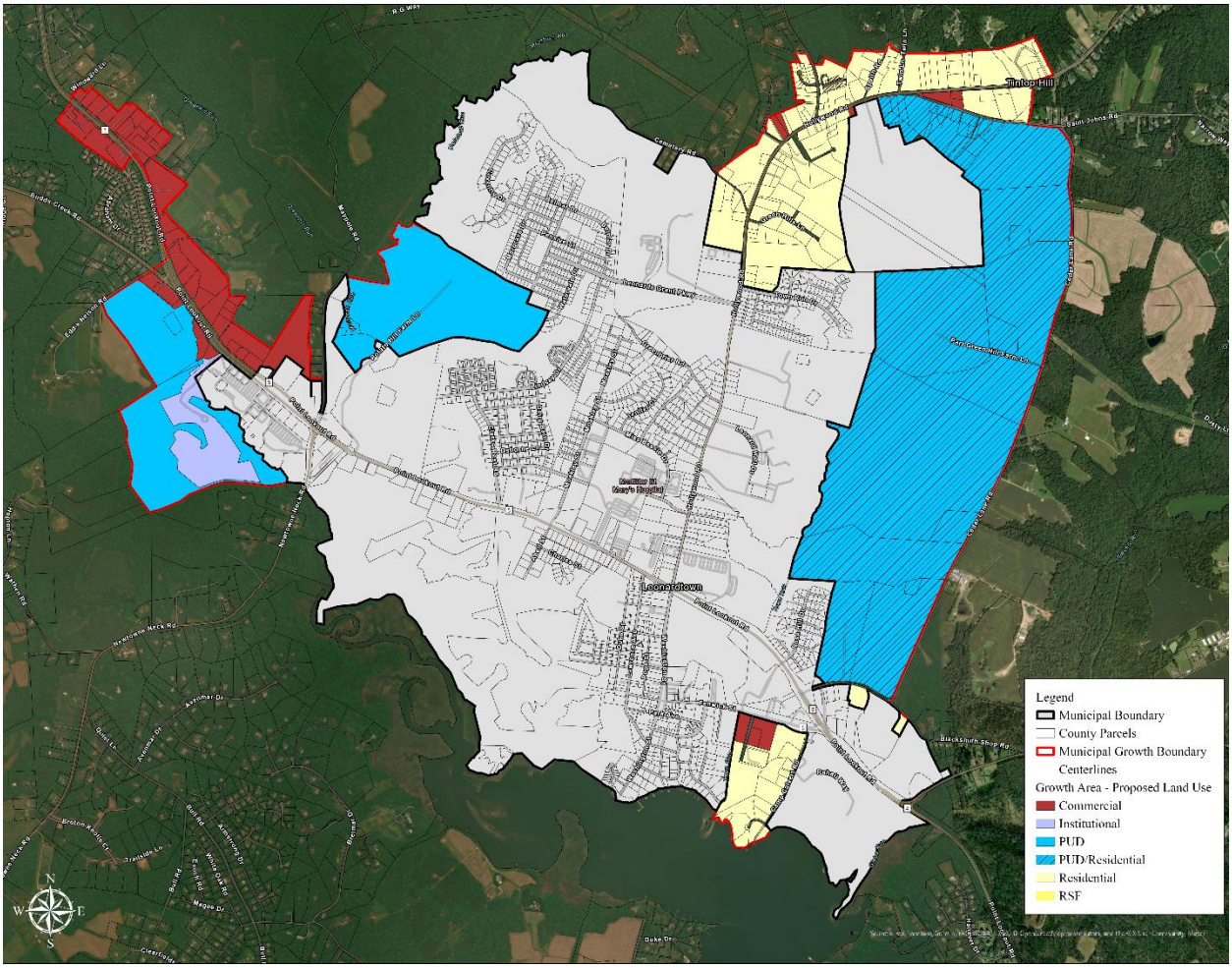
Policy GM-2.4: Locate Industrial and Office Uses in Development Districts

Locate industrial and office uses in and near the development districts, town centers, and the airport, and away from areas of existing residential uses.

Policy GM-2.5: Promote Building Well Connected Roadway Networks for Planned Growth in Development Districts

Promote building well connected local roadway networks to support planned growth in the Development Districts so as to help to preserve state highway capacity mainly for regional and through traffic.

Figure 3: Leonardtown Municipal Growth Areas & Proposed Land Uses



Policy GM-2.6: Provide Infrastructure that Supports Medium and High-Density Residential Use

Provide infrastructure that supports medium and high-density residential use in development districts.

Policy GM-2.7: Foster Urban Design and Development for Each Development District

Foster urban development patterns and design.

Policy GM-2.8: Delineate and Encourage Development of a Central Area with Mixed Uses

To create a sense of place, delineate and encourage development of a central area with mixed uses surrounded by larger inter-mixed blocks of residential, commercial, industrial, and business uses.

Policy GM-2.9: Maintain Visual and Functional Qualities of Development through Adherence to Site Standards

Maintain visual and functional qualities of development through adherence to site standards for landscaping, architectural design, access, lot coverage and open space, and buffering from adjacent developments and transportation corridors.

Action GM-2.9.1: Update Design Requirements in the CZO

Update design requirements in the CZO to create development that is cohesive and consistent with the character of the surrounding community.

Policy GM-2.10: Allow for and Provide Adequate Buffers Between Different Land Use Types

Allow for and provide adequate buffers to avoid conflicts between different land use types and to provide visual screening.

Policy GM-2.11: Continue to Promote the Use of Development Rights Transferred from Rural Districts

Continue to Promote use of development rights transferred from Rural Preservation (RPD) zoning districts.

Action GM-2.11.1: Continue to Promote Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) to Potential Developers

Department of Land Use and Growth Management (LUGM) staff should continue to prepare materials to promote the use of Transferrable Development Rights (TDRs) for new projects proposed within development districts, particularly for projects that include attainable housing and walkable, mixed-use developments.

Policy GM-2.12: Minimize Outlets to Major Roads

Minimize the number of outlets to major roads to increase efficiency of flow of traffic and to promote public safety by reducing the number of intersection conflict points.

Policy GM-2.13: Implement Specific Highway Access Policies

Implement highway access management plans for St. Andrew's Church Road (MD 4), Point Lookout Road (MD 5), Three Notch Road (MD 5/235), and Budd's Creek Road (MD 234).

Policy GM-2.14: Encourage Creative and Carefully Designed Commercial Areas

Encourage creative and carefully designed commercial areas, avoiding the inefficiencies and negative visual, land use and traffic impacts of strip commercial development.

GOAL GM-3: PROTECT, PRESERVE, & ENHANCE THE ROLE OF NAVAL AIR STATION PATUXENT RIVER (NAS PAX) IN THE COUNTY, REGION, STATE, & NATION

Develop a growth management strategy that both supports the existing military mission and improves prospects for the expansion of operational mission capabilities at NAS PAX.

Policy GM-3.1: Adopt and Implement Growth Management Strategies That Support NAS PAX

Develop growth management strategies and new initiatives that serve to protect, preserve, and further enhance the military mission and readiness of NAS PAX. This may include the adoption of compatible land use maps that go beyond current operations to account for future aircraft types, which may have larger noise contours or different flight patterns.

Action GM-3.1.1: Continue to Strategize Infill Development

Continue to explore programs to prioritize and/or incentivize high-density and population-sensitive growth (e.g., residential, schools, hospitals) in areas that do not compromise the mission of NAS PAX and public safety.

Action GM-3.1.2: Continue to Practice Shared Infrastructure Planning

Coordinate on regional transportation and utility upgrades to ensure they support both community growth and NAS PAX's increased operation demands.

Action GM-3.1.3: Establish a Transferable Development Rights (TDR) Program to Support Military Buffer

Establish a TDR program specifically for a military buffer (e.g., Airfield Operations Area of Influence) by shifting development potential away from high-risk accident potential zones and/or high-noise areas (the "Sending Area") to more suitable growth centers (the "Receiving Area").



Naval Air Station Patuxent River Sign

GOAL GM-4: SUPPORT COMPACT TOWN CENTERS

Support walkable, mixed-use, compact town centers as an alternative to big-box-style development.

Policy GM-4.1: Provide Infrastructure that Supports Specific Densities

Provide infrastructure that supports densities of five units per acre.

Policy GM-4.2: Encourage Mixed-Use Development

Encourage mixed use development and discourage strip development.

Action GM-4.2.1: Prepare Master Plans for Each Town Center

Prepare master plans for each town center to foster town development patterns and design. Consider mechanisms to reduce the potential for "repeat" land uses that are trending in new developments, including gas stations and convenience retail uses.

Policy GM-4.3: Minimize Points of Direct Access to Major Highways

Work with Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to minimize points of direct access to major highways and utilize access management best practices that consolidate driveway access are within a common development.

Action GM-4.3.1: Implement Highway Access Policies for Three Notch Road

Work with state to implement highway access policies for Three Notch Road (MD 5/235) within town centers and village centers and provide for sufficient streets to minimize local traffic on Three Notch Road.

Policy GM-4.4: Promote Use of Transferrable Development Rights (TDRs)

Promote use of Transferrable Development Rights (TDRs) from Rural Preservation zoning district to boost density of residences or intensity of businesses in town centers.

Policy GM-4.5: Encourage Installation of Underground Services

Encourage installation of underground services to minimize visual impacts of overhead utility lines.

Policy GM-4.6: Facilitate Improvement of Walkability and Bikeability

Facilitate the improvement of walkability and bikeability in already developed areas to encourage more active travel in the county and reduce vehicle miles traveled.

Action GM-4.6.1: Add Sidewalks and Multimodal Trails

Add sidewalks and bike/pedestrian trails by collaborating with private landowners, utilizing County-owned land, investing County funds, and updating the zoning ordinance.

GOAL GM-5: ENCOURAGE RESIDENTIAL-SUPPORTING COMMERCIAL & MODERATE RESIDENTIAL GROWTH IN VILLAGE CENTERS

Encourage the location and expansion of residential-supporting commercial (e.g., grocery stores and barber shops) and moderate residential growth in village centers: Callaway, Chaptico, Clements, Loveville, Ridge, Valley Lee, and St. Inigoes.

Policy GM-5.1: Support Development of Rural Village Centers to Serve Surrounding Rural Communities

Support development projects in rural village centers that align with the scale, character, and uses identified for these areas.

Action GM-5.1.1: Prepare Master Plans for Each Village Center

Prepare master plans for each village center to foster village development patterns and design.

Policy GM-5.2: Limit Moderate and High-Density Housing in Rural Areas

Limit large subdivisions and high-density housing in rural areas.

Policy GM-5.3: Encourage Low-Intensity Mixed Use Development in Village Centers

Encourage low-intensity mixed use development in Village Centers and discourage strip development.



Callaway Village Center. Image via Google Earth.

GOAL GM-6: SUPPORT INFILL DEVELOPMENT & ADAPTIVE REDEVELOPMENT

Support infill, redevelopment, and adaptive reuse of existing structures, when possible.

Policy GM-6.1: Update the County's Zoning Ordinance

Explore updating the County's zoning ordinance to better support adaptive reuse and the redevelopment of aging commercial areas to better utilize existing infrastructure and support economic development and attainable housing needs.

Policy GM-6.2: Encourage Infill Development through Designated Growth Area Incentives

Encourage infill development rather than new subdivision and development of large undeveloped parcels through incentives applied to projects in the designated Growth Areas, with coordination with NAS PAX, where appropriate.

Policy GM-6.3: Discourage Scattered New Development

Discourage scattered or "leapfrog" development through the use of 'disincentives (e.g., lower floor area ratio (FAR) and density allowances).

Policy GM-6.4: Encourage Development on Existing Platted Lots

Encourage development on existing platted lots within neighborhood conservation areas consistent with current patterns of development (bulk, density, and design) and with enhanced resource protection. Prohibit outward expansion of neighborhood conservation areas.

GOAL GM-7: MAINTAIN LAND BASE NEEDED FOR AGRICULTURAL & WORKING LANDS INDUSTRIES

Maintain lands within the Rural planning area and Rural Preservation land use category to support agricultural, equestrian, and other working lands industries. (See Environment and Natural Resources Element for more information on agriculture and workings lands preservation. See the Economic Development Element for more information on agriculture and working lands business support.)



A farmhouse near Loveville. Image by Elvert Barnes via Flickr.

GOAL GM-8: MEET THE COUNTY'S WATER SUPPLY NEEDS

Meet the County's long-term water supply needs and ensure that the supply is safe and efficiently provided within defined service areas. (See Public Facilities and Infrastructure Investments Element for more information on this goal.)

GOAL GM-9: DEVELOP INFRASTRUCTURE TO SERVE WATER & SEWER NEEDS IN GROWTH AREAS

Provide infrastructure to meet water and sewer service needs in Growth Areas, ensuring adequate capacity to accommodate future development, and address adequate facilities and services outside Growth Areas. (See Public Facilities and Infrastructure Investments Element for more information on this goal.)

Policy GM-9.1: Invest in Infrastructure Improvements While Limiting Sprawl

Invest in water and sewer infrastructure improvements without incentivizing sprawl or 'urbanizing' rural parts of the county.

Action GM-9.1.1: Partner with MetCom to Secure Funding for Priority Service Areas

The County will work with MetCom to secure needed funding to support extension of utility lines to priority service areas, particularly within the Lexington Park Development District (LPDD). These areas should be identified as priorities for economic development and attainable housing potential. Potential funding sources include special taxing districts, general obligation bonds, and other potential funding sources.

Action GM-9.1.2: Explore Ability to Expand Infrastructure or Establish Private Wastewater Systems in Growth Areas

In partnership with MetCom, evaluate opportunities to provide private wastewater systems within Growth Areas that are outside of planned service areas.

GOAL GM-10: SUPPORT COLLABORATION WITH HEALTH DEPARTMENT & METCOM TO ADDRESS PROBLEM SEWER AREAS OUTSIDE OF PLANNED SERVICE AREAS

The County Health Department will work with MetCom to address problem sewer (septic) areas as identified in the Comprehensive Water and Sewerage Plan (CWSP) in a way that balances community needs and priorities while protecting the environment. For more information about the CWSP and its related maps, see Appendix D: Water & Sewer Service Area Maps.

Action GM-10.1.1: Evaluate Land Acquisition Opportunities for Potential Wastewater Systems

Identify land acquisition opportunities for the use of a wastewater system to address the problem sewer areas as identified in the CWSP.

Action GM-10.1.2: Explore Funding Options for Addressing Problem Water and Sewer Areas

Research and secure potential funding opportunities through State/Federal grants along with any other funding source available to help offset the cost for evaluation, design, and construction of a wastewater system.

Action GM-10.1.3: Explore Sewage Disposal Options for Addressing Problem Water and Sewer Areas

Evaluate and determine clean water distribution and sewage disposal options on land acquired to address problem water and sewer areas.

Action GM-10.1.4: Explore and Advocate for Innovative Alternatives to Traditional Septic Systems

Explore and advocate for innovative alternatives to traditional septic systems.

3

Housing Element

In This Section

Planning for Housing
Goals, Policies, & Actions



Planning for Housing

National Trends

The United States has experienced a significant housing shortage since the early 2010s that was precipitated by the lead up to and occurrence of the Great Recession of 2008 and has continued for nearly two decades, according to the Congressional Research Service. There are numerous reasons for this extended housing shortage that vary depending on local housing market dynamics. The inadequate housing supply can be explained generally by these factors:

- Housing starts (new housing construction) have been behind by millions of units due to the **slow recovery of the recession**, resulting in the overall housing supply not keeping pace with the formation of new households
- **Increasing costs of land and construction** have slowed residential development and driven prices up
- A **limited supply of land for new housing development** in many communities hinders production of housing
- **Institutional investors** have bought up starter homes, including "flipping" homebuyers, limiting units available in the for-sale market or driving up for-sale costs
- **"Aging in place"** is restricting normal filtering of housing from one household to another, reducing the stock of housing that is normally available to first-time homebuyers
- Increases in **seasonally vacant housing** that are used as short-term rentals or second homes are reducing the year-round inventory of housing
- Approval of new housing units is often challenged by **residents that are not supportive of these development projects**

Across the nation, the demand for housing is also changing. The Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University identified in 2018 that the fastest growing household types are younger families with children, older persons, and empty nesters. Many households within these sectors have constrained incomes that limit their ability to afford higher priced housing that is currently available. These dynamics are affecting both households looking to purchase a home and renters. Many of these households are also seeking different housing options that reduce management and upkeep of homes and yards and provide walkable neighborhoods with easy access to amenities such as parks, community centers, neighborhood shops, and walking trails.

Regional Trends

These dynamics are playing out in Maryland. The Office of the Comptroller reported in 2025 that the state had a shortage of 100,000 units and needed to build 590,000 new homes to meet projected demand through 2045. This housing shortage has resulted in a decrease in normal population growth from migration, including a shift of younger and lower- and middle-income residents leaving the state for more affordable areas. This reduces the workforce of the state, limits economic development potential, and constrains government revenues needed to provide increasing costs to provide public services.

Data from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey indicate that these trends are also occurring in St. Mary's County:

- While St. Mary's County has a higher median household income than the state ($114,580 in St. Mary's County and $101,652 in Maryland), **the proportion of different income levels in the County is diverse** (11% of households earned between $100k-124k, 13% earned between $75k-99k, 12% earned between $50k-74k, 10% earned between $25k-49k, and 9% earned less than $25k in 2023)
- Between 2013 and 2023, the County experienced a **3% reduction in the proportion of family households**
- During the same timeframe, the **median home value increased 7.1% on top of inflation**, rising from $290,400 in 2013 ($377,275 in 2023 inflation-adjusted dollars) to $403,900 in 2023
- There was also a **46% decline in the number of homes available under $300,000 between 2013 and 2023** (not adjusted for inflation) – a price point that is generally affordable to middle-income households and critical public workers, such as teachers, nurses, and police officers
- **29% of homeowners were "cost-burdened"** (spent more than 30% of their income on household costs) in 2023
- **45% of renters were "cost-burdened"** during 2023

Similar to the state, these trends affect the county's ability to grow economically as many workers cannot afford to purchase or rent a home locally and may choose to work elsewhere where homes are more affordable.

Local Housing Trends & Policy Review

Before the St. Mary's 2050 Plan was developed, data on existing conditions in the county was gathered and analyzed in conjunction with projected future trends to provide a common understanding of St. Mary's County as part of the St. Mary's 2050: Charting Our Tomorrow project. As the comprehensive plan draft was developed, the Trends and Projections Report served as a point-in-time reference to help inform development of the plan. New data continuously becomes available, so the Trends and Projections Report is a helpful snapshot of the county as it existed in 2025.

As part of the Report, St. Mary's County has conducted an assessment of community characteristics, including identification of low-income and cost-burdened households. In addition, the County undertook an assessment of its zoning regulations that revealed that a variety of housing types are allowed within a majority of residential and mixed-use zoning districts. The goals, policies, and actions in this plan build on this analysis, support fair housing objectives (as defined in the Housing and Community Development Article of the *Annotated Code of Maryland* and required as a component of a local jurisdiction's housing element by the Land Use Article of the *Annotated Code of Maryland*), and provide support for more attainable housing to serve a variety of income levels and household needs.

Table 3 below identifies the types of residential uses that are permitted ("P") within zoning districts associated with residential and mixed-use land use categories.

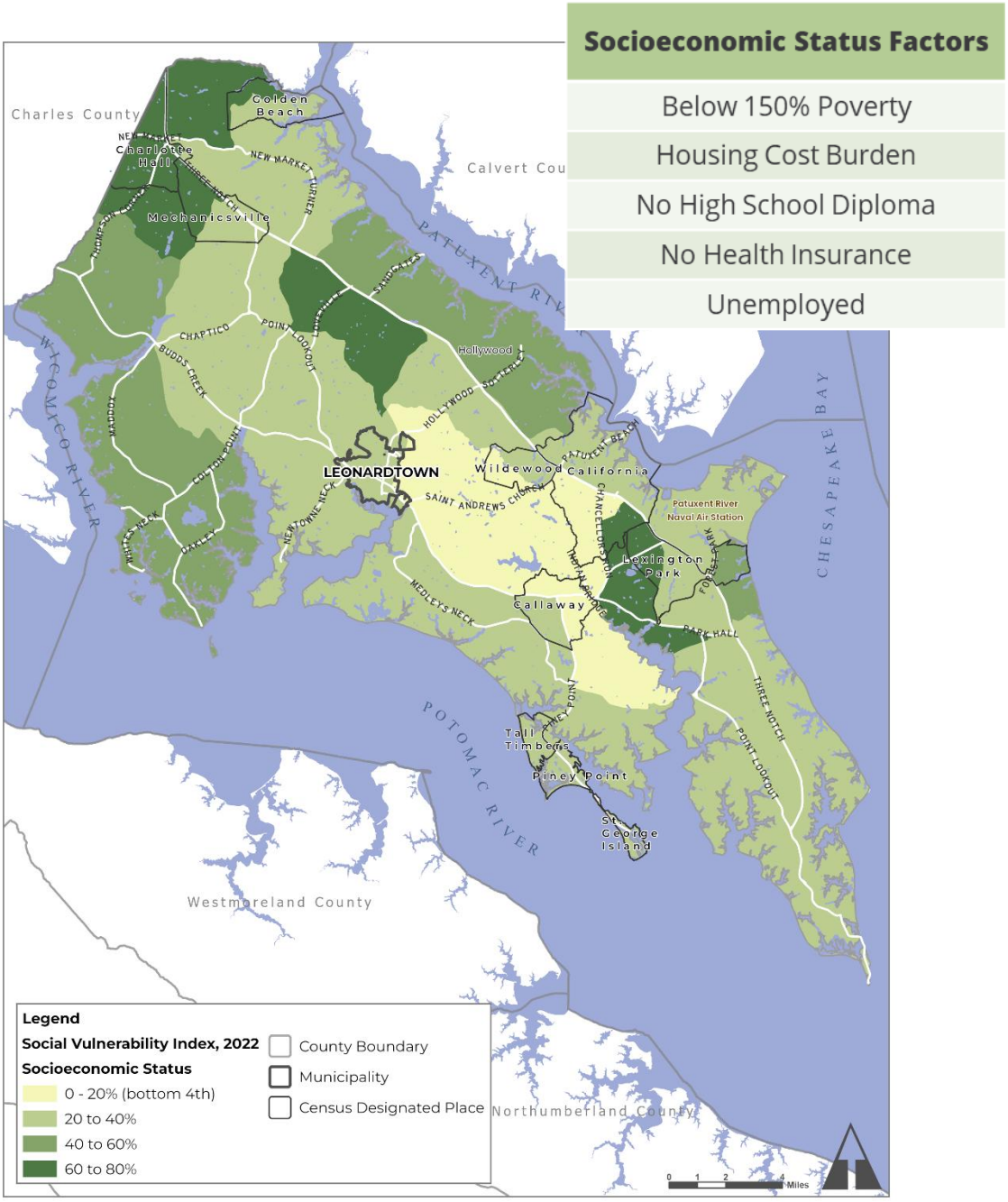
The Social Vulnerability Index Map (Figure 4) identifies locations where household conditions in St. Mary's County are vulnerable with respect to low-income status, are housing cost-burdened (spend more than 30% of their income on housing), lack a high school diploma, do not have health insurnace, or are unemployed. The darker the green, the higher the vulnerability of households in the area.

Table 3 : Summary of Land Use Categories & Housing

Land Use Group/Category	Zoning District	Dwelling Unit, Attached	Dwelling Unit, Detached	Mobile Home	Multi-family
Rural					
Rural Preservation	RPD	P	P	P	
	RNC		P	P	
Residential					
Residential Low Density	RL	P	P	P	P
	RL-T*	P	P	P	
Residential Medium Density	RM	P	P	P	P
Residential High Density	RH	P	P	P	P
Mixed-Use					
Mixed-Use Low Intensity	RMX	P	P	P	P
	VMX	P	P	P	P
	MXL*	P	P	P	P
Mixed-Use Moderate Intensity	TMX	P	P	P	P
	CMX	P	P	P	P
Mixed-Use Medium Intensity*	MXM*	P	P	P	P
Mixed-Use High Intensity*	MXH*	P	P	P	P

** This Land Use category and these zoning districts are only found within the LPDD.*

Figure 4: Social Vulnerability & Socioeconomic Status, 2022



Attainable Housing Approach

Local governments play a key role in determining housing production as land use is planned and regulated at the local level. Often, policies and regulations that are intended to support one community objective end up creating challenges to housing development. In Maryland, the Comptroller identified the following barriers to housing production statewide:

- Density limitations
- Parking requirements
- Public facility ordinances
- Forest conservation obligations
- Infrastructure limitations
- Development impact fees and building excise taxes
- Public input periods that delay project approvals and increase costs
- Appeals rights
- Process inefficiencies and administrative burden (both for government and developers)

Homeownership of single-family homes (SFDs) is one of the most successful methods of generational wealth building. A goal and priority of this plan is to make this type of homeownership more attainable for our residents.

Many communities, across the nation and in Maryland, are now focused on providing housing that is attainable to a variety of households and are utilizing numerous tools to address the challenging problem. The following provides a summary of types of tools used by communities across the nation. All of these tools are not necessarily supported by this plan.

- Protecting Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH) from increasing in cost
- Updating zoning densities in certain locations to increase the potential for a variety of home types, including "missing middle" housing types such as pocket neighborhoods, cottage courts, duplexes, triplexes, and other smaller multi-unit developments
- Reducing parking, landscaping, and open space requirements for single-family attached and multi-family housing to help offset construction costs
- Entering into public-private partnerships with developers to ensure that housing constructed will be supportive of local objectives
- Recruiting new housing developers to the area to encourage competition and produce new housing types not being met by local developers
- Providing free, permitted by-right site plans for missing middle housing types to promote production of these units locally
- Incentivizing or requiring construction of units affordable to certain households (typically identified by % of area median income) as part of new residential or mixed-use developments

- Raising local public dollars for a housing trust fund to support housing efforts
- Establishing a local or regional housing land trust to manage deed restricted, affordable housing units

These approaches were considered as part of the St. Mary's 2050 planning project.

Key Findings from Public Engagement

The housing policies and actions in this chapter were developed in consideration of the previously mentioned housing factors and as guided by community engagement.

Several important key takeaways emerged from this participation process, which are described in more detail below. Overall, residents recognize that the existing housing framework must adapt to evolving needs and growth challenges, while maintaining the rural character of the county and ensuring adequate provision of services to all households and businesses. Providing attainable housing options that align with community character and do not exceed local infrastructure capacity is the primary housing challenge for the County today.

Need for Diverse Housing Options

The community articulated the need for increased housing options to support residents at all income levels.

Participants called for workforce housing, alternative housing types, and addressing homelessness and housing insecurity through increased County support. There was strong support for housing attainability for critical workers (fire, police, nurses, teachers), young families, and young professionals as they are essential to the county's future.

Strong Support for Smaller Homes and Townhouses

When asked about providing smaller homes and townhouses in Growth Areas to ensure housing availability for key community members, the majority of respondents expressed support. This topic represents one of the strongest areas of consensus in the housing discussion.

Role of Multi-family Housing

Community opinion on multi-family housing (apartments and condominiums) is more divided. Survey responses showed an almost three-way split between support, opposition, and neutral stances on the topic of multi-family housing. Despite the variation in response, there was recognition that multi-family housing can play a role in increasing attainability for younger workers, aging seniors, and critical workers.

Location Preference for Housing Types

Survey responses indicated strong support for diverse housing types in established communities like Lexington Park, California, Hollywood, Leonardtown Development District, and Charlotte Hall. Depending on the Planning Area, residents support the idea of adding diverse housing types such as multi-story mixed-use buildings, starter homes and townhomes, and multi-family housing. Following national trends, many residents are interested in housing options that provide walkable and bikeable access to shopping, recreation, and dining uses that foster neighborhood vitality and community interaction.

Support for Strategic Redevelopment

The community demonstrated openness to redevelopment and intensification in appropriate locations. When asked about redeveloping aging commercial areas with the understanding that financial feasibility may require more intensive development than originally existed, an overwhelming majority of respondents were supportive. Respondents recognized revitalizing aging areas could convert to increased intensity centers that include housing and mixed-use development.



Illustration showing a wide range of small, multi-unit housing types. Illustration by Opticos Design, Inc.

GOALS, POLICIES, & ACTIONS

The following goals and policies should guide decision-making and investments for housing in St. Mary's County. The corresponding actions identify specific implementation strategies to further accomplish the housing goals.

GOAL HO-1: SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT OF A VARIETY OF ATTAINABLE HOUSING OPTIONS

Through the policies included in this plan, including the Land Use Map (LUM), support development of housing options that provide a variety of price points, styles of housing, and types of neighborhoods to meet the diverse needs of the County's current and future residents in collaboration with community organizations and Naval Air Station Patuxent River (NAS PAX).

Policy HO-1.1: Support the Development of Attainable Housing

Support the development of attainable housing options. Housing types that can support this goal include, but are not limited to:

- Small-lot single-family homes such as pocket neighborhoods and cottage courts
- Duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes
- Townhomes
- Small-unit (5-12), multi-family developments

Action HO-1.1.1: Consider Development of an Attainable Housing Work Group

Consider the establishment of an Attainable Housing Work Group to oversee development of the housing study (referenced in Housing Action HO-1.1.2: Consider the Preparation of a Housing Study to Determine the Optimum Mix of Housing Types for Existing and Future Needs) and to evaluate additional tools and programs that the County and The Housing Authority of St. Mary's County could undertake to address the housing challenge. Include developers and builders that work in the county, and relevant community members in this work group.

Action HO-1.1.2: Consider the Preparation of a Housing Study to Determine the Optimum Mix of Housing Types for Existing and Future Needs

In partnership with Leonardtown, the Departments of Economic Development (DED) and Land Use and Growth Management (LUGM) will develop a local housing study to determine the optimum mix of housing types or range of costs to support the County's existing and future needs based on an evaluation of the demographic and economic characteristics of the population and housing supply factors. It should also include specific strategies to be taken to support attainable housing needs. This study may also be used to refine the percent of area median income (AMI) thresholds for

workforce and/or affordable housing policies, such as Housing Action HO-1.1.5: Continue to Award Bonus Densities for the Provision of Workforce and/or Affordable Housing. The Housing Study should also consider the use of MDP's "Housing Data Dashboard" and the "Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Guidance" in the completion of its analysis.

Action HO-1.1.3: Explore the Creation of a Plan for Continued Collaboration with Leonardtown

Explore the creation of a plan for continued collaboration with Leonardtown.

Action HO-1.1.4: Track Housing Development

Track housing development (e.g., new homes, replacement homes, and additions and renovations to existing homes) and compare data to any goals/objectives that may be adopted following the completion of the Attainable Housing Working Group.

Action HO-1.1.5: Continue to Award Bonus Densities for the Provision of Workforce and/or Affordable Housing

Continue to award bonus densities in exchange for the provision of workforce and/or affordable housing in the Growth Areas. Review the bonus density provisions in the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance (CZO) to make the incentive more attractive to developers. Host a roundtable discussion with area housing developers to better ascertain what incentives are needed to produce these types of units. Consider adjusting Transferrable Development Rights (TDRs) requirements in Growth Areas to incentivize development of deed restricted workforce and/or affordable housing units.

Policy HO-1.2: Foster the Development of Senior Housing Options

Foster the development of housing options for older adults, including independent living facilities, assisted living accommodations and nursing care facilities.

Action HO-1.2.1: Evaluate Expedited Review Process for Housing Developments

Evaluate the opportunity to provide an expedited building permit review for housing developments that are affordable to median income households or below.

Action HO-1.2.2: Streamline Approvals for Aging in Place Home Modifications

Evaluate the building permit requirements for home modifications for seniors and persons with disabilities that are aging in place (staying within their own home). Update processes to streamline these approvals.

Policy HO-1.3: Ensure Age and Ability Friendliness Through Accessible Designs

Through the adoption of the International Building Code, prioritize accessible design of transportation corridors, sidewalks, and bus stops that are frequently used by older adults. Ensure development regulations and zoning decisions in residential areas, especially

aging neighborhoods, allowing older residents to age in place.

Policy HO-1.4: Continue to Monitor the County's Housing Stock to Ensure Choices for All Income Levels

Continue to monitor the variety of the County's housing stock to ensure choices are provided for all income levels and housing needs.

Action HO-1.4.1: Adjust Permitting and Incentives to Maintain an Appropriate Balance of Housing Types

Adjust permitting and/or enhance incentives to maintain an appropriate balance of housing types and price points. Bridge the gap between supply and the need for attainable housing.

Policy HO-1.5: Encourage the Inclusion of Accessory Dwelling Units and Apartments

Encourage inclusion of accessory dwelling units/apartments where parking is adequate and in accordance with standards that restrict external structural alterations so that the visual character of the neighborhood will be maintained.

Action HO-1.5.1: Evaluate Need for Equivalent Dwelling Units (EDUs) that Define Water/Sewer Infrastructure Capacity for Accessory Dwelling Units

Evaluate the need to increase equivalent dwelling units (EDUs) for water and sewer service to support development of accessory dwelling units within established and new single-family neighborhoods. For sewer service, encourage the use of the County's EDU Transfer Program.

Policy HO-1.6: Encourage Efficient Design to Reduce Costs and Impacts of Development

Encourage efficient design which reduces the costs and impacts of development. This includes clustering of homes to reduce land development costs and reducing the per project percentage of land retained for undeveloped open space in the Development District from 50% to as low as 20% in exchange for the construction of workforce and/or affordable housing.

Policy HO-1.7: Provide Quality Housing and Housing Services to Meet Resident Needs

In collaboration with The Housing Authority of St. Mary's County, provide quality housing and housing services to meet resident needs with respect to accessibility, affordability, location, and diversity of product and cost for households eligible for County support.

Action HO-1.7.1: Consider Surveying Housing Support Users

In collaboration with The Housing Authority of St. Mary's, consider surveying housing support users to identify the most effective programs and gaps in needed services.

GOAL HO-2: ENCOURAGE THE MAINTENANCE & UPKEEP OF EXISTING HOUSING

Enhance the livability of both existing neighborhoods and new housing developments by encouraging and fostering the maintenance and upkeep of existing housing.

Policy HO-2.1: Assure a Quality Housing Stock for Residents

Ensure a safe and adequate housing stock for residents and improve substandard housing conditions.

Action HO-2.1.1: Support Incentive Programs for the Rehabilitation of Housing

Support incentive programs for rehabilitation or replacement of deteriorating housing stock.

Action HO-2.1.2: Undertake Regular Review of the Livability Code and Enhance Enforcement

Continue regular review of the County's livability code to gauge the relevance and adequacy of the ordinance. Enhance enforcement of the County's livability code to meet the need to address substandard housing.

Action HO-2.1.3: Support Housing Improvement and Homeownership

Support housing improvement and homeownership through new County programs. Needed programs could be identified through the Housing Study (Action HO-1.1.2) and through the survey of housing support program users (Action HO-1.7.1). This includes monitoring and applying for state and federal resources to support these efforts.

Action HO-2.1.4: Enforce Existing Quality and Safety Regulations

Enforce existing regulations that assure adequate privacy and comfort, safety from fire, flood and other hazards, and protection from health threats.

Action HO-2.1.5: Require Demolition or Protections of Unsafe or Abandoned Structures

Require owners to demolish or adequately provide protections from the hazards of unsafe structures and abandoned uses.

Action HO-2.1.6: Advertise Available State Home Repair Programs

Provide outreach to homeowners in the county that have need for home repairs to educate them about available state home repair programs that can provide financial or other types of assistance.

GOAL HO-3: FOSTER RURAL & NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION

Continue to support the protection of rural lands and neighborhoods that carry economic importance and historic character in St. Mary's County.

Policy HO-3.1: Preserve Neighborhood Character by Ensuring that New Housing Units are Compatible with Existing Rural Neighborhoods

Preserve the character of existing rural neighborhoods through compatible housing development and design standards that reflect local context and history. This is supported through the application of the Residential Neighborhood Conservation (RNC) zoning district.



Burch Farm near Helen. Image by Elvert Barnes via Flickr.

GOAL HO-4: ENHANCE COMMUNITY CHARACTER OF EXISTING NEIGHBORHOODS & SUPPORT QUALITY DESIGN OF NEW NEIGHBORHOODS

Foster the protection of neighborhood character by revitalizing existing communities and ensuring new development integrates seamlessly through high-quality design that respects the local context.

Policy HO-4.1: Include Stakeholder Input in Planning Processes

Continue including stakeholder input in planning processes for development of new neighborhoods. This includes residents from adjacent and nearby neighborhoods, owners and workers at nearby business centers, and representatives from nearby institutions.

Action HO-4.1.1: Evaluate Ways to Augment Traditional Notification Requirements for Residential Development Projects

Evaluate ways to improve notification of area residents regarding proposed residential developments within an approximate distance of the project site. Include homeowners associations (HOAs) and HOA leadership in notifications. Encourage developers to hold community meetings with nearby neighborhoods to share information about the proposed project.

Policy HO-4.2: Enhance Existing Neighborhood Patterns through Construction and Renovation of Housing

Encourage construction and renovation of housing units to enhance and respect existing patterns and character of neighborhood.

Policy HO-4.3: Support Improvements to Existing Neighborhoods that Increase Safety and Walkability

Support capital investments in existing, older neighborhoods to incorporate needed wheelchair accessible sidewalks, street trees, signage, streetlights, and traffic calming measures that can provide a safer neighborhood environment and promote walkability.

Action HO-4.3.1: Explore an Audit of Public Right-of-Way Assets in Older Neighborhoods

Explore an audit of older neighborhoods built during or prior to the early 2000s to determine which neighborhoods are lacking public-rights-of-way assets (sidewalks, street trees, signage, streetlights, and traffic calming measures).

Action HO-4.3.2: Consider Funding Options for Investing in Neighborhood Improvements

Consider local special taxing districts and other options as funding mechanisms to support neighborhood capital investments for public-rights-of-way assets.

Policy HO-4.4: Develop Mixed Use Communities to Increase Sense of Community

As guided by the Land Use Map (LUM), increase the sense of community and reduce the need for automobile travel by developing mixed use neighborhoods which integrate housing and neighborhood-serving commercial that is walkable, accessible safely by bike, and potentially served by public transportation. These communities should be designed through a master planning approach to maximize internal connectivity and provide a range of housing options. These developments can support "complete neighborhood" objectives, depending on the size of the development, with the intent of providing a mix of residential, recreational, shopping, dining, and service uses that support residents' daily needs.

Action HO-4.4.1: Prepare Design Guidelines to Guide Development of New Neighborhoods

Prepare design guidelines to articulate for residential developers the elements of projects that the County would like to see developed, including:

- Maintain picturesque landscapes when locating housing
- Improve degraded areas by providing landscape amenities
- Provide open space that supports neighborhood connectivity, access to natural areas, passive recreation, and reduced stormwater and flooding impacts
- Create a sense of identity and place for residents through architectural standards
- Include neighborhood amenities, such as parks, trails, club houses, and recreational amenities. For larger developments, support inclusion of neighborhood scale retail uses
- Create an interconnected street, pedestrian, and biking network
- Provide a variety of housing types

Policy HO-4.5: Encourage a Mix of Opportunities for Passive and Active Recreation

Encourage a mix of private and public amenities and opportunities for passive and active recreation within neighborhoods, including but not limited to:

- Parks and green spaces
- Walking and biking trails
- Community centers and libraries
- Public transit access
- Public waterway access

Policy HO-4.6: Locate Residential Developments to Increase Environmental Sensitivity and Accessibility

Locate residential developments so as to avoid environmentally sensitive areas and increase access to public transportation.

Policy HO-4.7: Promote Open-Space Oriented Site Designs with Recreational and Community Services Facilities

Promote and enhance open space-oriented site designs (cluster subdivisions), particularly within Residential Low-Density (RL) land use categories, with emphasis on recreational amenities and the provision of public and private community services and facilities.

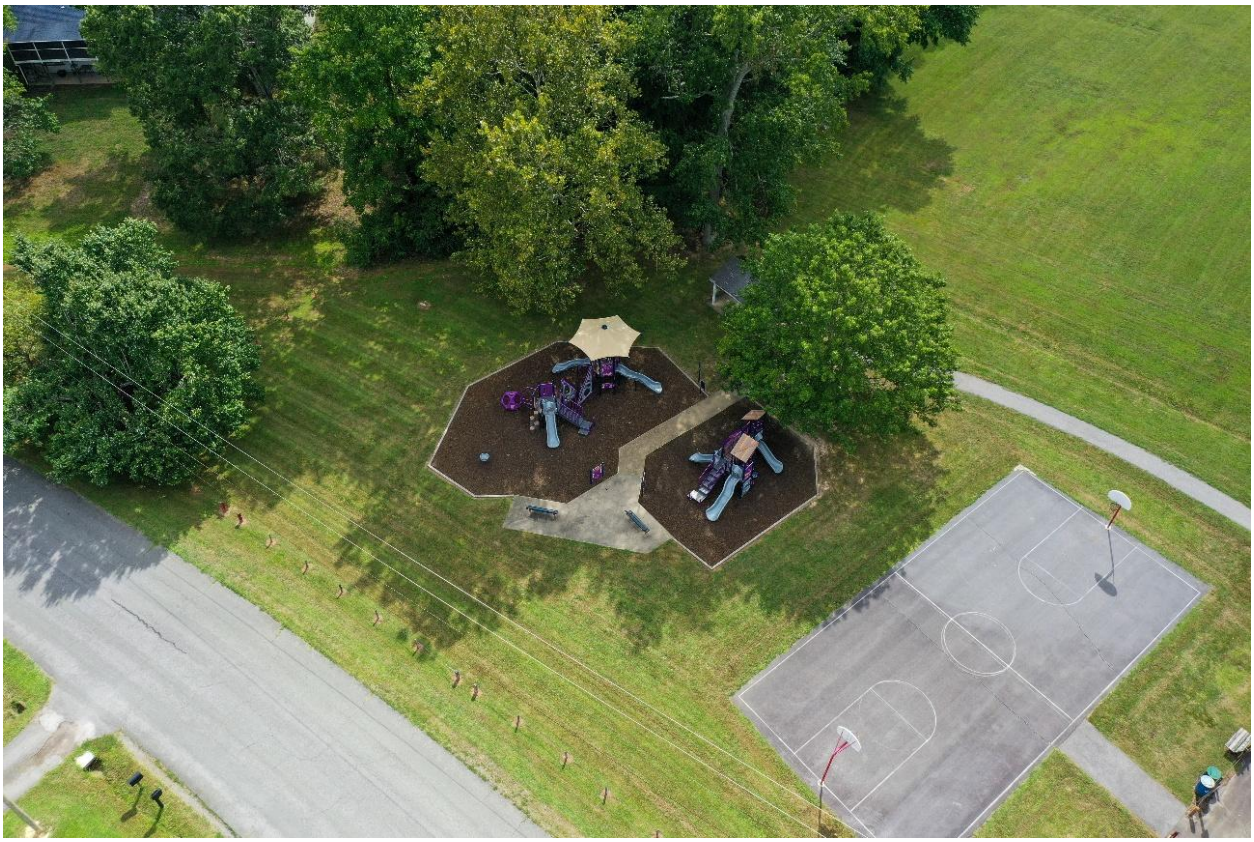
Policy HO-4.8: Promote, Recognize, and Reward Good Design

Promote, recognize, and reward good design.

Action HO-4.8.1: Develop a Program to Incentivize Enhanced Design

Develop and establish a program that encourages and incentivizes design of developments that exceed CZO requirements. Strategies include:

- Provide increased bonus densities for enhanced design of "complete neighborhoods" located within the Development Districts
- Planning Commission recognition for innovative and effective community design
- Chesapeake Bay Community recognition of "Bay Friendly" environmental design
- Support green building design for energy efficiency and long-term affordability of the housing



St. Andrew's Estates Neighborhood Park

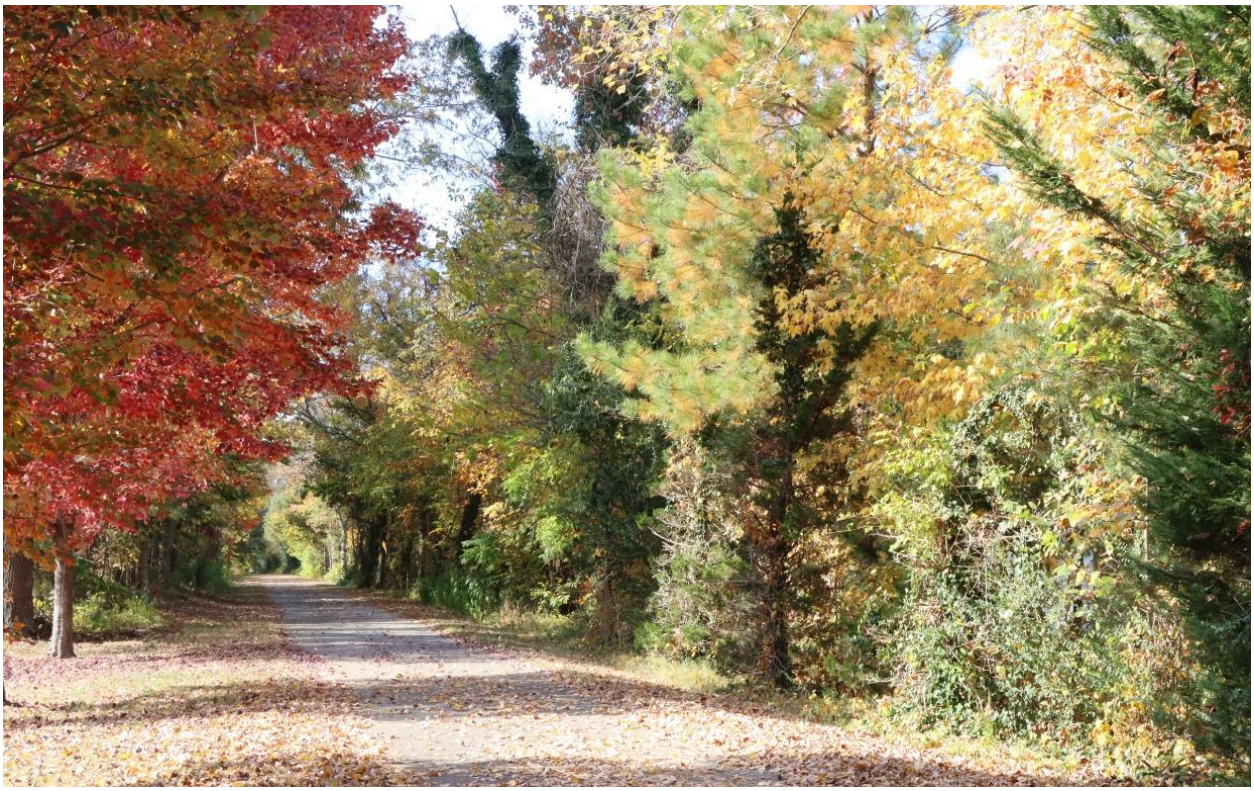
GOAL HO-5: SUPPORT FISCAL EFFICIENCY BY REQUIRING DEVELOPERS TO PROVIDE NEEDED INFRASTRUCTURE FOR NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS

Require developers to provide essential infrastructure for new development to reduce financial burden on existing residents and support the County's fiscal efficiency.

Policy HO-5.1: Require Developers to Meet Public and Community Facilities and Services Requirements

Require housing developers to meet adequate public and community facilities and services requirements for residential projects. These services include but are not limited to:

- Connections to public water/sewer
- Road or intersection improvements to mitigate traffic
- Development of public transit stops
- Incorporation of sidewalks and bicycle paths and parking into street design
- Incorporation of safe public rights-of-way and street designs for school bus stop pick up areas



Three Notch Trail

4

Economic Development Element

In This Section

Planning for Economic Development
Diverse Economy
Heritage & Outdoor Recreation Tourism
Working Lands
Mineral Resources
Marine Resources



Planning for Economic Development

St. Mary's County has a thriving economy poised to become even stronger. A high concentration of aviation, unmanned systems, and related research occupations; a foundation in agriculture and aquaculture, and the expansion of tourism and advanced manufacturing have blended together to support a flourishing economy. It is notable that of the more than 36,000 jobs in St. Mary's County, the majority of jobs are occupied by residents. Similarly, the majority of working county residents hold jobs in the county. These jobs are clustered within the County's Growth Areas and dispersed in rural lands and waterways.

As St. Mary's County continues to grow, a sustained strategic focus and high levels of collaboration between County departments and employment partners will be key for further advancing the economy of St. Mary's County.

National & Regional Trends

Shifting Retail Landscape

Across the country, increasing online shopping and e-commerce have come at the expense of physical retail locations and increased vacancies in shopping centers. While St. Mary's County is not immune to this trend, it is less affected than other locations since most of its occupations are based in the information economy, with roles in engineering, business and financial operations, computer and mathematical roles, and office and administrative support. Such economic shifts emphasize the importance of diversification — overreliance on one type of role can become a liability.

Agricultural Lands Under Threat

Nationally, agricultural lands are rapidly being converted for residential uses, and other competing uses like solar energy, resulting in the loss of farmland and the undermining the agriculture-based sector of local economies. St. Mary's County has significant agricultural lands and is facing growth pressure with its steady population growth. Fortunately, the County has a long history of agricultural land preservation efforts, and its strategy for growth directs urban and suburban development to primary Growth Areas and away from rural and agricultural lands. Continuing to protect agricultural land and support access to local markets strengthens the resilience of food systems of the county while preserving a key component of the county's rural identity and local economy.

A Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

The St. Mary's County Department of Economic Development (DED) has a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) that is regularly updated to guide the County's initiatives to advance economic growth, resilience, and quality of life. When decisions relating to economic development are being considered, the CEDS and this Comprehensive Plan should be used together to guide the decision-making process. This strategy identifies four key areas for economic development focus:

- Grow emerging and heritage industries;
- Attract and retain a young, talented, and diverse workforce;
- Create a nurturing environment for innovation and entrepreneurship; and
- Support and advance the mission of NAS PAX and tenant commands.

Key Findings from Public Engagement

The economic development policies and actions in this chapter were developed in consideration of these factors and as guided by community engagement, stakeholder meetings, and County leadership.

Several important key takeaways emerged from this participation effort and an analysis of current conditions in St. Mary's County, which are described in more detail below.

Industry Diversification

While community members expressed gratitude and support for the continuing presence of NAS PAX and the related industries it attracts, many expressed interest in broadening the types of jobs and industries in St. Mary's County to increase resilience to economic shocks.



From Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

Small Businesses

Community members expressed a strong desire to support and promote small, locally owned businesses. Support for small businesses was juxtaposed with the lack of support for large chain stores — community members generally wanted to limit the expansion of national retailers.

Expanding Tourism

Tourism was identified by community members as a potential area of economic

expansion. Historical sites, outdoor recreation opportunities, and agritourism were all noted as existing strengths of St. Mary's County that could be leveraged for tourism. Cultural learning programs, local history recognition, and community festivals could serve tourists and residents alike.

Maintaining Rural Character

Economic growth that maintains rural character was important to many residents. Local traditions, such as farming and watermen culture, should be promoted and protected. Amish and Mennonite communities, which have a deep history in the county, were identified as important to the county's rural culture. Community members stressed that town centers and village gathering spaces should be developed in a walkable, community-centered way, with downtown Leonardtown as a good example of development consistent with rural character.

Leveraging Marine Resources

St. Mary's County has always enjoyed a vital attachment to the water. From the establishment of the first capital of Maryland on the shores of the St. Mary's River to being a bounteous source of epicurean seafood, it has always been closely linked to the surrounding waters in many ways. Looking ahead it will be important to build on its water-oriented assets.



Barns at New Market in Charlotte Hall

DIVERSE ECONOMY

GOAL ED-1: CONTINUE TO PROTECT, ENHANCE, & DIVERSIFY THE COUNTY'S ECONOMIC BASE

Continue to protect, enhance, and diversify the county's economic base to ensure long-term stability and prosperity, in line with the County's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

Policy ED-1.1: Encourage Collaboration between the Departments of Economic Development and Land Use and Growth Management to Strengthen Local Businesses

Collaboration between the St. Mary's County Department of Economic Development (DED) and the Department of Land Use and Growth Management (LUGM) will support the expansion of both small and large businesses to strengthen the commercial tax base, which will both lower the tax burden on residential properties and provide more job opportunities for county residents.

Policy ED-1.2: Strengthen Collaboration with NAS PAX to Support Retention and Expansion of Defense Industries

Pursue the retention and expansion of existing defense-related industries, which are critical to the economy of St. Mary's County. Work with NAS PAX to understand and support its continued operation in St. Mary's County. This work should be in line with the County's CEDS.

Action ED-1.2.1: Continue to Work with NAS PAX on Recommended AICUZ Overlays, Including Noise Contours and Accident Potential Zones (APZs)

Avoid development impacts around NAS PAX and Webster Field that might threaten their continued operation through the continued use of Air Installations Compatible Use Zones (AICUZ) and other appropriate tools.

Policy ED-1.3: Support New and Existing Businesses in the Innovation Economy

Accommodate the building of new and the expansion of existing businesses in the innovation economy space, including technology firms, in line with the County's CEDS.

Action ED-1.3.1: Continue to Provide Incentives, Training, and Other Tools to Encourage Business Growth and Diversification

Continue to encourage business growth and diversification, including established technology firms to increase non-defense work, with incentives, training, and other tools.

Action ED-1.3.2: Continue to Market to and Recruit High-Quality Enterprises

Continue to attract high-quality businesses through marketing and recruitment of enterprises with high asset and high wage levels. Potential industry sectors include international marketing, research and technology, and companies with an express interest in commercializing technologies currently used in defense or government-only applications.

Policy ED-1.4: Implement the AeroPark Innovation District Master Plan

Implement the AeroPark Innovation District Master Plan to attract more advanced manufacturing, aviation, and unmanned and autonomous systems businesses both within the district and across the county. Implementation efforts should align with the County's CEDS. Evaluate the AeroPark Innovation District Master Plan every three to five years.

Policy ED-1.5: Ensure Appropriately Zoned Land is Available for New Office, Commercial, Industrial, and Mixed-Use Development

Ensure that there is enough appropriately zoned land within Growth Areas available for new office, commercial, industrial, and mixed-use development and redevelopment, in line with the County's CEDS.

Policy ED-1.6: Revitalize Established Businesses and Commercial Centers in Designated Growth Areas

Take advantage of existing infrastructure and available public services by promoting redevelopment of commercial centers in designated Growth Areas and revitalizing established businesses, in line with the County's CEDS and with Growth Management Policy GM-1.3: Protect Naval Flight Operations through Land Use Planning.

Action ED-1.6.1: Update the Zoning Ordinance to Facilitate Mixed-Use Redevelopment

Update district and use regulations to encourage for redevelopment of aging shopping areas to include residential development alongside commercial, office, or other appropriate use types.

Policy ED-1.7: When Updating Commercial Centers, Prioritize Existing Small Businesses and Attract Locally Owned Businesses

In commercial revitalization projects, encourage mixed-use development that first considers existing small business or attracts locally owned businesses as a part of the revitalized community. Example solutions include plans to find temporary or permanent nearby locations for existing businesses that are being displaced, and discounted rents for local businesses that relocate to the revitalized center.

GOAL ED-2: LEVERAGE COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH NAS PAX TO SUPPORT JOINT PRIORITIES

The presence of NAS PAX provides a unique opportunity to tap into federal resources that will strengthen both the military mission and the local economy.

Policy ED-2.1: Explore the Use of Intergovernmental Support Agreements (IGSA)

Explore prospects for establishing ongoing financial partnerships between the County and other local units of government with NAS PAX. For many defense communities, IGSAs have created a new annual revenue stream in tens of millions of dollars.

Policy ED-2.2: Infrastructure and Resilience Investment

Collaborate and coordinate with NAS PAX to plan, design, finance, and construct essential public utility and infrastructure improvements within the adopted Air Installations Compatible Use Zones (AICUZ).

Action ED-2.2.1: Continue to Prioritize Joint-Use Infrastructure

Continue to prioritize capital projects that benefit both the military installation and the general public, such as upgraded regional water systems, resilient microgrids, or improved transportation corridors and transit systems leading to installation gates.

Action ED-2.2.2: Continue to Explore Use of Federal Grant Programs

Continue to explore the use of Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation (OLDCC) Defense Community Infrastructure Program grants to fund shared community-military infrastructure deficiencies. Plan and design improvements with OLDCC program requirements in mind.

Policy ED-2.3: Economic Monitoring and Advocacy

Partner with NAS PAX, the largest single employer in the region, to track the performance of the installation, knowing the essential role it plays in the economy, protecting it from foreseeable threats, and sharing that information with both internal and external stakeholders.

Action ED-2.3.1: Economic Impact Assessments

Commit to regular updates of a Base Economic Impact Statement (EIS) to quantify the installation's contribution to regional payroll, contracts, and job creation. Publicize the importance and economic impact (both regionally and nationally) of NAS PAX in collaboration with local stakeholder groups like the Southern Maryland Navy Alliance and The PAX Partnership (TPP).

GOAL ED-3: CENTER WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & TALENT ATTRACTION AS CORE STRATEGIES

Center workforce development and talent attraction as core economic development strategies. Promote the county and region as an emerging employment center of a highly educated and skilled workforce. These efforts will align with the County's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

Policy ED-3.1: Work with Local Partners to Support and Expand Workforce Development Programs

Work with local partners to support and expand workforce development programs, especially those in the technology and advanced manufacturing sectors, to ensure job employment skills are available to meet existing and new technology requirements. Provide support for vulnerable populations seeking higher education and training opportunities.

Action ED-3.1.1: Continue to Develop Partnerships to Support Employment Opportunities for Vulnerable Populations

Continue to proactively develop partnerships with local business and employment groups to foster and support employment opportunities for vulnerable populations.

Action ED-3.1.2: Continue to Support Programs That Connect Students with Employment Opportunities

Continue to work collaboratively with education systems, local employers, and service providers to create a seamless transition for youth and adults from school to employment opportunities.

Action ED-3.1.3: Continue to Support Technical Education Opportunities in the Trades

Continue to support and promote access to technical training programs to meet workforce needs, including programs that provide mentorship, hands-on training, and skilled trades education.

Policy ED-3.2: Collaborate with Local Schools to Support Positive Learning Outcomes

Collaborate with local schools to ensure graduates are workforce-ready.

Policy ED-3.3: Recognize the Needs of Emerging Families

Recognize the needs of emerging families, such as affordable day care and workforce housing, when considering how to draw in new talent, and work with partners to help meet such needs so the county is an even more attractive place for workers and businesses.

Policy ED-3.4: Plan for Recreational and Cultural Amenities to Improve Quality of Life

Collaboratively plan for recreational and cultural amenities that improve the quality of life for existing and future residents and include arts and cultural elements in the planning process. Attracting a young, talented, and diverse workforce would set St. Mary's County apart from otherwise similar counties and attract employers.

Action ED-3.4.1: Continue to Attract Businesses Supporting Recreation and a High Quality of Life

Continue to attract and retain young professionals and families through business offerings. Target specialized retailers and other businesses such as movie theaters, bookstores, outdoor recreation providers, indoor recreation providers, and arts enterprises.

Action ED-3.4.2: Continue to Encourage Public Art and Art Installations

Continue to support the incorporation of public art and art installations in and around public buildings and spaces, using clear selection criteria and community-informed review processes to ensure appropriateness, inclusivity, and compatibility with facility use.



Lexington Park Health Hub Mural

GOAL ED-4: RECOGNIZE THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF SMALL BUSINESSES TO QUALITY OF LIFE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Recognize the contributions of small businesses to both quality of life and economic development, and advance policies that encourage more unique, locally owned businesses to open, in line with the County's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

Policy ED-4.1: Create and Execute County-Wide Initiatives to Support Small Businesses

Work with partners on county-wide initiatives that support and market existing small businesses. Support start-ups and early-stage technology companies and create opportunities for innovation and entrepreneurship.

Action ED-4.1.1: Continue to Streamline the Development Approval Process

Continue to update and streamline the development approval process to reduce the time between receiving an application and issuing a permit. Promote this process to local small businesses.

Action ED-4.1.2: Continue to Support Co-Working Spaces

Continue to encourage and support shared work spaces where entrepreneurs, freelancers, and startups can work side by side, exchange ideas, and collaborate. Co-working spaces can provide affordable and flexible workspace, access to shared equipment and technology, and opportunities for networking and mentorship. These spaces can build a supportive network that nurtures innovation while lowering barriers for new and emerging businesses.

Policy ED-4.2: Create Public-Private Partnerships to Support Existing and New Small Businesses

Collaborate with the private sector to offer support for existing and new small businesses. Build on existing programs to incentivize the development of new small businesses in all parts of the county, particularly when commercial sites are redeveloped.

Policy ED-4.3: Provide Expanded Opportunities for Rural Services, Industrial, and Entrepreneurial Activities

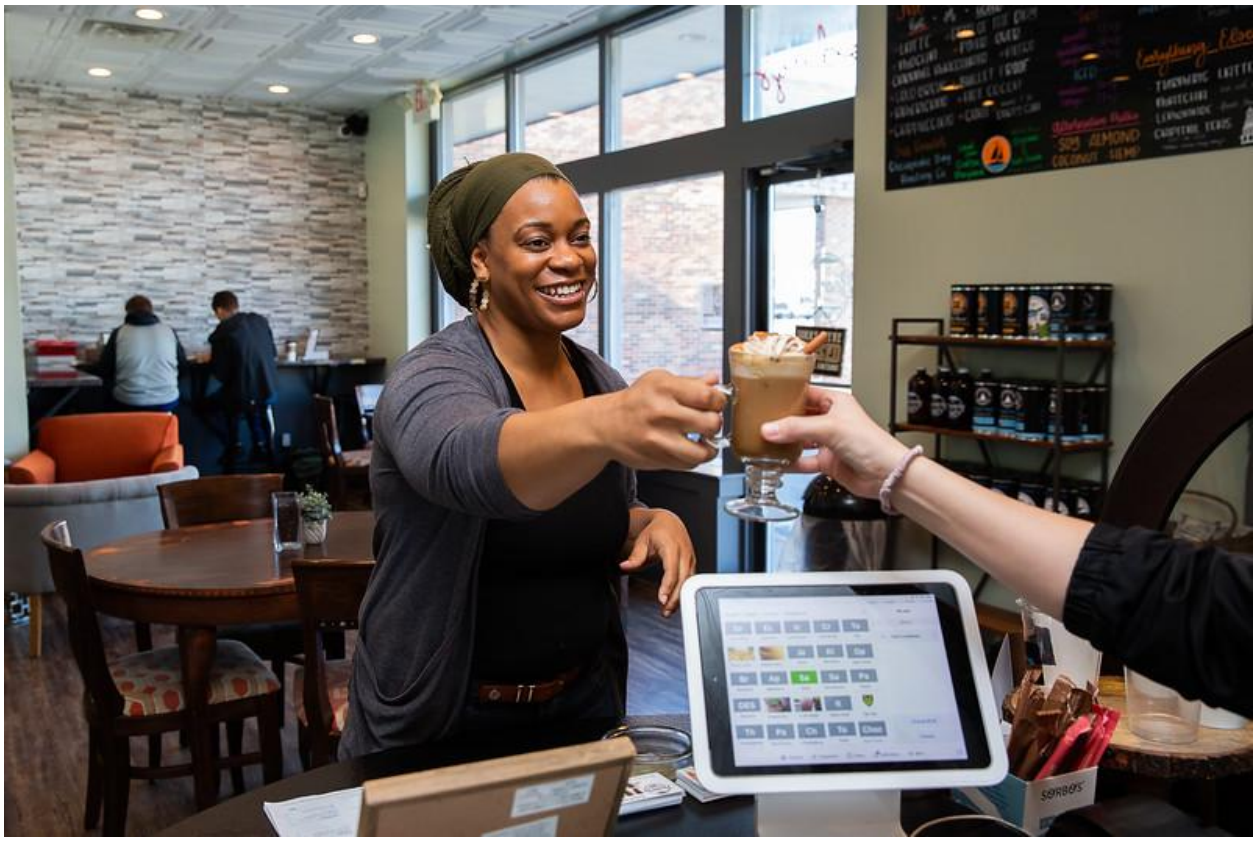
Enable farmers to supplement their agricultural incomes with small-scale cottage industries, such as cabinet making or welding shops. Such supplemental income production activities should be at a scale or intensity which will not unduly change the character of the area. Also support daily commercial services needs of rural residents by supporting rural-scale retail in appropriate locations.

Action ED-4.3.1: Update The CZO to Allow Appropriate Small Business Ventures in Agricultural Areas

Increase the allowable uses in agricultural districts to encourage appropriate small business ventures. Establish standards to prevent negative impacts on adjoining properties. When possible, minimize restrictions for businesses on farms.

Policy ED-4.4: Support Local Businesses to Become More Resilient to Future Hazards

In an effort to support pre-disaster preparedness, support and educate local businesses to become more resilient to future hazards.



The Beanery in California, MD

HERITAGE & OUTDOOR RECREATION TOURISM

GOAL ED-5: SUPPORT & EXPAND TOURISM

St. Mary's County is a Certified Local Government (CLG) through the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) and is part of the Southern Maryland National Heritage Area, one of the nation's designated regions where historic and cultural resources come together to create a nationally significant lived-in landscape. An important goal of the plan is to support and emphasize existing, unique county assets and rural setting to expand tourism and bring more tax revenue into the county, in line with the County's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), while mitigating adverse impacts of tourism on public infrastructure.

Policy ED-5.1: Maintain, Promote, and Expand Historic Sites, Historic Districts, Museums, and Other Cultural Resources

Maintain, promote, and expand historic sites, historic districts, museums, and heritage resources. Support public and private efforts, collaborating with partners such as St. Mary's College (SMCM), St. Mary's City, St. Mary's County Historical Society, and the St. Mary's County Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) to identify historic buildings, areas, or assets for designation or preservation.



House at Historic Sotterley

Action ED-5.1.1: Continue to Promote Heritage Education

Continue to expand and promote heritage education, using natural and cultural resources of the Southern Maryland heritage area to communicate the importance of the resources to the quality of life.

Action ED-5.1.2: Continue to Regularly Update and Maintain an Inventory of Natural, Recreational, Historical, and Cultural Resources in the County

Continue to collaborate with "Visit St. Mary's" to regularly update the inventory of resources available on the "Yes St. Mary's" and "Visit St. Mary's" websites. Both sites can be a tool for tourism and recreation, education and research, preservation and conservation, and economic development.

Action ED-5.1.3: Continue to Update Existing and Add Additional Signage to Promote, Link, and Interpret Sites

Continue to increase ease of access to natural, recreational, historical, and cultural

resources in the county by continuing to update existing and adding additional signage to promote, link, and interpret tourism sites. Consider adding site information at county entrances.

Action ED-5.1.4: Continue to Document the Significance of Structures Slated for Demolition

Continue to review and document the historic and architectural significance of all structures slated for demolition that are fifty years or older.

Action ED-5.1.5: Continue to Document Local Cultural Traditions Through the St. Mary's County Historical Society

Continue to collaborate with the St. Mary's County Historical Society to document local cultural traditions.

Action ED-5.1.6: Continue to Promote the Designation of and Investment in Historical Sites, Historic Districts, and Heritage Resources

Continue to promote recognition of and financial investment in heritage resources to foster a strong sense of history and place and to increase economic opportunity and revenues for all segments of the economy. This includes pursuing official State and Federal recognition of the County's historic sites, heritage areas, arts and entertainment districts, and eligible roads and their vicinities. Programs include the National Park Service's Chesapeake Gateways program, National Register of Historic Places, Maryland Arts and Entertainment Districts, and Maryland's Scenic Byways (Religious Freedom and Star-Spangled Banner).

Action ED-5.1.7: Continue to Provide Local Tax Incentives for the Preservation of Important Historical and Cultural Resources

Continue to encourage the private sector preservation of historical and cultural resources through local tax incentives.

Action ED-5.1.8: Continue to Inform Landowners of the Resources Available for Conservation and Adaptive Reuse of Significant Historic Structures

Continue to help landowners understand the resources available for conservation and adaptive reuse of significant historic structures. One such resource is the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) grants, which provide incentives to foster the preservation or restoration of significant structures.

Action ED-5.1.9: Support a New Interpretive Center/Visitors Center

Support the opening of the new Interpretive Center/Visitors Center, highlighting the stories of the indigenous, African American, and first European settlers in Maryland. Additionally, find opportunities to support a new hotel in development on the site ahead of Maryland's 400th anniversary.

Policy ED-5.2: Protect Natural, Recreational, Historical, and Cultural Assets Through the CZO

Update and use the tools in the CZO to protect natural, recreational, historical, and cultural assets.

Action ED-5.2.1: Continue to Utilize the Historic Landmarks and Districts Overlay in the CZO and Protect Other Important Areas

Continue to work with interested property owners to designate historic sites and historic districts in the CZO using the existing Historic Landmarks and Districts Overlay. The 18th-century village section of Charlotte Hall is an example of an appropriate historic district. Protect the scenic roads and corridors identified in the Historic Roads Survey. Identify and protect the County's natural and rural viewsheds.

Action ED-5.2.2: Require Identification and Documentation of Archeological Sites on a Property Prior to Any Disturbance of the Site

Require the identification and documentation of cemeteries, burial grounds, and archeological sites on a property prior to any disturbance of the site.

Action ED-5.2.3: Encourage Compatible Development in Designated Historic Districts

Update the CZO to encourage compatible development in historic districts. Explore the creation of performance standards to minimize impacts on surrounding properties. Adopt design guidelines for all locally designated historic sites and districts.

Action ED-5.2.4: Promote Adaptive Reuse of Historic Structures

Update the Historic Preservation Commission's (HPC) design standards. Consider establishing a nonconforming use provision that allows long vacant structures which are documented and designated as having both historic and architectural significance to be renovated in a manner consistent with maintaining historic and architectural integrity and to be occupied with uses that are compatible with their historic purpose and use.

Action ED-5.2.5: Continue to Ensure Implementation of Ordinance Requirements for Protection of Designated Scenic and Historic Corridors

Continue to verify compliance with requirements in the CZO related to the protection of designated scenic and historic corridors, including historic bridges.

Policy ED-5.3: Leverage Existing Historic Assets to Promote Tourism

Leverage existing historic assets and locations with a strong sense of place. Tap into increased interest in historic assets leading up to Maryland's 400th anniversary in 2034.

Action ED-5.3.1: Encourage Small Businesses Near Historic Sites and Rural Crossroads

Seek creative ways to foster business development at historic sites and important county crossroads such as Ridge, Clements, and Chaptico, while respecting Critical Areas and other regulations that limit use.

Policy ED-5.4: Expand Tourist-Oriented Businesses

As supported by the CEDS, encourage and support tourist-oriented shops, restaurants, lodging, conference facilities, motor sports facilities, and

recreation, especially businesses oriented towards the natural and historical assets of the county. For recreation, emphasize service providers for activities like hiking, biking, fishing, kayaking, boating, and tours of historical sites. Consider support of tourism-based businesses or filming opportunities through tax incentives.

Policy ED-5.5: Improve Existing Parks and Encourage Development of New Parks

Maintain and improve existing County-owned parks and encourage the development of new parks—especially on the water—to expand access for residents while attracting visitors who are seeking outdoor recreation options.

Action ED-5.5.1: Continue to Maintain and Improve County-Owned Parks

Continue to invest in maintenance and improvements to existing County-owned parks.

Action ED-5.5.2: Continue to Support New Parks and Parks Improvement Efforts for State and National Parks, Monuments, and Trail Networks

Continue to support new and ongoing planning efforts to maximize the public benefits of parks, monuments, and trail networks in St. Mary's County, including the Chesapeake Gateways and Watertrails Network, the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, and all County and State parks.

Policy ED-5.6: Encourage High-Quality and Contextually Appropriate Architectural Design and District Character

Support high-quality and contextually appropriate architectural design to positively impact tourism and quality of life. Support the incorporation of public art and art spaces where appropriate, working closely with the St. Mary's County Arts Council and the Department of Economic Development (DED).

Action ED-5.6.1: Continue to Support Leonardtown in Developing Contextually Appropriate Mixed-Use Areas

Continue to support Leonardtown in encouraging owners and developers of single-story buildings in the town core to add upper stories for mixed use and consider supporting similar styles of development in other populated areas of the county. Expand the network of Art and Entertainment Districts in St. Mary's County through support of Leonardtown's current district and through considering similar districts in other parts of the county.

Policy ED-5.7: Continue to Support Regional Transportation Opportunities that Enhance Tourism

Continue to support tourism initiatives that improve visitor access, strengthen regional partnerships, and enhance the visitor experience, including the continued evaluation of regional passenger ferry opportunities, where

appropriate and consistent with future County priorities.

Action ED-5.7.1: Continue to Promote Destination-Based Transportation Partnerships

Continue to encourage collaborative marketing initiatives that connect transportation options, including but not limited to passenger ferry service where available, with waterfront communities, historic destinations, museums, parks, lodging, restaurants, recreational opportunities, agritourism destinations, and local businesses to strengthen St. Mary's County tourism economy.



Snowhill Park in Mechanicsville

WORKING LANDS

GOAL ED-6: PROMOTE A ROBUST, DIVERSE AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY SECTOR

Promote a robust, diverse agriculture, aquaculture, fishing, and forestry sector that preserves open spaces and strengthens traditional farming, in line with the County's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).



Summerseat Farm in Mechanicsville

Policy ED-6.1: Focus on Financial Incentives to Help Farmers Keep Farming

Focus on financial incentives to help farmers keep farming and to support young people who are getting their start as farmers and need small business support. Provide governmental incentives and policies that encourage continued major acreage in traditional and alternative crops. Provide economic incentives and land planning to stabilize the presence of the Amish and Mennonite farming community.

Action ED-6.1.1: Continue to Expand Farm-to-School Purchasing Program

Continue to expand the existing farm-to-school purchasing program to support stable local markets for farm products.

Policy ED-6.2: Support Agritourism Opportunities

Support agritourism opportunities, such as farm stays, events, roadside stands, recreation farms, pick-your-own produce outlets, craft beverage production with local products (such as wineries, distilleries, and breweries), corn and hay mazes, farm life demonstrations, or community fairs.

Policy ED-6.3: Support Agriculture Through Updated County Regulations

Ensure that County regulations are not preventing agricultural businesses success.

Action ED-6.3.1: Continue to Streamline the Development Review Process for Agricultural Businesses

To the extent practicable, continue to streamline development review processes for agricultural uses to ensure the viability and flexibility of agricultural businesses.

Action ED-6.3.2: Continue to Update Agricultural Uses and Definitions

Continue to update the CZO to support the development of new agricultural support uses, such as small-scale meat processing, agricultural product distribution centers, produce packing hubs, and value-added agriculture generally. Ensure that the agriculture-related definitions in the CZO are at least as expansive as those in state statute, referring to state statute as necessary.

Policy ED-6.4: Explore New Transportation-Related Policies that Support Farming

Study and explore new transportation-related policies that support farming, such as requiring the construction of wider road shoulders when roads are reconstructed, to better support farm vehicles, carts, and buggies used by the Amish and Mennonite farmers.

Policy ED-6.5: Pursue Alternative Crops and Markets

Increase education about and production of specialty crops for urban, regional, and niche markets with emphasis on locally grown and raised. Provide increased marketing opportunities for locally grown products. Re-examine new uses of preserved agricultural land for profitability in a post tobacco production era. Examples of specialty crops include grapes and other fruits for wine; flowers; herbs, ornamentals, and other nursery plants; organic produce and high value vegetables and fruits.

Policy ED-6.6: Support Forestry Programs that Sustain Private Forests

Support the continuance of private forests to produce lumber and wood products while maintaining rural open space, wildlife habitat, and water quality.

Action ED-6.6.1: Continue to Encourage Landowner and County Participation in Forest and Woodlands Programs

Continue to encourage the participation of landowners and the County in state and federal programs that enhance and protect forests and woodlands, support silviculture activities, and provide financial incentives for retaining forests. Such programs include cost share programs, tax incentive programs for conservation and management, education programs, and technical assistance programs.

MINERAL RESOURCES

GOAL ED-7: PROMOTE & PROTECT APPROPRIATE MINING ACTIVITY

Promote and protect the continued economic viability of the mining industry and mineral resources in St. Mary's County, in line with the County's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

Policy ED-7.1: Support Mining Activities While Minimizing Potential Negative Impacts

Support continued economic viability of mining activity in the county, while ensuring that the impacts of mining on neighboring areas are minimized as much as possible.

Action ED-7.1.1: Encourage the Conversion of Residential Mining Sites to Recreational Areas

Review existing regulations and update as necessary to ensure that negative physical impacts, water quality impacts, and visual impacts are avoided or mitigated. This includes removal of vegetation, soil disturbance, and grading. Enforce mining-related regulations to ensure that mining activity complies with all applicable standards and procedures.

MARINE RESOURCES

GOAL ED-8: SUPPORT FISHERIES & AQUACULTURE ACTIVITIES

Enhance fish stock and markets for local watermen and enhance recreational fishing opportunities by supporting fisheries and aquaculture activities, in line with the County's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

Policy ED-8.1: Invest in and Maintain Aquaculture Opportunities

Seek aquaculture investment, maintain existing aquaculture activities, and restore overworked areas to support the local aquaculture economy and culture.

Action ED-8.1.1: Continue to Support Local, State, and Regional Efforts to Effectively Manage and Regulate Aquaculture Activities for Continued Productivity

Continue to work with Maryland and neighboring states to share equitable laws to regulate fishing, crabbing, and oystering, and to effectively manage commercial harvesting for continued productivity. Continue to assist in regional and local efforts (including collaboration with local organizations) to restore fish and shellfish populations and habitats, and to prevent recurrence of such overworking.

Action ED-8.1.2: Continue to Provide Infrastructure and Support Related Uses for a More Robust Fishing Industry

Continue to provide infrastructure such as landings and docks, and support locally available processing facilities, to increase both saltwater and freshwater aquaculture production.

Policy ED-8.2: Support and Expand Recreational Fishing Opportunities

Support and expand recreational fishing opportunities, including encouraging fee-paying freshwater fishing ponds and lakes.

Policy ED-8.3: Enhance Marine-Based Recreational Opportunities

Explore opportunities to expand public access to the waterfront and improve water safety.



From Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

5

Environment and Natural Resources Element

In This Section

Planning for the Environment and Natural Resources
Sensitive Areas & Areas of Critical State Concern
Priority Preservation Areas
Water Resources



Planning for the Environment & Natural Resources

This element establishes the County's framework for protecting natural systems while directing growth toward areas with existing services. It converts community priorities into a unified strategy that safeguards the Chesapeake Bay, shorelines, forests, wetlands, working lands, and scenic landscapes. It aligns conservation actions with the comprehensive plan's emphasis on intentional, place-efficient growth.

Key Findings from Public Engagement

Values & Long-Range Vision

Participants consistently emphasized five priorities: preserving rural character and farmland; protecting waterways, wetlands, and the Chesapeake Bay while improving public access; preventing sprawl by focusing growth in existing centers; expanding parks, trails, and green spaces; and sustaining agriculture and aquaculture. Residents also called for climate resilience, particularly coastal protection and limits on floodplain development. Participants tied environmental protection directly to growth management by keeping rural areas rural, encouraging redevelopment in Development Districts and Town Centers, and investing in infrastructure where it already exists.

There are operational challenges of environmental management: aging septic and sewer infrastructure, coastal hazards, and the need to modernize processes to ensure environmental review remains efficient and enforceable. The community acknowledged that maintaining growth boundaries and targeting restoration efforts would achieve both economic and ecological goals.

What Data Shows

A High-Value, High-Exposure Natural System

The Trends and Projections Report documents extensive forests, wetlands, and stream networks that support biodiversity and water quality. Large portions of the County fall within Targeted Ecological Areas (TEAs) and the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area, confirming the importance of protecting these lands while managing development along tidal waters and steep slopes. The locations of environmentally sensitive lands, such as the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area, can be viewed across multiple layers within the County's publicly available GIS system.

Agriculture remains central to the County's identity and economy, but continued farmland conversion poses a

risk. Protecting working lands and supporting agri-business diversification are essential to sustaining both local food systems and the County's rural character.

Hazards & Infrastructure Constraints

Flooding, sea-level rise, drainage failures, and aging septic systems pose growing threats to water quality and property. Aligning development with watershed function, upgrading failing systems, and preventing further fragmentation of forested areas are critical to maintaining resilience and ecological health.

Organizing Logic for this Element

The policies that follow are organized around four complementary lenses that link community vision, data, and State mandates into an implementable framework:

Protect & Connect Core Natural Systems

Prioritize the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area and TEAs, maintain and expand native vegetated buffers, and close green infrastructure gaps that connect habitat cores and headwaters. These efforts enhance biodiversity, water quality, and flood resilience.

Sustain Working Lands as Conservation Partners

Keep farming and aquaculture viable through preservation funding, easements, and targeted incentives. Support enterprise diversification that reduces conversion pressure and aligns land use policies to protect prime soils and rural landscapes.

Direct Growth to Conserve

Focus on redevelopment and housing within Development Districts and Town Centers. Require environmental site design and clustering to minimize disturbance, reduce impervious surfaces, and safeguard streams and headwaters. This approach upholds the County's tiered growth framework.

Build Climate & Water Resilience

Combine shoreline and floodplain protection with stormwater and septic upgrades, regenerative stream restoration, and habitat recovery for submerged aquatic vegetation and fish. Encourage nature-based designs that reduce risk and restore ecosystem function.

Key Themes Linked to Policies

Critical Areas & Sensitive Lands

Updating Critical Area regulations, mapping habitats, and enforcing protective buffers are central to maintaining ecological integrity and complying with State mandates. This focus ensures that areas most vulnerable to disturbance (shorelines, wetlands, and tidal transition zones) are identified,

monitored, and protected through clear, predictable standards. These measures safeguard biodiversity, water quality, and shoreline stability while providing a foundation for adaptive management as environmental conditions change.

Green Infrastructure

Protecting and connecting natural landscapes requires a comprehensive approach to green infrastructure. By identifying ecological cores and corridors using local and State data, the County can target reforestation and conservation easements to strengthen connectivity between critical habitats. This approach prioritizes headwaters and Stronghold watersheds to maintain ecosystem services such as flood control, nutrient filtration, and wildlife movement. Mapping and closing gaps in the green infrastructure network will also create opportunities for multi-benefit projects that enhance both conservation and community resilience.

Forests & Tree Canopy

Forests are among the County's most valuable assets for biodiversity, water filtration, and carbon sequestration. Implementing a no-net-loss framework for forest cover, combined with strong mitigation requirements for unavoidable clearing, will help prevent fragmentation and maintain ecological function. Expanding urban forestry programs within Development Districts and Town Centers will further improve air quality, reduce urban heat, and provide aesthetic and recreational value. These coordinated actions ensure that tree canopy and forest resources are managed as essential natural infrastructure rather than secondary amenities.

Wetlands, Streams, & Buffers

Healthy wetlands and riparian systems are vital for water quality, flood mitigation, and habitat continuity. The County's strategy emphasizes requiring native vegetative buffers along all rivers, streams, and tidal or nontidal wetlands to stabilize banks, filter runoff, and provide shade for aquatic species. Alteration of these systems will only be permitted where no feasible alternative exists, and any impacts must be fully mitigated through restoration and replanting. Regenerative stormwater design and targeted restoration of degraded stream segments will return these systems to their natural hydrologic and ecological functions.

Working Lands & Rural Character

Sustaining agriculture, aquaculture, and forestry as viable industries is essential for maintaining rural character and economic stability. The County will continue expanding farmland preservation funding and incentive programs that encourage landowners to protect productive soil through easements and participation in State and Federal programs. Support for agritourism, local markets, and small-

scale producers helps diversify farm income and reduce conversion pressure. Aligning preservation investments with State TEAs and Rural Legacy priorities ensures that conservation and economic development reinforce each other.

Public Access & Recreation

Enhancing public access to nature complements conservation by connecting residents and visitors to the County's environmental and cultural resources. Expanding greenways, blueways, and trail systems will create continuous corridors linking parks, heritage sites, and waterfront areas. These projects demonstrate best practices in resource stewardship and environmental design, offering educational opportunities while maintaining sensitive habitats. Thoughtful public access planning ensures that recreation and conservation coexist, strengthening community identity and long-term support for environmental protection.

How This Element Will Be Used

Project Review & Permitting

The policies in this element provide a clear framework for evaluating development proposals and public projects through an environmental lens. They establish measurable standards for buffer widths, site suitability, and mitigation requirements to ensure that project review processes are consistent, transparent, and enforceable. Interagency coordination among planning, public works, environmental services, and health departments will be strengthened so that natural resource protections are integrated early in project design rather than treated as afterthoughts. By embedding environmental considerations into permitting and review, the County can reduce conflicts, accelerate approvals for compliant projects, and ensure that development aligns with long-term conservation objectives.

Capital Investment & Restoration Targeting

This element also serves as a guide for directing capital improvement and restoration efforts to areas where they will yield the greatest environmental and public benefit. Mapping of TEAs, green infrastructure networks, and hazard-prone lands provides the spatial intelligence needed to prioritize investment in reforestation, stream restoration, and stormwater or septic upgrades. Focusing limited resources in these high-value zones ensures cost-effective outcomes, protecting water quality, enhancing flood resilience, and reducing maintenance burdens on public infrastructure. Over time, these targeted investments will produce measurable ecological gains while supporting the County's goals for sustainable growth and community resilience.

Growth Management Integration

Environmental protection and growth management are interdependent strategies within this framework. The policies outlined here reinforce the County's tiered land use system by channeling growth and redevelopment toward Development Districts and Town Centers while conserving the rural landscape. By aligning zoning, infrastructure planning, and resource protection, the County can minimize sprawl, preserve agricultural viability, and reduce infrastructure costs. This integrated approach ensures that conservation outcomes are not isolated initiatives but are embedded within broader planning decisions, resulting in a growth pattern that is both economically efficient and environmentally responsible.



Chaptico Park

SENSITIVE AREAS & AREAS OF CRITICAL STATE CONCERN

GOAL ENV-1: PROTECT & ENHANCE SENSITIVE AREAS & AREAS OF CRITICAL STATE CONCERN

Protect and enhance Areas of Critical State Concern, including the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area, State-designated habitats, and other environmentally sensitive lands, to safeguard ecological functions and ensure compliance with State mandates and further serving the interests of St. Mary's County, which has a rich maritime culture that supports many other priorities in the St. Mary's 2050 plan. Sensitive Areas and Areas of Critical State Concern were intentionally grouped under a shared goal because they function as an integrated resource protection system rather than as distinct, unrelated policy domains. Areas of Critical State Concern fall squarely within the statutory intent of §3-104 of the Land Use Article of the *Annotated Code of Maryland*. This structure strengthens policy clarity, reflects on-the-ground implementation, and supports a coordinated approach to environmental stewardship consistent with both local planning objectives and State mandates in collaboration with local organizations.

Policy ENV-1.1: Identify and Map Critical Habitats

Continue to track the location of, manage, and monitor critical fish, wildlife, and plant habitats by applying Federal, State, and local resource protection policies within all development activities.

Action ENV-1.1.1: Continue to Map Natural Landscape Features and Sensitive Areas

Use Federal, State, and local datasets to continue to identify and update mapping of streams, wetlands, hydric and erodible soils, floodplains, steep slopes, important forest habitats (including forest interior dwelling species (FIDS) and headwater forests), natural heritage areas, and rare, threatened, or endangered species. Incorporate priority areas such as Stronghold Watersheds identified by the Maryland Biological Stream Survey. Continue to publish sensitive area mapping through Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for use by citizens, consultants, and staff to support project design and review while safeguarding sensitive species.

Action ENV-1.1.2: Map Green Infrastructure

For rural areas and all lands mapped as green infrastructure by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR), develop guidance maps and conservation regulations to sustain agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and aquaculture, and to preserve nature-dominated environments such as wetlands, forests, abandoned fields, stream valleys, floodplains, and habitat protection areas.

Policy ENV-1.2: Conserve Critical Fish, Wildlife, and Plant Habitats

Conserve critical fish, wildlife, and plant habitats by enforcing State programs, habitat protection measures, and voluntary conservation agreements.

Action ENV-1.2.1: Continue to Implement the Maryland Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Program Policy

Continue to update and implement the Maryland Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Program (COMAR 27.01.01 - 27.01.14) to ensure compliance with State law, facilitate uniform enforcement, streamline application review, and establish land use and development controls that limit adverse impacts, recognizing that environmental harm may result not only from pollution but also from the scale and intensity of human activity in the Critical Area.

Action ENV-1.2.2: Maintain Riparian Buffers in Accordance with State Standards

For all riverbanks, perennial streams, and intermittent streams within the Critical Area, continue to provide riparian buffers at least 100 feet wide, expanded as necessary for adjacent wetlands, steep slopes, and erodible soils. For intermittent streams outside the Critical Area, provide riparian buffers at least 50 feet wide, expanded as necessary for adjacent wetlands, steep slopes, and erodible soils.

Action ENV-1.2.3: Continue to Protect Habitats that Support Species

Continue to protect habitats that support species in need of conservation, including rare, threatened, and endangered species, waterfowl areas, pollinator habitat, colonial bird nesting sites, forest interior dwelling species, and breeding, feeding, and wintering habitats dependent on the Chesapeake Bay, its tributaries, and coastal environments. Enforce State and Federal requirements for protective buffers and seasonal restrictions on development and other activities near breeding and nesting sites, and promote voluntary conservation through landowner agreements, conservation easements, and tax incentive programs.

Policy ENV-1.3: Maintain and Enhance Forest Cover

Preserve existing forests and expand tree-covered areas throughout the County to protect biological productivity, habitat, and water quality.

Action ENV-1.3.1: Continue to Apply the Forest Conservation Act

Keep applying Maryland's Forest Conservation Act, including any changes made in the future.

Policy ENV-1.4: Protect Wetlands, Streams, and Sensitive Aquatic Habitats

Protect wetlands, rivers, streams, riparian corridors, and sensitive aquatic habitats by maintaining functional native buffers, preserving natural hydrology, limiting disturbance, and restoring degraded

systems. Safeguard critical ecosystems, including submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV), anadromous fish spawning areas, and tidal transition zones, to support water quality, habitat connectivity, and ecological function.

Action ENV-1.4.1: Continue to Require Protective Native Buffers

Continue to require protective, naturally vegetated buffers for wetlands, rivers, streams, shorelines, and tidal and non-tidal wetlands. Buffers shall utilize native species, provide shading, stabilize banks, filter runoff, and be expanded where necessary to protect hydric or erodible soils and sustain wetland hydrology. Disturbance within buffers shall be prohibited unless no feasible alternative exists and shall require substantial mitigation for approved impacts.

Action ENV-1.4.2: Maintain Natural Hydrology

Preserve natural runoff patterns, stormwater flows, and riparian processes to protect hydrological and ecological functions of streams, wetlands, and downstream aquatic systems. Where development contributes runoff to sensitive aquatic areas, require regenerative stormwater design practices that restore natural hydrology and support long-term stream and buffer function.

Action ENV-1.4.3: Strengthen and Restore Riparian, Wetland, and Aquatic Habitats

Enhance riparian corridors, wetlands, and aquatic habitats through planting, restoration, and buffer enhancement programs that improve shading, water quality, and habitat continuity, and create connected wildlife corridors. Prioritize restoration in headwater streams, tidal transition areas, and wetland complexes.

Action ENV-1.4.4: Restore Degraded Streams, River Sanctuaries, Buffers, and Aquatic Vegetation

Where streams, river sanctuaries, riparian buffers, or wetlands are degraded, require restoration measures that return these systems to their ecological function. Identify and protect submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) and anadromous fish spawning areas, and support restoration initiatives, including stakeholder and watermen participation where appropriate.

Action ENV-1.4.5: Prohibit Alteration of Wetlands and Sensitive Aquatic Areas

Prohibit alteration of wetlands, including mowing, filling, ditching, placement of structural stormwater facilities within buffers, or significant modification of natural drainage patterns. Maintain transitional habitats between aquatic and upland communities and protect hydric soils adjacent to wetlands through incorporation into expanded buffers. Require adequate mitigation for any unavoidable impacts.

Action ENV-1.4.6: Continue to Protect Submerged Aquatic Habitats

Continue to identify and protect areas of SAV and prioritize conservation of low-impervious watersheds that support anadromous fish spawning and nursery habitat.

Action ENV-1.4.7: Prioritize Native Buffers in Headwaters, Wetlands, and Tidal Transition Zones

Focus on planting and restoration efforts to create continuous native buffers in headwater streams, tidal transition areas, and wetland complexes, with designs that enhance shade, stabilize banks, and improve water quality. Where buffer disturbance is proposed, require identification of feasible alternatives prior to approval.

Policy ENV-1.5: Minimize Impact on Sensitive Areas Through Development Review

Minimizing the impact of development is an important priority to maintaining the sustainability of the County for future generations.

Action ENV-1.5.1: Continue to Ensure Compliance with Natural Resource Protection Policies

Continue to ensure that all County agencies and departments comply with natural resource protection policies during project review and approval.

Action ENV-1.5.2: Continue to Require the Use of Environmental Site Design

Continue to require new development to use environmental site design (ESD) practices to maximize onsite infiltration and habitat protection and encourage regenerative stormwater management where structural controls are unavoidable.

Action ENV-1.5.3: Continue to Minimize Disturbance in Development

Continue to limit land disturbance before final approvals; cluster development to reduce impervious surfaces and protect stream watersheds.

Action ENV-1.5.4: Continue to Limit Development in the Critical Area Buffer

Continue to restrict new development activities in the 100-foot Buffer to water-dependent uses. Revise nonconforming use standards to allow site improvements that reduce impacts and improve water quality.

PRIORITY PRESERVATION AREAS

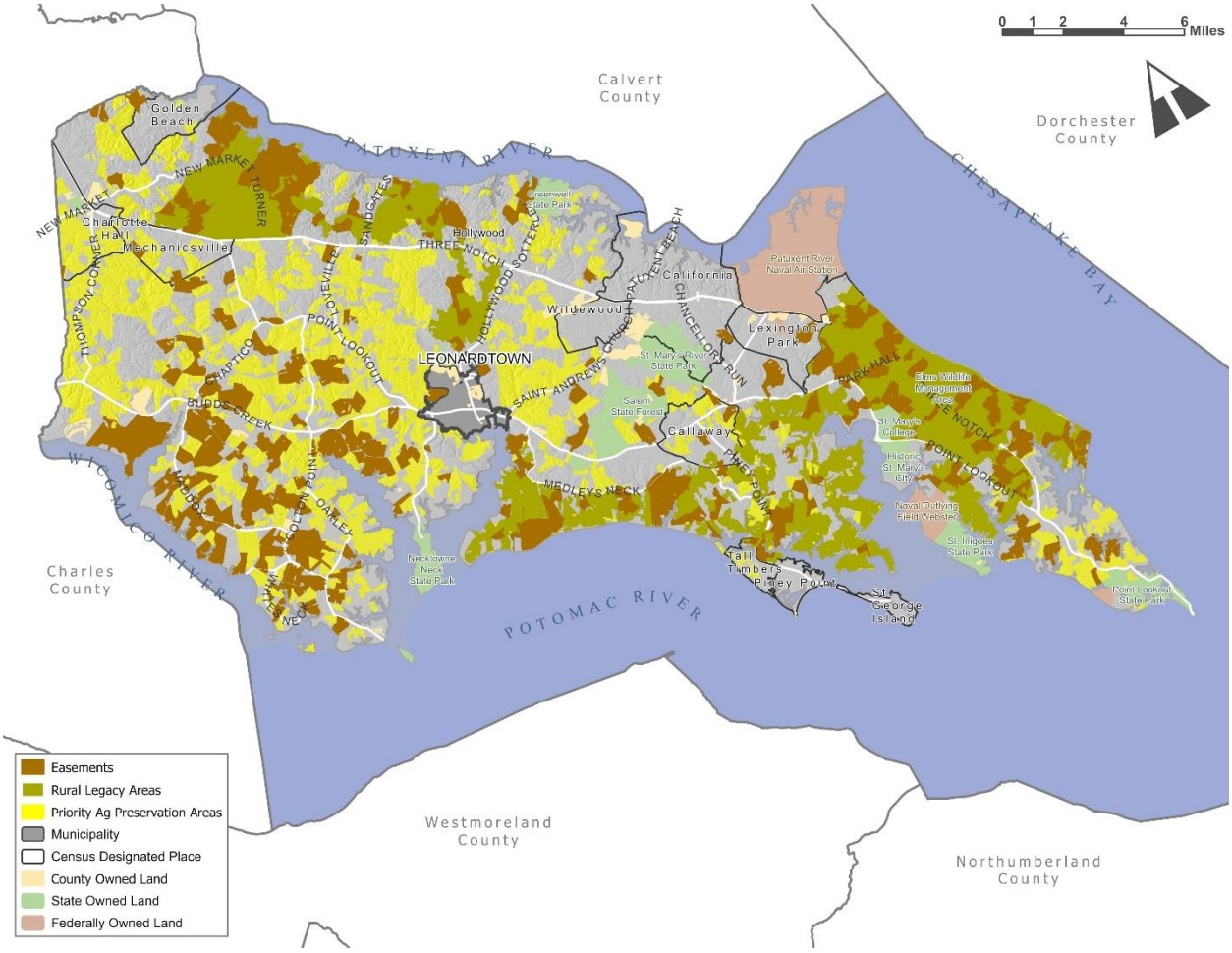
GOAL ENV-2: MAINTAIN FARMING AS A VIABLE ECONOMIC ENGINE

Maintain farming as a viable and resilient industry that supports local food production, strengthens the rural economy, and sustains the working landscapes of St. Mary's County.

Policy ENV-2.1: Retain Agricultural Land Uses and Protect Priority Farmland

Retain agricultural land uses and preserve prime farmland and woodland soils to keep farming viable and maintain the Priority Preservation Area (protect 80% of the 97,660-acre area).

Figure 5: Rural and Agricultural Preservation Areas, including Priority Preservation Areas



Action ENV-2.1.1: Continue to Limit Growth in Rural Areas

Continue to limit growth in rural areas to preserve open space and support agriculture and forestry by exploring an Agricultural Overlay floating zone with density reductions and standards, paired with incentives such as Transferrable Development Rights (TDRs) density bonuses and expanded permitted uses to supplement farm income.

Action ENV-2.1.2: Continue to Promote Transferrable Development Rights (TDR) Program

Continue to invest in the removal of development rights from agricultural parcels through private-market Transferrable Development Rights (TDRs), the purchase or donation of conservation easements, the support for land trust partnerships, and the implementation of voluntary agricultural overlays with incentives to sustain farm and forestry operations.

Action ENV-2.1.3: Continue to Expand Farmland Preservation Funding and Programs

Continue to expand farmland preservation by sustaining the Agricultural District Program (including five-year agreements where applicable) and leveraging multiple funding sources — County recordation tax revenues, TDR fee-in-lieu funds (directed to Priority Preservation Areas), installment purchase agreements, and matched State/Federal funding — to achieve preservation goals and ensure long-term protection of farmland.

Action ENV-2.1.4: Meet the Priority Preservation Area Target

Reaffirm the County's commitment to preserve at least 80% of the 97,660-acre Priority Preservation Area (PPA) by 2040 through Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) easements, Rural Legacy acquisitions, County transfer-tax programs, TDR retirements, and land-trust partnerships. Publish an annual PPA progress map and report showing acres protected, contracts pending, and funding sources leveraged.

Policy ENV-2.2: Foster Expansion of Agricultural and Aquaculture Industries

Promote the growth and profitability of agriculture and aquaculture through supportive policies, incentives, and diversification of farm enterprises.

Action ENV-2.2.1: Continue to Create Local Incentives

Continue to develop and implement local incentives, zoning tools, and taxing policies to preserve farmland, including establishment of a Critical Farms program.

Action ENV-2.2.2: Continue to Promote Best Management Practices (BMPs)

Continue to require and promote best management practices in farming, forestry, and aquaculture to reduce soil erosion, minimize nutrient and chemical runoff, and protect water quality and habitats.

Action ENV-2.2.3: Continue to Promote Participation in Conservation Funding Programs

Continue to publicize and promote landowner participation in State and Federal funding programs for cover crops, fencing, manure management, nutrient management, and other practices that conserve soils, improve productivity, and protect water quality. Potential Federal funding sources include the Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration Program (REPI), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

Action ENV-2.2.4: Advocate for and Ensure the Protection of Riparian Rights

Advocate for and ensure the protection of riparian rights for property owners consistent with emerging aquaculture trends.

Policy ENV-2.3: Leverage and Target Farmland and Forestland Preservation Programs

Maximize the use of State, County, and land trust programs to permanently protect farmland and forests, directing investments to high-priority areas that sustain agriculture, forestry, and rural character.

Action ENV-2.3.1: Continue to Expand Participation in Preservation Programs

Continue to facilitate and promote landowner enrollment in the MALPF, Rural Legacy Program, REPI Program, and County preservation programs.

Action ENV-2.3.2: Maximize Available Easement Funding

Continue to fully utilize State agricultural transfer taxes, County recording taxes, and other dedicated funds to purchase permanent easements on prime farmland and woodland.

Action ENV-2.3.3: Target Priority Lands

Continue to pursue MALPF, Rural Legacy, and County transfer tax funds to purchase easements restricting development on prime farmland, woodlands, and green infrastructure gaps identified in Action ENV-3.1.2: Map and Close Green Infrastructure "Gaps" with Multi-Benefit Projects below.

Action ENV-2.3.4: Align Investments with Federal, State, and Land Trust Priorities

Prioritize County preservation funds for properties that fall within State TEAs, Rural Legacy Areas, REPI Program areas, and land-trust priority maps and that contribute to the PPA goal. Work with Naval Air Station Patuxent River (NAS PAX) to ensure that farmland and forestland preservation efforts align with federal priorities.

GOAL ENV-3: PROTECT & CONSERVE SIGNIFICANT RESOURCE AREAS

Protect and conserve significant resource areas, including locally identified green infrastructure, forests and wildlife habitats, wetlands, streams, scenic landscapes, cultural and historic resources, mineral lands, and shoreline habitats, to sustain biodiversity, community character, and long-term land productivity.

Policy ENV-3.1: Protect Natural Landscapes and Green Infrastructure

Protect and conserve locally significant natural landscapes and green infrastructure networks to maintain ecosystem services, habitat connectivity, and rural character.

Action ENV-3.1.1: Conserve Green Infrastructure in Growth Areas

In planned development areas, identify and map green infrastructure networks to be conserved as open space; coordinate passive recreation with conservation objectives; establish development standards that enhance woodland and forest functions for water quality; and design stormwater facilities as community amenities.

Action ENV-3.1.2: Map and Close Green Infrastructure "Gaps" with Multi-Benefit Projects

Use DNR Green Infrastructure and local data to identify connectivity gaps where plantings, conservation easements, or restoration will (1) connect habitat cores, (2) reduce stormwater/nuisance flooding, and (3) protect agricultural soils. Prioritize headwater forests and Stronghold watersheds identified by the Maryland Biological Stream Survey in targeting and project selection. Work with land trusts and other partners to prioritize protecting these green infrastructure gaps.

Policy ENV-3.2: Preserve Scenic, Historic, and Roadside Resources

Preserve scenic, historic, and roadside landscapes as defining features of County identity and rural character.

Action ENV-3.2.1: Continue to Preserve Scenic and Historic Roadway Corridors

Continue to preserve, maintain, and enhance the character-defining qualities of designated scenic and historic roads.

Action ENV-3.2.2: Preserve and Enhance Roadside Forests and Woodland Buffers

Preserve and enhance roadside forests and woodland buffers to protect viewsheds of historic roads, maintain the rural character of roadways in rural areas and growth area edges, and use urban forestry and street trees to buffer and screen new development along principal roads in town centers and villages.



Three Notch Trail Information Board

Policy ENV-3.3: Develop and Manage Greenways and Open Space Systems

Develop interconnected greenways and open space systems to enhance recreation, public access, habitat protection, water quality, and heritage area connections, while demonstrating best practices in resource stewardship.

Action ENV-3.3.1: Implement Greenway and Open Space Projects

Implement greenway and open space projects that link watershed resources with Southern Maryland Heritage Area sites, supporting both environmental and cultural objectives.

Action ENV-3.3.2: Continue to Demonstrate and Promote Resource Protection Through Education

Use publicly managed lands to continue to demonstrate natural resource protection techniques and educate residents, businesses, and students about the benefits of a healthy environment. Expand education and public awareness programs, including integration of environmental curriculum in public schools, to encourage preservation of cultural, historic, and natural resources (e.g., birds and other wildlife).

Action ENV-3.3.3: Integrate Greenways into Development Design

Require County ordinances and transportation plans to protect sensitive areas within open space parcels of major subdivisions. Ensure these open spaces contribute to a continuous network of wildlife corridors and support development of a countywide greenway and trail system. Design and locate greenway infrastructure to avoid and minimize impacts on habitat and ecological functions.

Action ENV-3.3.4: Explore the Feasibility of an Urban Tree Program

Explore the creation of an urban tree program for Leonardtown and Lexington Park Development Districts and for the Town Centers.

Policy ENV-3.4: Accommodate Mineral Extraction While Minimizing Impacts

Accommodate the extraction of mineral resources while minimizing adverse impacts to water resources, habitats, and adjacent land uses, and preserving access to potential resource areas for future needs.

Action ENV-3.4.1: Require Mineral Extraction Operations to Implement Best Management Practices (BMPs)

Require mineral extraction operations to implement best management practices that protect surrounding habitats, water quality, and neighboring land uses.

Action ENV-3.4.2: Maintain Land Use Policies That Preserve Access to Mineral Resource Areas

Maintain land use policies that preserve access to mineral resource areas and prevent incompatible development, while prohibiting mineral extraction in designated habitat protection areas unsuitable for mining.

Action ENV-3.4.3: Continue to Require Reclamation and Site Stabilization Plans for All Extraction Activities

Continue to require reclamation and site stabilization plans for all extraction activities to ensure long-term environmental protection and viable post-mining land use.

Policy ENV-3.5: Require Reclamation for All Decommissioned Solar Projects

An important priority for the community is to ensure that when a solar generation project is decommissioned, the property is returned to pre-development condition.

Action ENV-3.5.1: Require Reclamation for All Decommissioned Solar Projects

Required reclamation for all decommissioned solar projects that currently exist or that may be established in the future to ensure environmental protection and post-solar viable land use.

WATER RESOURCES

GOAL ENV-4: PROTECT & ENHANCE WATER RESOURCES

Reduce nutrient and sediment pollution to the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries through Tributary Strategies, partnerships, and enforcement of water quality standards.

Policy ENV-4.1: Reduce Nutrient and Pollutant Loads to the Chesapeake Bay and Its Tributaries

Reduce nutrient and sediment pollution entering the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries by implementing Tributary Strategies, coordinating with State and Federal partners, non-governmental organizations to strengthen stewardship of marine resources and, when necessary, enforcing measures that ensure measurable improvements to water quality.

Action ENV-4.1.1: Implement Tributary Strategies

Continue implementing Tributary Strategy actions for the Lower Potomac and Patuxent watersheds to achieve nutrient reduction goals consistent with the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) and Watershed Implementation Plans.

Action ENV-4.1.2: Continue Coordination with State and Federal Partners

Continue to work with State and Federal agencies to streamline reviews, ensure regulatory compliance, and implement projects that protect water quality and habitats, including addressing problem sewer areas near the waterfront in coordination with the Health Department.

Action ENV-4.1.3: Track and Adapt Implementation

Monitor Tributary Strategy progress, report on milestones, and adjust actions based on State water quality and habitat data. Implement regulatory controls if voluntary measures fail to achieve nutrient reduction goals.

Policy ENV-4.2: Protect and Sustain Groundwater and Drinking Water Supplies

Safeguard groundwater and drinking water through recharge protection, monitoring, conservation, and pollution prevention. If needed, investigate the status of the aquifers that St. Mary's County (including NAS PAX) draws from, and note if there are any concerns regarding their ability to support future development.

Action ENV-4.2.1: Continue to Work with the State to Protect Aquifer Levels and Recharge Areas

Continue to work with State and regional agencies to protect aquifer recharge zones, regulate land use impacts, and enforce well abandonment standards.

Action ENV-4.2.2: Monitor Groundwater Withdrawals

Track withdrawal rates and aquifer levels; direct new wells to aquifers in ways that protect existing supply and users.

Action ENV-4.2.3: Promote Water Conservation, Reuse, and Risk Mitigation

Expand conservation programs, reclaimed water use, effluent reuse for irrigation/industry, and residential practices such as rain barrels and cisterns. Monitor and mitigate risks such as arsenic in the Piney Point and Aquia aquifers and pollution from contaminated sites. Conservation mitigates the impacts of droughts, lowers utility bills, and prevents the destruction of aquatic habitats caused by excessive water withdrawal.

Action ENV-4.2.4: Continue to Protect Surface Water and Impoundment Sites

Enforce land use policies to continue to protect potential impoundment areas and safeguard surface waters from contamination by chemicals, pesticides, and waste.

Action ENV-4.2.5: Continue to Promote Diversity of Water Supply

Continue to diversify the water supply and encourage water conservation to reduce the use of well water. Diversifying the water supply would improve sustainability and resiliency, potentially reducing water withdrawn from aquifers by millions of gallons per day.

Action ENV-4.2.6: Continue to Conduct a Feasibility Study for Beneficial Reuse of Treated Effluent

Continue to examine the feasibility of using treated effluent from existing public wastewater treatment facilities for activities such as cooling tower waters, for irrigation (e.g., golf courses and leased agriculture land) and other non-potable uses. Reuse of treated effluent could reduce the discharge volume and associated nitrogen/phosphorous from entering the local waterways, including the Chesapeake Bay.

Policy ENV-4.3: Apply Best Practices in Development to Protect Water Quality

Ensure new development and redevelopment projects minimize disturbance, incorporate environmental site design, and comply with resource protection standards through coordinated enforcement and interagency review.

Action ENV-4.3.1: Continue to Enforce Zoning, Permits, and Resource Protections

Continue to apply zoning and permit requirements to minimize water quality impacts, require Best Management Practices (BMPs) to control erosion and sedimentation during construction, and coordinate with State agencies to enforce restrictions on wetlands, streams, and their buffers.

Action ENV-4.3.2: Continue to Provide Incentives for Stewardship

Continue to provide incentives for soil conservation, buffer planting, livestock exclusion fencing, and alternative watering systems for agriculture and forestry.

Policy ENV-4.4: Reduce Point and Nonpoint Source Pollution

Reduce pollution from both point and nonpoint sources through comprehensive watershed management, improved wastewater and septic controls, stormwater regulation, and ongoing monitoring and adaptive management.

Action ENV-4.4.1: Continue to Control Runoff and Monitor Watershed Pollution

Continue to enforce stormwater, erosion, and sediment control standards and conduct watershed studies to identify pollution sources, inform the public, and hold responsible parties accountable.

Action ENV-4.4.2: Continue to Address Environmental Impacts from Sewage and Septic Systems

Continue to protect water resources from contamination related to wastewater treatment and septic failures.

Action ENV-4.4.3: Continue to Coordinate Nutrient Reduction and SAV Restoration

Continue to align County water quality programs with State Tributary Strategies and support SAV restoration to improve Bay health.

Action ENV-4.4.4: Enforce Adaptive Management

Ensure agency oversight and use State tracking tools to adjust County strategies to meet water quality standards.

Policy ENV-4.5: Manage Shorelines, Water-Dependent Uses, and Public Access

Manage shorelines, water-dependent uses, and public access in a manner that balances habitat protection, water quality, recreation, and commercial needs.

Action ENV-4.5.1: Establish Shoreline Work Guidelines

Require shoreline permits to give equal weight to near-shore habitat protection, natural resources, and property protection.

Action ENV-4.5.2: Update Standards for Marinas and Water-Dependent Facilities

Update zoning and performance standards for marinas and water-dependent facilities to minimize cumulative impacts while supporting viable marina activities. Allow Buffer Management Overlay for existing marina sites to facilitate improvements.

Action ENV-4.5.3: Continue to Expand Public Water Access

Continue to acquire lands to provide public access to the Patuxent River, Potomac River and other waterfront areas and provide recreational water-dependent facilities that are environmentally sustainable.

6

Transportation Element

In This Section

Charting a Connected Tomorrow
Biking, Walking, & Hiking
Roads
Transit
NAS PAX & St. Mary's County Regional Airport



Charting a Connected Tomorrow

The transportation system of St. Mary's County is the lifeblood of its communities, connecting residents to jobs, services, recreation, and beyond. As St. Mary's County looks towards 2050, the overarching vision for its transportation element is to foster a safe, efficient, accessible, fair, and sustainable network that supports the county's unique character – balancing its rich agricultural and maritime history with present-day industry and future growth. This involves not only maintaining and improving existing infrastructure but also embracing innovative solutions and expanding multimodal options to meet the evolving needs of its diverse population. This document provides an overview of the key themes and priorities identified through extensive community engagement and data analysis, serving as a foundational piece for the St. Mary's 2050 Comprehensive Plan's Transportation Element.

The County's commitment to thoughtful growth and preservation of its rural character is intrinsically linked to its transportation strategy. An effective transportation plan must address the localized challenges that accompany growth, particularly in areas identified for development, while simultaneously ensuring accessibility and safety across the entire county, including its rural landscapes. The Comprehensive Plan aims to establish a cohesive, countywide vision for land use and an actionable strategy to achieve it, with transportation playing a pivotal role in this endeavor.

The Current Transportation Landscape: A Snapshot

St. Mary's County's transportation network is a blend of local roads, minor collectors, and principal arterials, with major north-south and east-west connectors facilitating movement throughout the county. The Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T) primarily manages this road network, in coordination with the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), the Calvert-St. Mary's Metropolitan Planning Organization (C-SMMPO), and the Department of Land Use and Growth Management (LUGM).

Public transit services are provided by the St. Mary's Transit System (STS), which operates nine routes Monday through Friday, with some Saturday service and two Sunday routes. These services also include Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) deviations, and major trip generators such as multi-family housing, medical facilities, educational institutions, major employers, and shopping areas in route planning. However, transit dependency is expanding beyond current service routes, particularly towards the northwestern

parts of the county. Future service planning, including identification of candidate destinations and corridors for expansion will be addressed through the two upcoming route studies (Transit Development Plan (TDP) Update and the C-SMMPO study) and is not available at this time.

For active transportation, sidewalks exist along some major road corridors, but they frequently lack full connectivity, especially in Lexington Park and adjacent areas. Bicycle routes are expanding with plans to connect full routes.

Commuting patterns in St. Mary's County reveal a significant interplay between where residents live and work. Approximately 44% of people working in St. Mary's County live outside the county, while 56% of residents living in St. Mary's County work outside the county. Conversely, 56% of those working in St. Mary's County also reside within it. This highlights the importance of both internal and external connectivity for the county's workforce.

Community Concerns & Priorities: Voices from Engagement

Community engagement insights are crucial for shaping a transportation element that is responsive to the needs and aspirations of St. Mary's County residents and community members.

Traffic Congestion & Road Infrastructure

A prominent concern among community members and residents is increased traffic, particularly in areas like Lexington Park and along Three Notch Road. The current functionality of various intersections is a point of contention, with reports of dangerous intersections, frequent accidents, and high congestion along key corridors such as Route 235, Route 5, and Great Mills Road. Specific intersections, including Great Mills and Route 5, Route 242 and Route 5, and Route 234 and Route 5, are noted for significant congestion, especially during school commute times. Issues like poorly managed light cycles and inadequate turning lanes seem to exacerbate afternoon traffic problems.

Community feedback consistently calls for improved traffic management and road infrastructure, including requests for additional vehicle lanes and new bridges before permitting further growth, and a focus on road maintenance in both rural and urban areas. Projects like the FDR Boulevard, aimed at alleviating congestion on MD 235, are a step in the right direction.

Public Transportation Access & Expansion

There is a clear appreciation for existing public transportation, coupled with a strong desire for improved and expanded services offering greater access. Much of

the community supports improving existing bus routes with more frequent service and adding new routes to unserved areas within the county. A significant portion also desired new routes to areas outside the county, such as the Washington, D.C. area.

The community emphasized the need to modernize and update the STS bus system, including supporting paratransit services. There is also interest in emerging forms of public transportation like microtransit, an on-demand and flexible-route form of public transportation. There are concerns about a perceived lack of public transit access to key areas, including St. Mary's College of Maryland (SMCM), and the need for shuttle services for NAS PAX base commuters to reduce congestion. Long-term future investments in public transportation, especially for the county's aging population, are a concern. There is a strong link between public transit and access to essential services.

Active Transportation: Bicycling & Pedestrian Infrastructure

The community desires safe bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Building upon the success of the Three Notch Trail, there continues to be a desire to see more trails in rural areas. Specific needs include adding shoulders to Medleys Neck Road for walking and biking, improving pedestrian safety, and connecting and expanding sidewalks, especially in Lexington Park and along major corridors. Leonardtown, California, and Lexington Park were identified as priority areas for new or enhanced bike/pedestrian trails.

Safety & Regulation

Traffic and vehicle safety is a significant concern, with a high number of crashes reported, particularly on or near Three Notch Road. The need to address safety issues is a key priority. Additionally, there is interest in evaluating parking requirements to ensure flexibility and appropriateness.

Interdependencies & Integrated Planning

The various aspects of transportation are not isolated; they form a complex web that interacts with land use, economic development, public health, and environmental sustainability. This "connective tissue" is vital for crafting a comprehensive and effective transportation element.

Transportation & Land Use

The close relationship between transportation and land use is evident in several themes, highlighting the need for intentional growth management. Concerns about increased traffic directly linked to new development underscore the need for coordination between transportation investments and locations supported for new development. The desire for mixed-use developments and walkable communities underscores a

preference for land use patterns that reduce reliance on single-occupancy vehicles and promote active transportation. Similarly, the support for clustering services in rural areas at town centers/crossroads, potentially supported by package plants for water and sewer, indirectly supports more localized travel patterns and potentially reduces longer commutes. The discussion around acceptable levels of service (LOS) in town centers versus development districts further emphasizes the need for integrated planning that considers both transportation capacity and desired development character.

Transportation & Economic Development

Efficient transportation is critical for economic vitality. The continued build-out and support for the county airport and related technology park points to the role of transportation infrastructure in supporting key industries. The number of residents commuting into and out of the county for work highlights the importance of regional transportation connections and the potential for improved public transit to support this workforce mobility. Addressing traffic congestion also contributes to economic efficiency by reducing commute times and improving goods movement.

Transportation & Public Health

The demand for expanded public transportation options, particularly to unserved areas and the aging population, demonstrates the role of transportation in promoting access to essential services. Improving pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure not only offers recreational opportunities but also encourages physical activity, contributing to public health outcomes. The need to ensure feasible safety for Amish and Mennonite communities traveling via horse and buggy is another example of addressing the specific transportation needs of diverse populations within the county.

Transportation & Environmental Sustainability & Resilience

Promoting active transportation and expanding public transit can contribute to environmental goals by reducing vehicle pollution and emissions. Furthermore, improved road maintenance and infrastructure can implicitly address issues related to stormwater runoff and its impact on waterways. While not explicitly detailed in the transportation section, the broader discussions about social vulnerability and resiliency in the face of natural hazards suggest that transportation infrastructure planning must consider the impacts of climate change, such as nuisance flooding affecting roadways. Ensuring resilient transportation networks is also crucial for emergency response and maintaining connectivity during adverse events.

Key Themes for the Transportation Element

Enhancing Multimodal Connectivity

Prioritizing the expansion and integration of various transportation modes, including improved public transit, a comprehensive network of bicycle and pedestrian trails, and safe pedestrian infrastructure, to offer viable alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle travel.

Addressing Traffic Congestion & Safety

Implementing strategies to alleviate traffic congestion in key corridors and intersections, improving road infrastructure, and enhancing traffic management systems. A strong emphasis will be placed on improving traffic and vehicle safety through targeted interventions and community education campaigns.

Promoting Equitable Access

Ensuring that all residents, regardless of age, income, or location, have equitable access to transportation options that connect them to jobs, education, healthcare, and other essential services. This includes expanding public transit to unserved areas and supporting the transportation needs of vulnerable populations.

Integrating Transportation & Land Use

Developing transportation solutions that are in harmony with planned land use patterns, supporting smart growth principles, encouraging mixed-use and walkable communities, and minimizing the adverse transportation impacts of new development. This involves a collaborative approach between transportation planners and land use decision-makers.

Investing in Resilient & Sustainable Infrastructure

Planning for transportation infrastructure that is resilient to the impacts of climate change and supports environmental sustainability. This includes considering the long-term viability of infrastructure projects in the face of environmental challenges and promoting modes that reduce emissions.

Supporting Regional Connectivity

Recognizing St. Mary's County's position within a broader regional context, and advocating for and participating in regional transportation planning efforts, including potential future connections to neighboring counties and the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, and considering the needs of commuters to and from the county.

A Path Forward

The future of St. Mary's County's transportation system relies on a proactive and integrated approach that reflects the community's values and addresses its challenges. By focusing on enhancing multimodal connectivity, mitigating congestion, ensuring equitable access, aligning with land use, building resilient infrastructure, and fostering regional connections, the County can continue charting a connected, sustainable, and prosperous tomorrow for all residents.



A St. Mary's Transit System (STS) bus shelter.

BIKING, WALKING, & HIKING

GOAL TR-1: ENSURE A SAFE & COMPLETE PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

Develop and maintain a continuous and accessible system of sidewalks, crosswalks, and pedestrian pathways that connects the community and ensures safety for all residents.

Policy TR-1.1: Apply Excellent Community Design Principles for Pedestrian Safety

Apply excellent community design principles to all new construction and redevelopment to create safe, accessible, and integrated environments for pedestrians.

Policy TR-1.2: Require Adequate, Well-Marked Crosswalks and Sidewalks Where Feasible

Require adequate, well-marked crosswalks and sidewalks in all relevant development and redevelopment projects, where feasible (e.g., new residential development with lots less than one acre in size) to enhance public safety of the community.

Action TR-1.2.1: Continue to Maintain a Program for Sidewalk Repair and Obstruction Removal

Continue to maintain a program for sidewalk repair and obstruction removal while continuing to improve ADA compatibility and mobility access. Continue to make ADA improvements when asphalt overlays are scheduled.

Policy TR-1.3: Systematically Fill Gaps in Existing Sidewalk Network

Systematically evaluate and identify locations where new sidewalk connections are needed to fill gaps in the existing network.

Policy TR-1.4: Collaborate with Leonardtown on a Countywide Pedestrian and Bikeways Master Plan

Work with Leonardtown to create a Countywide Pedestrian and Bikeways Master Plan that aligns the Town's and the County's investments with regional goals.

Action TR-1.4.1: Initiate a Joint Planning Framework with Leonardtown to Explore Countywide Pedestrian and Bikeways Master Plan

Initiate a joint planning framework with Leonardtown to explore the creation of a countywide pedestrian and bikeways master plan.

GOAL TR-2: PROMOTE BICYCLING AS A VIABLE TRANSPORTATION MODE IN THE GROWTH AREAS

Establish a comprehensive bicycle network supported by essential amenities and public awareness, making cycling a safe, convenient, and attractive option for transportation and recreation.

Policy TR-2.1: Provide End-of-Trip Support to Cyclists

Provide end-of-trip support for cyclists by ensuring necessary facilities are available at their destinations.

Policy TR-2.2: Establish Bicycling as a Safe Mode of Transportation

Enhance public awareness to establish bicycling as a recognized and safe mode of transportation.

Action TR-2.2.1: Continue to Explore the Inclusion of Bicycle Lanes and Trails in the Development Districts

Continue to explore the inclusion of bicycle lanes/trails to address gaps in infrastructure connecting high-density residential areas and commercial nodes.

Policy TR-2.3: Apply Community Design Principles to Create Safe Environments for Bicyclists and Pedestrians

Apply excellent community design principles to all new construction and redevelopment to create safe, accessible, and integrated environments for bicyclists.

Action TR-2.3.1: Adopt Official Design Standards for Bicycle Facilities

Adopt official design standards for bicycle facilities and multi-use trails and integrate them into the County's Road Ordinance and Design Manuals.

Action TR-2.3.2: Provide Secure and Convenient Bicycle Parking and Storage at Key Locations

Provide secure and convenient bicycle parking and storage at all key destinations, including schools, recreation facilities, parks, and public offices.

Action TR-2.3.3: Continue to Work with St. Mary's Transit System to Equip All Transit Vehicles with Bicycle Accommodations

Continue to work with St. Mary's Transit System (STS) to continue to equip all transit vehicles with bicycle accommodations to support multimodal travel.

GOAL TR-3: IMPROVE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM CONNECTIVITY

Create a fully integrated transportation system where developments, travel modes, and key destinations are seamlessly linked, reducing travel distances and improving traffic flow.

Policy TR-3.1: Ensure Site Design Enhances the Transportation Network

Ensure that all site design, including design of County-owned grounds and facilities, maximizes the attractiveness and connectivity of the transportation network.

Action TR-3.1.1: Update Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance (CZO) and Subdivision Regulations to Require Connectivity

Update CZO and Subdivision Regulations to require pedestrian/bicycle easements and physical connections between adjacent commercial developments and abutting residential subdivisions when redevelopment and/or new development is proposed.

Policy TR-3.2: Encourage New Development to Provide Safe Routes, Including Alternative Routes Connecting to Adjacent Neighborhoods, School, and Activity Centers, Where Feasible

Encourage new developments to provide safe, alternative access routes connecting to adjacent neighborhoods, schools, and activity centers.

Policy TR-3.3: Coordinate with Adjacent Counties to Maintain Consistent Transportation Facilities

Coordinate with adjacent counties to maintain the continuity and consistency of transportation facilities across borders.

Action TR-3.3.1: Continue to Encourage Private and Public Roads that Slow Traffic Speeds

Continue to encourage private and public roads that slow traffic speeds to reinforce pedestrian safety and access, by using narrower rights of way, speed humps, traffic circles, and similar features, as appropriate for the road type.

Policy TR-3.4: Continue to Support Regional Transportation Opportunities

Continue working with regional, state, federal, and local partners to evaluate transportation opportunities that improve regional connectivity and mobility, including passenger ferry, water transit, and other alternative transportation services, where appropriate and consistent with County priorities.

Action TR-3.4.1: Continue to Evaluate and Support Regional Transportation Opportunities

Continue to evaluate and support transportation initiatives that may enhance mobility, tourism, economic development, and regional connectivity. This may include participation in planning, feasibility studies, partnerships, pilot programs, and grant or other funding opportunities for passenger ferry, water transit, and other alternative transportation services

GOAL TR-4: SECURE LONG-RANGE FUNDING & MULTI-MODAL SYSTEM VIABILITY

Ensure the long-term success of the multi-modal network through strategic financial planning, support for long-range bicycle and pedestrian projects, preservation of future transit corridors, and expansion of public transportation.

Policy TR-4.1: Commit to Providing Expanded Pedestrian and Bicycle Opportunities

Commit to providing expanded pedestrian and bicycle opportunities for both recreation and transportation.

Action TR-4.1.1: Continue to Leverage a Diverse Portfolio of Funding Sources

Continue to leverage a diverse portfolio of funding sources, including County bonds, impact fees, State Program Open Space (POS) funds, and federal programs, for trail system development.

Policy TR-4.2: Identify Future Congestion Points and Determine Transit Improvements

Identify future congestion points and determine the transit improvements required to ensure efficient travel for all modes.



Two people walking with bicycles in a park

GOAL TR-5: INTEGRATE TRAILS & PATHWAYS INTO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Weave a network of recreational and transportation trails into the fabric of the community by incorporating them into all new land use and development projects.

Policy TR-5.1: Ensure New Developments Contribute to Bicycle and Pedestrian Opportunities

Ensure new developments contribute to expanded pedestrian and bicycle opportunities.

Policy TR-5.2: Consider a Wide Range of Land Uses as Key Nodes Within a Trail Network

Consider a wide range of land uses—such as parks, schools, and historical points of interest—as key nodes and destinations within the trail network.

Action TR-5.2.1: Continue to Incorporate Trails into the Development of New Parks and Community Projects

Continue to incorporate trails into the development of all new parks and community projects, adhering to applicable design standards.

Action TR-5.2.2: Require Developers to Either Construct or Pay a Fee-in-Lieu to Support the Three Notch Trail

Require developers to either construct portions of the Three Notch Trail or pay a fee-in-lieu to support its completion.

Action TR-5.2.3: Continue to Consider Connections to Community Points of Interest in Route Planning

When planning routes, continue to consider connections to parks, park-and-ride lots, water access areas, schools, and other community points of interest.

Policy TR-5.3: Partner with SMECO to Explore Using Powerline Easements for Trails

Work with the Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative (SMECO) to examine opportunities to turn powerline easements into trails.



A mile marker on Three Notch Trail

ROADS

GOAL TR-6: CONCENTRATE DEVELOPMENT TO PRESERVE REGIONAL HIGHWAY CAPACITY

Strategically guide new development into designated Growth Areas, promoting well-connected local road networks while preserving the capacity and function of state highways for regional and through traffic.

Policy TR-6.1: Concentrate New Development in Designated Growth Areas

Concentrate the majority of new residential and commercial growth in development districts, town centers, and village centers to support functioning of regional highway capacity.

Policy TR-6.2: Maintain Scenic Corridors

Maintain scenic corridors along the Religious Freedom Byway (including MD 234 and MD 5 near and south of Leonardtown) and other scenic corridors by limiting signage and clear-cutting for development.

Policy TR-6.3: Continue Planning for Critical Corridors

Continue planning for critical corridors, including Three Notch Road and FDR Boulevard.

Action TR-6.3.1: Complete FDR Boulevard Planning Study with the Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Promote the completion of the FDR Boulevard extension through completion of the study to provide justification for funding.

Action TR-6.3.2: Continue to Promote Well-Connected Roadway Networks to Support Planned Growth

Continue to promote the building of well-connected local roadway networks to support planned growth within the Development Districts.

Action TR-6.3.3: Continue to Work with Maryland State Highway Administration to Manage State Road Access Points for Development

Continue to work with the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) to manage state road access points for existing and planned development.

Action TR-6.3.4: Continue to Prepare and Implement Specific Highway Access Policies for Key Corridors

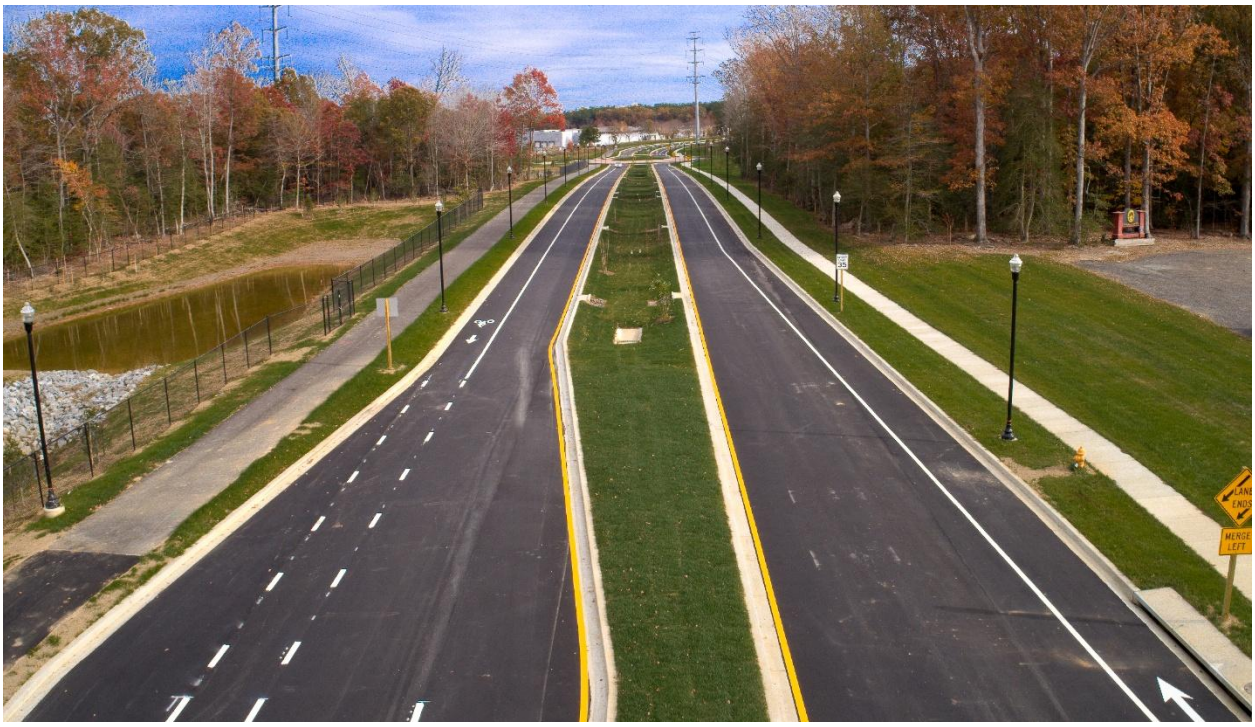
Continue to prepare and implement specific highway access policies for key corridors like Three Notch Road (MD 5/235) in Charlotte Hall, New Market, Mechanicsville, and Hollywood.

Action TR-6.3.5: Commission a Comprehensive Corridor and Land Use Study for Three Notch Road and FDR Boulevard

Work with the C-SMMPO to complete a comprehensive corridor and land use study for completion of the Three Notch Road and FDR Boulevard corridors to address current and future transportation needs within the Lexington Park Development District (LPDD).

Action TR-6.3.6: Collaborate with the Town of Leonardtown and the C-SMMPO to Advocate for Roadway Enhancements

Collaborate with the Town of Leonardtown and the C-SMMPO to advocate for roadway enhancements along the Route 5 corridor in Leonardtown.



An aerial view of FDR Boulevard.

GOAL TR-7: CREATE A SAFE, EFFICIENT, & INTEGRATED ROADWAY SYSTEM

Develop and maintain a roadway system that is safe, efficient, and economical for all modes of transportation, supporting community revitalization, economic development, and environmental stewardship.

Policy TR-7.1: Ensure a Safe and Efficient Roadway System

Ensure the roadway system is integrated, safe, and efficient for all users, improving traffic management and road infrastructure. Implement age-friendly road design features for older drivers, such as protected left turn signals with dedicated turn lanes, improved street lighting at intersections, larger road signs with clearer fonts, slower speed limits, and rumble strips.

Action TR-7.1.1: Prioritize Maintenance of Existing County Roadway Network and Associated Drainage Assets Including a Pavement Management Program Consistent with Sound Asset-Management Practices

Prioritize the maintenance of the existing county roadway network and associated drainage assets including a Pavement Management Program consistent with Sound Asset-Management practices.

Policy TR-7.2: Classify County Roadways Based on Vehicular Conditions

Classify County roadways based on vehicular volume, speed, and geometric conditions to guide planning. Standardize classification using state naming conventions.

Policy TR-7.3: Provide Safe and Efficient Roads that Support Community Goals

Provide safe and efficient roads that actively support community revitalization, economic development, and environmental goals.

Action TR-7.3.1: Continue to Identify Future Congestion and Determine Roadway Improvements

Continue to identify locations that will experience future congestion and determine the roadway improvements needed to ensure efficient travel.

Action TR-7.3.2: Develop and Implement Transportation Plans and Standards that Support Community Goals

Develop and implement transportation plans and standards that support resource protection, community character, and economic development.

Action TR-7.3.3: Continue to Coordinate New Roadway Development with Leonardtown

For new roads in and near Leonardtown, continue to coordinate with Leonardtown and with state agencies to ensure integration and consistency.

GOAL TR-8: ENHANCE ROADWAY SAFETY FOR ALL USERS & CULTURAL CONTEXTS

Proactively improve roadway safety by reducing conflict locations and integrating the unique cultural needs of all communities, including the Amish and Mennonite populations.

Policy TR-8.1: Formally Integrate Amish and Mennonite Communities into Transportation Planning

Formally integrate the unique agriculture and culture of the Amish and Mennonite communities into transportation planning.

Policy TR-8.2: Ensure Adequate Safety for Travelers with an Appropriate Level of Access

Ensure adequate capacity and safety for the entire traveling public with an appropriate level of access.

Policy TR-8.3: Prioritize Providing a Safe and Efficient Roadway System

Prioritize providing a safe and efficient roadway system as a core principle of transportation planning.

Action TR-8.3.1: Continue to Initiate Improvements to Enhance Safety and Reduce Conflict Locations

Continue to initiate improvements to enhance safety and reduce conflict locations, especially on roadways with high traffic volumes and insufficient passing opportunities.

Action TR-8.3.2: Continue to Identify and Evaluate Conflicts Between Horse-and-Buggy Traffic and Motorized Vehicles

Continue to identify and evaluate conflicts between horse-and-buggy traffic and motorized vehicles by analyzing County roadways based on traffic volume.

Action TR-8.3.3: Continue to Develop a List of Recommended Upgrades and Downgrades in the Road Classification System

Continue to develop a list of recommended upgrades and downgrades in the road classification system to ensure safety needs are met.

GOAL TR-9: MANAGE ROADWAY ACCESS TO IMPROVE TRAFFIC FLOW & SAFETY

Improve the safety and efficiency of major roads by minimizing access points and requiring shared access solutions in new and existing developments.

Policy TR-9.1: Provide an Integrated and Efficient Roadway System

Provide an integrated and efficient roadway system by encouraging inter-parcel connections and managing how properties connect to the public road network.

Action TR-9.1.1: Continue to Require Joint-Use Access Driveways and Driveway Consolidation

Continue to require joint-use access driveways and driveway consolidation for contiguous properties to reduce the number of ingress and egress points.

Action TR-9.1.2: Continue to Minimize Access Points to Major Roads

Continue to minimize the number of outlets (access points) to major roads.



A roundabout on FDR Boulevard.

GOAL TR-10: PROMOTE RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE & ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Build and maintain a transportation system that is resilient to environmental risks and actively supports the protection of natural resources and community character.

Policy TR-10.1: Reduce Long-Term Risks from the Effects of Natural Hazards

Reduce long-term risks to people and their property from the effects of natural hazards like flooding.

Policy TR-10.2: Ensure the Roadway System Supports Community Revitalization and Environmental Stewardship

Ensure that the roadway system supports and promotes community revitalization while not compromising environmental stewardship goals.

Policy TR-10.3: Direct Growth Away from Sensitive Resource Areas

Direct growth away from sensitive resource areas to promote the protection of agriculture and forestry.

Action TR-10.3.1: Continue to Address Inadequate Storm Conveyance Systems and Bridge Structures

Continue to address existing storm conveyance systems and bridge structures that are inadequate to handle runoff and lead to localized flooding.

Action TR-10.3.2: Continue to Develop Transportation Plans that Support Resource Protection and Corridor Preservation

Continue to develop and implement transportation plans and standards that explicitly support resource protection and corridor preservation.

Action TR-10.3.3: Continue to Utilize Mitigation Efforts to Minimize Damage to Properties

Continue to minimize damage to properties that experience repetitive loss from natural events through proactive mitigation efforts.

TRANSIT

GOAL TR-11: IMPROVE HIGH-PERFORMING FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE TRANSIT OPERATIONS

Ensure the County's transit system operates at or above state performance standards while maintaining a financially sound structure through continuous evaluation and strategic management of fares and funding.

Policy TR-11.1: Improve Mobility and Public Transportation Programs

Improve mobility and public transportation programs and service for the citizens of St. Mary's County.

Policy TR-11.2: Commit to Meeting or Exceeding Transit System Performance Standards

Commit to meeting or exceeding the performance standards established for all transit systems in the State of Maryland.

Policy TR-11.3: Maintain a System of Continuous Needs Assessment

Maintain a system of continuous needs assessment and evaluation to guide system improvements and funding strategies.

Action TR-11.3.1: Continue to Meet or Exceed Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) Performance Standards

Continue to meet or exceed the MTA performance standards developed for all transit systems in the State of Maryland.

Action TR-11.3.2: Maintain a Needs Assessment and Evaluation of Funding Structures

Maintain a needs assessment and an evaluation of options, fare structure, and supplemental funding sources for system improvement.

GOAL TR-12: EXPAND TRANSIT SERVICES TO MEET GROWING REGIONAL DEMAND

Proactively expand transit routes and service opportunities to meet the increasing demand for travel both within and beyond St. Mary's County, fostered by strong regional cooperation.

Policy TR-12.1: Meet Transit Demand by Expanding Routes and Service

Meet the rapidly growing transit demand to and from St. Mary's County by expanding routes and service opportunities.

Action TR-12.1.1: Continue to Strategically Expand Transit Services to Reach Regional and Metropolitan Destinations

In coordination with regional partners, continue to strategically expand routes and service opportunities to accommodate the county's growing transit demand, connecting with regional and metropolitan destinations and improving public transit reach.

Policy TR-12.2: Encourage Transit Use for Broader Community Benefits

Encourage the use of transit to achieve broader community benefits, such as reduced emissions and greater economic opportunity.

Policy TR-12.3: Promote and Advocate for a Connected Public Transit System

Promote and advocate for a connected public transit system through local and regional cooperation and coordination.

Action TR-12.3.1: Continue to Promote Public Transit Systems through Local and Regional Collaboration

Continue to promote and advocate for public transit systems and connections through collaboration with local and regional partners including the continued collaboration with the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) Office of Statewide Planning on regional transit and locally operated transit services.

Action TR-12.3.2: Continue to Actively Encourage Transit Use for Persons Without Motor Vehicles

Continue to actively encourage the use of transit to minimize trips, reduce emissions, and increase economic opportunities for persons without motor vehicles.

Policy TR-12.4: Support First and Last Mile Connections

Support planning of first and last mile connections to fixed route transit stops making non-vehicular travel easier.

GOAL TR-13: ENSURE TRANSPORTATION ACCESS FOR VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

Create a seamless and accessible transportation system that addresses service deficits for targeted and vulnerable populations, enhancing their quality of life and connection to human services.

Policy TR-13.1: Foster a Seamless Delivery System of Care for Human Services that Enhances Quality of Life

Foster a seamless delivery system of care for human services that enhances citizens' quality of life and promotes cohesive communities.

Policy TR-13.2: Support Increased Public Transportation Options for Targeted Populations

Support and promote increased public transportation options that directly address service deficits for targeted populations.

Policy TR-13.3: Prioritize Securing Funding to Improve Service Quality for the County's Vulnerable Populations

Prioritize securing funding to improve service quality and access for the county's vulnerable populations.

Action TR-13.3.1: Continue to Seek Funding to Improve Transit Access to Vulnerable Communities

Continue to seek funding specifically to improve transportation for vulnerable populations and to enhance the quality and accessibility of service.

Action TR-13.3.2: Continue to Identify the Evolving Needs of Public Ridership

Continue to identify the evolving needs of public ridership, including rural transit gaps, especially among targeted groups, through dedicated outreach and education programs to expand ridership.

Action TR-13.3.3: Continue to Support and Promote Public Transportation Options to Address Deficits in Targeted Populations

Continue to support and promote increased public transportation options that are designed to address deficits for targeted populations.

GOAL TR-14: MAINTAIN & BUILD UPON THE EFFECTIVE & COLLABORATIVE TRANSIT MANAGEMENT

Strengthen the administration and planning of the County's transit services by continuing to create dedicated management roles, implementing expert recommendations, and fostering stakeholder collaboration.

Policy TR-14.1: Ensure Transportation Services are Professionally Managed and Planned

Foster a seamless and cohesive community by ensuring transportation services are professionally managed and planned.

Policy TR-14.2: Encourage the Creation of a Dedicated Management Structure for Public Transportation Services

Encourage the creation of a dedicated management structure to oversee mobile and public transportation services.



A St. Mary's Transit System (STS) bus

GOAL TR-15: INCREASE RIDERSHIP THROUGH STRATEGIC OUTREACH & SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

Grow public transit ridership by better understanding rider needs, actively promoting the benefits of transit, and continuously improving the quality and relevance of the service.

Policy TR-15.1: Improve the Overall Quality and Availability of Public Transportation Programs

Improve the overall quality and availability of public transportation programs and service to all residents by identifying and improving bus stop deficiencies (on an on-going basis).

Policy TR-15.2: Meet Growing and Evolving Transit Demand by Adapting Services Based on Rider Feedback

Meet growing and evolving transit demand by strategically expanding routes and adapting services based on performance and rider feedback.

Policy TR-15.3: Encourage Widespread Use of Transit as a Primary Mode of Travel

Encourage widespread use of transit as a primary means of travel to achieve community-wide goals.

Action TR-15.3.1: Continue to Promote Transit Benefits to Attract New Riders

Continue to promote the benefits of using transit, such as minimizing trips and increasing economic opportunity, to attract new riders.

Action TR-15.3.2: Explore the Development of a Plan to Integrate Transit Opportunities with Tourism Goals

Explore the development of an action plan to link current and projected tourism with transit opportunities.

NAS PAX & ST. MARY'S COUNTY REGIONAL AIRPORT

GOAL TR-16: PROTECT AIRPORT NAVIGATIONAL SAFETY & AIRSPACE INTEGRITY

Ensure the operational safety and integrity of St. Mary's County Regional Airport by preventing the construction of physical or non-physical obstructions that could interfere with flight paths and approach minimums.

Policy TR-16.1: Mandate that Tall Structures Do Not Impede on Airport Approach Minimums

Mandate that the design and construction of all towers and tall structures do not impede or adversely affect airport approach minimums.

Action TR-16.1.1: Continue to Ensure the Permitting Process Explicitly Reviews for Obstructions

Continue to ensure that the permitting process for construction activities includes reviews and prevents the creation of obstructions or incompatibilities.



Captain Walter Francis Duke Regional Airport

GOAL TR-17: PROMOTE COMPATIBLE LAND USE THROUGH EFFECTIVE AIRPORT ZONING

Align all county zoning and permitting activities with established Airport Environs to ensure that adjacent land uses are compatible with airport operations and do not create safety or noise conflicts.

Policy TR-17.1: Continue to Use Airport Environs (AE) as the Primary Zoning and Permitting Tool for Construction Near the Airport

Continue to use Airport Environs (AE) as the primary tool for all zoning and permitting of construction activities in the airport's vicinity.

Policy TR-17.2: Utilize Zoning to Support Non-Encroachment on the Airport

Support non-encroachment on the airport through the strict implementation of zoning restrictions.

Action TR-17.2.1: Continue to Utilize the Airport Environs to Guide Zoning and Permitting

Continue to utilize the established Airport Environs (AE) to guide zoning and permitting for construction, preventing incompatible development.

Action TR-17.2.2: Continue to Support Funding Allocations for the Airport's Expansion

Continue to support funding allocations for the airport's expansion, which reinforces its role as a key factor in regional land use planning.



Airplane Hangar

GOAL TR-18: STRENGTHEN THE COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP WITH NAVAL AIR STATION PATUXENT RIVER (NAS PAX)

Foster a strong, cooperative relationship with NAS PAX through coordinated airspace management, aligned zoning policies, and support for mutual economic interests.

Policy TR-18.1: Commit to a Cooperative Framework for Managing Shared Airspace

Commit to a formal, cooperative framework for managing shared and restricted airspace with NAS PAX.

Policy TR-18.2: Support Non-Encroachment Zoning Policies

Support non-encroachment zoning policies that are aligned with the operational needs of NAS PAX and Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) decisions.

Action TR-18.2.1: Continue to Review and Evaluate AICUZ Recommendations for Adoption

Continue to review and evaluate AICUZ and other zoning restrictions to protect airport approach paths, prevent encroachment on military operations, and ensure compatible land use.

Action TR-18.2.2: Continue to Periodically Review Letter of Authorization (LoA)

Continue to revisit and, if necessary, update the current Letter of Authorization (LoA) between the County and NAS PAX regarding aircraft operations in Restricted Airspace.



Airplanes at Patuxent River Naval Air Museum

GOAL TR-19: DRIVE REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH AIRPORT GROWTH

Leverage the St. Mary's County Regional Airport as a primary driver of economic growth by encouraging supportive industries and investing in its continued expansion and modernization.

Policy TR-19.1: Encourage Regional Economic Activities that Support and Are Supported by the Airport

Actively encourage regional economic activities that support and are supported by the airport, including tourism, industrial development, and technology.

Policy TR-19.2: Promote the Continued Expansion of the Airport

Promote the continued expansion of the airport as a Category II (large) general aviation facility to attract new business and investment.

Policy TR-19.3: Ensure Zoning and Land Use Policies Protect the Airport's Growth Potential

Ensure zoning and land use policies protect the airport's growth potential and its role as a key economic asset.

Action TR-19.3.1: Continue to Market the Airport's Capabilities

Continue to market the airport's capabilities to attract industrial developments and tourism that benefit from aviation access.

Action TR-19.3.2: Continue to Protect the Airport's Operational Capacity

Continue to protect the airport's operational capacity by ensuring that nearby construction does not impede flight approaches, thus safeguarding its economic function.



St. Mary's County Regional Airport

GOAL TR-20: SECURE LONG-TERM AIRPORT VIABILITY THROUGH CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT & FUNDING

Ensure the long-term operational and financial health of the St. Mary's County Regional Airport by consistently seeking federal funding and implementing capital improvement projects.

Policy TR-20.1: Commit to the Long-Term Vision of the Airport

Commit to the long-term vision of the airport as a Category II (large) general aviation facility.

Policy TR-20.2: Prioritize Securing Government Funding for Improvements

Prioritize securing federal and state funding to support capital improvements, expansion, and maintenance.

Action TR-20.2.1: Continue to Support and Apply for the Federal Airport Capital Improvement Program (ACIP)

Continue to actively support and apply for the Federal Airport Capital Improvement Program (ACIP) and its associated funding allocations.

Action TR-20.2.2: Continue to Plan for Continued Airport Expansion

Continue to plan for the continued expansion of the airport as a Category II general aviation facility.

Action TR-20.2.3: Continue to Implement Projects Funded by ACIP

Continue to implement projects funded by ACIP and other sources to maintain and upgrade airport infrastructure.

7

Public Facilities and Infrastructure Element

In This Section

Building Blocks of a Thriving Community
Water, Wastewater, & Stormwater to Support Growth
Adequate Public Facilities & Infrastructure Investment
Broadband & Electrical Utilities
Libraries and Government Facilities
Recreation & Parks
Schools



Building Blocks of a Thriving Community

Public facilities and infrastructure are the essential building blocks of a thriving community. They are the systems and services—from clean water and reliable sewer service to schools, parks, and public safety—that determine the quality of life, shape growth, protect public health, and ensure economic competitiveness. For St. Mary's County, a jurisdiction that prides itself on its rural character and waterfront heritage while accommodating strategic growth, the planning and provision of these foundational elements are critically important.

As the County charts its course to 2050, this Public Facilities and Infrastructure Element will establish a vision and an actionable strategy for investing in, maintaining, and expanding these vital systems. It recognizes that infrastructure is not merely a technical concern but the connective tissue that links land use, environmental stewardship, economic development, and access to services. Based on extensive data analysis and community feedback, this element seeks to create a framework for proactive, resilient, and equitable infrastructure planning that supports the County's long-term goals and ensures that St. Mary's remains a premier place to live, work, and visit for generations to come.

Existing Conditions: A System Overview

The framework for the County's future is built upon its existing network of facilities and infrastructure, managed by a combination of county, municipal, state, and private entities.

Water & Wastewater

MetCom is the primary public water and sewer provider outside of Leonardtown, operating seven wastewater treatment plants and 28 water systems that draw from the Aquia, Piney Point, and Upper Patapsco aquifers. The Town of Leonardtown operates its own municipal system and has agreements with MetCom for additional capacity. Beyond these centralized systems, the county has numerous private and community systems, including small package plants, and over 26,000 onsite septic systems, which are prevalent in rural preservation areas.

Stormwater Management

The County operates under a state-mandated Phase II MS4 permit to manage stormwater runoff through a system of ditches, culverts, and over 1,400 structural best management practices. Several watersheds, including the St. Mary's River and Breton Bay, are documented as having impairments for nutrients and sediment. The County is

evaluating a stormwater utility to address legacy neighborhoods lacking controls.

Public Safety

Fire services are provided by volunteer firefighters, while emergency medical services are primarily volunteer-based but supplemented with paid professionals. Law enforcement includes the County Sheriff's Office and the Maryland State Police. The Sheriff's Office currently operates a headquarters and three district stations. They are pursuing Capital Improvement Projects for a new headquarters and support services building.

Broadband

Broadband is another term for high-speed internet access, initially used to differentiate services like Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) and cable internet from dial-up internet. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) defines broadband as a connection with at least 100Mbps download speed and 20Mbps upload speed. St. Mary's County has adopted a holistic approach to improving digital access for county residents, achieving wired broadband connectivity for 99% of all county addresses offering speeds up to 1000Mbps download speed and 50Mbps upload speed.

Libraries

Three library facilities in Leonardtown, Lexington Park, and Charlotte Hall serve as important community resources, offering a range of services from homework help to technology instruction.

Recreation & Parks

The County maintains over 13,000 acres of public parks, trails, beaches, museums, and recreational facilities. Many of these facilities are aging and will require future investment to maintain and expand services.

Education

St. Mary's County Public Schools serves over 16,000 students across 19 elementary, five middle, and three high schools, plus a career and technology center. However, some schools, particularly in Leonardtown and parts of California and Lexington Park, are over capacity, and much of the system's building infrastructure is aging.

Community Voices: Key Concerns and Priorities

Public engagement has been a cornerstone of the St. Mary's 2050 planning framework. Feedback from the public, including stakeholder interviews, small-group discussions, online surveys, and an interactive mapping exercise that captured specific infrastructure needs, revealed a clear consensus on the major challenges and opportunities facing the County's public facilities and infrastructure.

Water, Sewer, & Septic System Challenges

A predominant theme is the need to ensure the adequate provision of water and sewer service, particularly in designated Growth Areas. Community members and residents are deeply concerned about resilience, citing the increase in failing septic systems due to rising water tables and poor soils, which presents both a public health and an environmental challenge. There is strong interest in transitioning communities with failing septic and well infrastructure to centralized systems, with modular "package plants" frequently cited as a key potential solution for wastewater treatment in rural and growing areas like Charlotte Hall. The need for water/wastewater infrastructure investment was a key issue identified by residents in the interactive mapping exercise. At a policy level, aligning new connections and capacity upgrades with the land use plan was emphasized. Drainage fixes in legacy neighborhoods were also noted as complementary to wastewater improvements to protect water quality and reduce localized flooding.

Demand for Enhanced Community Facilities

There is a strong, consistent call for investment in community facilities. Residents desire more recreational facilities, including sports complexes, pools, and youth entertainment venues. In CEW #2, community sports and recreation facilities both had extremely strong support for future long-term investment. Support for expanding libraries, improving schools to address overcrowding, and strengthening human services for the elderly and disabled is also prominent. Furthermore, residents want to see continued support for public safety, with some suggesting a transition to professional, paid Fire and EMS services to ensure long-term sustainability.

Ensuring Infrastructure Keeps Pace with Growth

A critical point identified by community members is the need to re-examine and strengthen adequate public facility requirements to ensure that infrastructure provision is concurrent with new development. There is a palpable concern that development is outpacing the capacity of public facilities, leading to issues like school overcrowding and increased traffic. Residents have called for infrastructure improvements to align with population growth and for a balance between growth and adequate infrastructure investments.

Broadband & Modern Utilities

While not as dominant as other themes, the need for modern infrastructure is present. Residents have specifically called for the expansion of fiber optic communication lines to homes,

highlighting a desire for the high-speed connectivity that is essential for modern economic participation and quality of life. Public input emphasized closing rural broadband gaps, coordinating with state and federal funding programs, and aligning fiber expansion with Growth Areas and public facility sites (schools, libraries, public safety) to amplify community benefits. While most of the backhaul infrastructure installed is fiber optic, a significant portion of infrastructure installed within the last mile (to the home) is legacy radio frequency (RF) cable. Emphasis should be placed upon maximum upload and download speeds offered and monthly connectivity costs, with less emphasis on the medium which is used in construction.

An Integrated Planning Framework

Public facilities and infrastructure do not exist in a vacuum. Their planning and implementation are deeply intertwined with nearly every other aspect of the comprehensive plan. Recognizing these connections is essential for creating a successful and holistic strategy. In practice, the Planning Areas framework and Land Use Map guide where capital projects and services should go, and facility siting is considered alongside resiliency opportunity areas to serve people effectively and safely.

Infrastructure, Land Use, & Community Character

The availability of water, sewer, and transportation infrastructure is a primary driver of development patterns. Residents expressed a strong desire to keep growth from moving beyond areas where infrastructure is available and to direct it to designated Growth Areas to preserve the county's rural character. By strategically planning infrastructure extensions, particularly water and sewer services, the County can effectively guide growth to areas like Charlotte Hall and Lexington Park, while protecting its valuable farmland and natural landscapes from sprawl. Decisions about infrastructure are, in effect, decisions about the future land use and the character of the community.

Infrastructure & Public Health

The connection between infrastructure and public health is direct and undeniable. The issue of failing septic systems, as noted by residents, is a clear example where inadequate infrastructure becomes a public health and livability crisis, risking the contamination of groundwater and recreational waters. Meanwhile, investing in public facilities like parks, trails, and walkable communities encourages physical activity and improves health outcomes. Access to adequate healthcare facilities is another critical component of a healthy community.

Infrastructure & Environmental Resilience

Infrastructure planning is a critical tool for building resilience to environmental hazards. The County's Resiliency Opportunity Areas highlight places that warrant added focus in siting and hardening public facilities. The county faces challenges from rising sea levels, coastal erosion, and flooding, which threaten infrastructure and public safety. Decisions about where and how to build or upgrade facilities must account for these vulnerabilities. For example, promoting innovative septic systems or extending public sewer can mitigate nutrient pollution in the Chesapeake Bay, while robust stormwater management protects water quality. The location and design of public facilities in relation to identified Resiliency Opportunity Areas are crucial for protecting the county's most vulnerable populations.

Infrastructure & Economic Development

High-quality public facilities and reliable infrastructure are prerequisites for a healthy economy. Continued investment in the AeroPark Innovation District, supported by adequate utilities, is vital for the county's high-tech industries. A skilled workforce is dependent on a high-performing school system with modern facilities. Amenities like parks, libraries, and cultural sites contribute to a high quality of life, which is essential for attracting and retaining the young, talented, and diverse workforce the County seeks to cultivate. With a tax base that is predominantly residential, targeting infrastructure to catalyze non-residential investment in Growth Areas strengthens long-term fiscal health.

Key Themes for the Public Facilities & Infrastructure Element

Synthesizing the data and community input, the following core themes should guide the development of the Public Facilities and Infrastructure Element for the St. Mary's 2050 Comprehensive Plan.

Strategic Modernization & Resilience

Proactively upgrade and maintain aging water, sewer, stormwater, and school facilities, and design new and replacement projects to meet permitting requirements and coastal flood risks. Prioritize retrofits in legacy neighborhoods and site/harden facilities in Resiliency Opportunity Areas to protect vulnerable populations; address wastewater "problem areas" with right-sized solutions.

Infrastructure-Guided Growth

Use public water/sewer and transportation investments to direct growth to designated areas — Development Districts (Lexington Park, Leonardtown) and Town Centers (Charlotte Hall, Hollywood) — supporting

reinvestment and redevelopment while preserving rural and sensitive lands. Map service areas to the Land Use Map and Planning Areas framework to sequence extensions and capacity improvements with planned growth.

Enhancing Quality of Life through Community Facilities:

Invest in a diverse and accessible network of public facilities, including parks, recreational opportunities, libraries, and public safety services, to meet the needs of a growing and aging population and enhance community well-being. Focus reinvestment where facilities reach the most residents and address documented aging assets.

Ensuring Equitable Access & Service:

Prioritize projects that close service gaps in historically underserved or vulnerable communities, using Resiliency Opportunity Areas and Social Vulnerability Index insights to target siting, hardening, and access improvements. Coordinate with partners to improve safe, multimodal access to facilities.

Fostering Collaborative & Sustainable Funding:

Pursue innovative and collaborative funding and operational models, including public-private partnerships and the potential for a stormwater utility, to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of infrastructure projects and services.

Building a Resilient Foundation for 2050

The public facilities and infrastructure of St. Mary's County are more than just pipes, buildings, and roads; they are the foundation upon which the county's future will be built. The community has spoken clearly, desiring a future with reliable services, vibrant community spaces, and infrastructure that supports both growth and preservation. By embracing an integrated, proactive, and strategic approach to planning, the County can make wise investments that will pay dividends for decades, ensuring that the St. Mary's of 2050 is a resilient, prosperous, and exceptional place for all.

To prepare for future growth and community facility and infrastructure needs, St. Mary's County undertakes an annual evaluation of its capital facilities and identifies a six-year schedule (the current fiscal year and the following five-years) for future investments. For public sanitary sewer and potable water utility services, St. Mary's County coordinates with the Metropolitan Commission on an annual basis to establish a six-year schedule of capital investments through its Capital Improvement Budget and Plan. This comprehensive plan identifies these annual processes and plans as the guides for future capital needs.

WATER, WASTEWATER, & STORMWATER TO SUPPORT GROWTH

GOAL PFI-1: PROVIDE PLANNED WATER/SEWER FOR GROWTH AND REDUCE STORMWATER/NUTRIENT IMPACTS

Modernize central service in Growth Areas and reduce pollution from septic and stormwater to protect local waters and the Chesapeake Bay.

Policy PFI-1.1: Implement the Comprehensive Water and Sewerage Plan and Guide Service to Growth Areas

Extend water and sewer in an orderly manner within Development Districts and Town/Village Centers and upgrade community systems to meet standards, as guided by the Comprehensive Water and Sewerage Plan (CWSP). For more information about the CWSP and its related maps, see Appendix D: Water & Sewer Service Area Maps.

Action PFI-1.1.1: Continue to Provide Central Water in Growth Areas and Upgrade Community Systems

Continue to extend central water systems within Growth Areas per the CWSP, require connections where proximate, and upgrade community systems to meet standards, including fire flow.

Action PFI-1.1.2: Continue to Provide Planned Sewer Service and Design to County Standards

Continue to extend planned sewer within Growth Areas and require that new collection systems meet County and MetCom standards.

Action PFI-1.1.3: Continue to Update CWSP to Reflect Actual Service Areas, Support Development in Growth Areas, and Identify Areas of Concern

Continue to conduct an update to the CWSP that converts a static policy document with maps to an online, dynamic tool that is updated over time to reflect updates to service areas as they occur. Consider evaluating the "no planned service" areas to confirm that these areas are outside of the defined Growth Areas per the Planning Areas map. Consider removing the 3- and 6-year designations, and instead designate properties within 200 feet of existing infrastructure as "planned service." Clarify that the timing of providing water and sewer infrastructure in planned service areas is driven by private development and is not provided in advance or front funded by MetCom. Consider creating a sewer category for identified problem sewer areas, where infrastructure expansions to these remote areas are not planned but where stand-alone community systems (i.e., package plants) may be a feasible option.

Action PFI-1.1.4: Update the Adequate Public Facilities Provisions of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance (CZO)

Update the Adequate Public Facilities provisions in Chapter 70.8 and 70.9 of the CZO to ensure the requirements for sewerage (Section 70.8) and water (Section 70.9) are consistent with the other public facility requirements and produce satisfactory results.

Action PFI-1.1.5: Continue to Address Problem Sewer Areas and Problem Water Areas

Continue to address problem water areas, problem sewer areas (like those with failing septic systems creating health and environmental hazards), and unfit systems that are not designated for planned service. Identify suitable land for the siting of stand-alone systems such as package treatment facilities in problem sewer areas, and identify potential funding sources for the construction of such facilities.

Policy PFI-1.2: Upgrade Treatment and Manage to Nutrient Caps

Advance plant upgrades and operations that keep discharges within assigned nutrient caps and support Bay restoration.

Action PFI-1.2.1: Implement Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrades and Septic Mitigation

Complete planned upgrades to major wastewater treatment plants, encourage septic upgrades for individual properties, and identify failing septic clusters for targeted solutions. Upgrade treatment plants in alignment with growth plans and projections, including the Growth Areas identified in this plan.

Policy PFI-1.3: Manage Stormwater with Environmental Site Design (ESD) and Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Programs

Apply ESD as the principal approach for new and redevelopment, retrofit existing problem areas, and implement MS4 program components, including post-construction management, illicit discharge detection and elimination, public education, and staff training.

Action PFI-1.3.1: Continue to Implement the MS4 Program and Stormwater Best Practices

Continue to develop and carry out programs that reduce pollutants in stormwater, address post-construction runoff, detect and eliminate illicit discharges, educate and engage the public, and train staff in protection measures.

Policy PFI-1.4: Protect Groundwater and Private Community Systems

Site new wells appropriately, cap abandoned wells and require connections or upgrades of community systems to meet public health standards.

Action PFI-1.4.1: Continue to Manage Groundwater and Private Community Water Systems

Continue to direct new wells to appropriate aquifers and continue enforcement for community systems to connect to central water where required or to upgrade and maintain systems as needed.

ADEQUATE PUBLIC FACILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

GOAL PFI-2: MAINTAIN COUNTY TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Ensure that the County's transportation infrastructure is well-maintained, efficient, and meets the needs of residents of all ages and abilities, as outlined in the most recent St. Mary's County Transportation Plan and in the Transportation Element of this plan.



A roundabout on FDR Boulevard.

GOAL PFI-3: MAINTAIN & INCREASE QUALITY OF LIFE BY INVESTING IN CORE PUBLIC SERVICES

Maintain and increase the overall quality of life for county residents by investing in core public services such as Emergency Medical Services (EMS), public safety, and fire services.

Policy PFI-3.1: Invest in Law Enforcement and Emergency Response Facilities and Equipment

Invest in law enforcement and emergency response systems.

Action PFI-3.1.1: Continue to Implement Hazard Mitigation Policies

Continue to implement policies from the 2023 St. Mary's County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan to improve disaster preparedness, in alignment with Public Health and Community Services Action PH-1.2.5: Continue to Promote and Implement Disaster and Emergency Plans.

Action PFI-3.1.2: Continue to Provide Development Data and Growth Trends to Sheriff's Office

Continue to share regular updates on development and growth with the Sheriff's Office, in partnership with Department of Economic Development (DED). This will help the Sheriff's Office align their staffing and operations with population growth and development trends, supporting long-term service capacity.

Action PFI-3.1.3: Explore Updates to the Essential Public Facilities in CZO

Assess the potential to add law enforcement, fire services, EMS, and potentially other services as Essential Public Facilities in Section 70.4 of the CZO.

Policy PFI-3.2: Budget for Core Capital Investments

Proactively budget for core capital investments and communicate the County tax dollars required to maintain the high level of service that residents desire.

Action PFI-3.2.1: Continue to Invest in Water Tanks for Fire Protection

Continue to invest in water tanks in areas not served by water systems to provide adequate water supply for firefighting.

Policy PFI-3.3: Establish Long-Term Fire and EMS Plans

Respond to the county's growth by exploring long-term fire and EMS needs. (See Public Health and Community Services Action PH-1.4.7: Continue to Ensure Adequate Water Supplies to Provide Fire Protection).

BROADBAND & ELECTRICAL UTILITIES

GOAL PFI-4: EXPAND RELIABLE UTILITIES & UNIVERSAL BROADBAND ACCESS

Provide reliable electric service and countywide access to high-speed internet to support safety, education, health, and economic competitiveness.

Policy PFI-4.1: Improve Grid Reliability and Visual Quality

Coordinate utility upgrades with corridor projects to reduce outages and visual clutter, using shared easements and context-sensitive design.

Policy PFI-4.2: Expand High-Speed Internet and Communications Networks

Continue partnering with providers to encourage commercial Internet Service Providers to expand wired broadband offerings in our community. Competition encourages innovation, improves services, and maintains costs to the consumer.

Action PFI-4.2.1: Continue to Provide Efficient Electric Power and Communications and Support Telecommuting Infrastructure

Continue to maintain and improve the delivery of electric power and communications systems and require development projects to incorporate site and building features that support telework and flexible work arrangements.

Action PFI-4.2.2: Continue to Foster Expanded Availability of High-Speed Internet Service

Work with private providers and partners to continue to expand high-speed internet access countywide, focusing on underserved areas and leveraging external funding and right-of-way coordination.

Policy PFI-4.3: Lead by Example in County Facilities

Advance energy and resource-efficient investments in County buildings and sites through life-cycle analysis and transparent annual reporting.

LIBRARIES & GOVERNMENT FACILITIES

GOAL PFI-5: KEEP ST. MARY'S COUNTY A DESIRABLE PLACE TO LIVE THROUGH COMMUNITY AMENITIES INVESTMENT

Keep St. Mary's County an attractive and desirable place to live and grow by investing in community sports and recreation facilities, libraries, and other public amenities.

Policy PFI-5.1: Maintain and Create Public-Private Partnerships to Support Development of Recreation Facilities

Build on existing, and create new, public-private partnerships to support the development of indoor sports and recreation facilities, such as a sports dome, and arts and culture spaces and opportunities.

Policy PFI-5.2: Strengthen the System of Libraries, Community Centers, and Senior Activity Centers

Strengthen the system of libraries, community centers, and senior activity centers to maintain and improve them as resources for all residents, especially children, while considering the development of new or expanded facilities in currently underserved areas.

Policy PFI-5.3: Bolster County Support for Cultural Assets

Bolster County financial and organizational support, including public-private partnerships, for cultural assets like parks, museums, and historical sites. This will help to maintain them and increase awareness of the county's history and unique culture.



The St. Mary's County YMCA Groundbreaking

RECREATION & PARKS

GOAL PFI-6: EXPAND & CONNECT PARKS, TRAILS, AND PUBLIC WATER ACCESS

Build an equitable, connected park and waterfront system that supports health, recreation, and tourism, serving users of all ages.

Policy PFI-6.1: Implement the Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan and Park Master Plan (LPPRP) and Park Master Plans

Implement the LPPRP. Program active parks, indoor facilities, and shared-use trails where demand is highest and growth is occurring.

Action PFI-6.1.1: Expand a County-Wide System of Recreation Facilities in and Near Growth Areas

Use planning and the capital program to deliver a comprehensive park system, particularly active parks, located in and near Development Districts, Town Centers, and Village Centers.

Action PFI-6.1.2: Continue to Provide Additional Fields, Court Facilities, and Shared-Use Trails

Continue to add baseball/softball diamonds, multipurpose fields, indoor court facilities, and pedestrian/bicycle trails to meet current and projected demand.

Policy PFI-6.2: Increase Public Access to the Water

Improve and add facilities for boating, fishing, and waterfront recreation, while protecting appropriately zoned waterfront lands for marine uses.

Action PFI-6.2.1: Continue to Expand Recreation on the Water and at Waterfront Sites

Continue to accommodate and promote fishing, boating, sailing, and related recreation by improving facilities and protecting appropriately zoned waterfront land for marinas and landings.

Action PFI-6.2.2: Build Additional Water-Access Facilities

Deliver new public water-access facilities, including boat ramps and fishing areas, through the capital program and partnerships.

Action PFI-6.2.3: Evaluate Myrtle Point Park for Public Access to the Patuxent River

Advance feasibility and project development for additional public access at Myrtle Point Park, with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access, lighting, and shoreline-sensitive design.

SCHOOLS

GOAL PFI-7: ALIGN SCHOOL CAPACITY & SITES WITH PLANNED GROWTH

Coordinate facilities so seats, sites, and access keep pace with development and educational needs.

Policy PFI-7.1: Plan Capacity Proactively

Use enrollment projections and Growth Areas plans to time, site, and finance school projects, in partnership with the Board of Education of St. Mary's County and Leonardtown.

Action PFI-7.1.1: Continue to Assist St. Mary's County Public Schools (SMCPS) in the Preparation of the Educational Facilities Master Plan

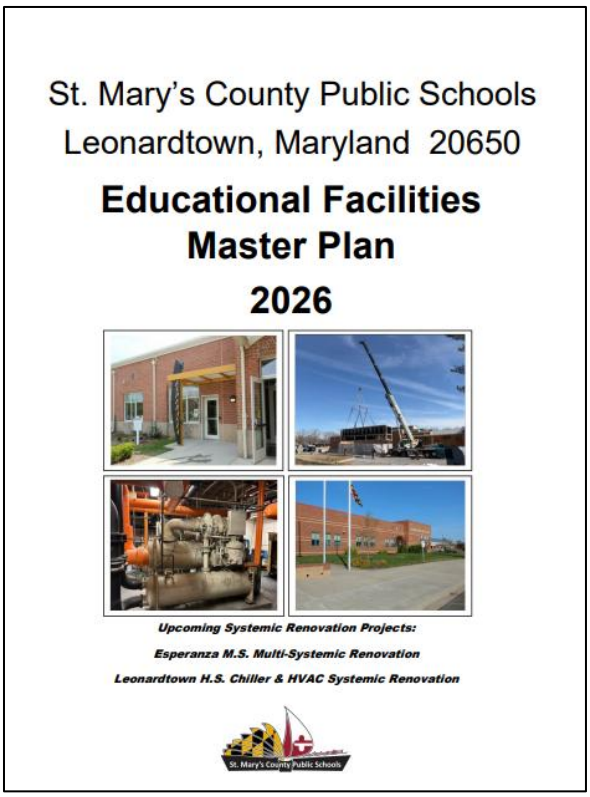
Continue to contribute to the annual preparation of a six-year Educational Facilities Master Plan (EFMP) and align project timing and siting with enrollment projections and planned Growth Areas.

Action PFI-7.1.2: Continue to Recognize and Support a Full-Spectrum Educational System

Continue to coordinate with education partners to provide facilities and programs that meet the needs of students at all levels, including career and technical pathways.

Policy PFI-7.2: Site and Access Schools Safely

Favor locations with safe walk/bike/transit options and opportunities for shared use with parks and libraries.



Cover of the 2026 EFMP

8

Public Health and Community Services Element

In This Section

Planning for Public Health & Community Services
Health & Safety Needs



Planning for Public Health & Community Services

National and Regional Trends

Health & the Built Environment

There is growing recognition that the way that communities are physically organized and built can impact health through factors like air quality, access to physical activity, access to recreational space for older adults and people with disabilities, protection from natural hazards, crime prevention through physical design choices, and even contribution towards providing a sense of belonging in a community and improved mental health. Amid this growing recognition of the wide variety of factors that influence health, St. Mary's County can work across departments and with community partners to address the multitude of factors that shape individual and public health.

An Aging Population

Nationally, the median age of residents is increasing, due to the aging of the "Baby Boomer" generation and declining birth rates, according to data from the U.S. Census Bureau. Getting older can affect many different aspects of life, from healthcare to housing, transportation, recreational activities, and other social services. While the median age or St. Mary's County residents is generally younger than the state and the nation, according to data from the U.S. Census Bureau, its population is still aging, and continued preparation for the needs of older adults will be important.

Public Health & Community Services Approach

As the county continues to grow and age, it will be important to support health through the built environment and through programs and services, recognizing that health is impacted through a diverse array of policies, many of which are not usually considered to primarily be about health (such as the built environment, economic opportunity, transportation, and green space/the environment). This broad, holistic lens, combined with the specific recommendations in the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), will help guide St. Mary's County towards a healthier future.

The Local Health Department serves as the County's chief health strategist. In this role, the Health Department provides leadership to assess community health needs, convene cross-sector partners, leverage data and evidence, and align

policies, programs, and investments across health care, public health, and related systems to improve population health.

Health-related goals, objectives, and strategies within this Comprehensive Plan are informed by and coordinated with St. Mary's County's Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), developed every six years by the Local Health Improvement Coalition (Healthy St. Mary's Partnership). County health actions identified in St. Mary's 2050 shall be reviewed and updated, as appropriate, to align with each new CHIP cycle to ensure responsiveness to evolving health needs, emerging data, and best practices.

Key Findings from Public Engagement

The public health and community services policies and actions in this chapter were developed in consideration of these factors and guided by community engagement involving community members.

Several important takeaways emerged from this participation effort and an analysis of current conditions in St. Mary's County, which are described in more detail below.



Community Engagement Event at Ridge Volunteer Firehouse



Community Engagement Event at Charlotte Hall Library

Healthy Living

Supporting healthy lifestyles was important to many community members. Walkable communities, including access to shopping near residences, was identified as one way to support healthy living. Community members also called for more recreational facilities, including sports complexes, pools, and other entertainment for youth. Parks, trails, and public green spaces and beaches were also identified as important for quality of life and healthy lifestyles. Farmers' markets and community gardens were strongly supported as well, providing healthy food options and connecting community members with local farms.

Healthcare Access

Community members encouraged the expansion of healthcare access across the county. This includes urgent care centers and specialized medical facilities, including services tailored for the needs of older adults.

Aging in Place

As residents age, many see increased need for support to allow residents to 'age in place' allowing residents to stay in their homes as they get older. Such services range from updates to the home's physical accessibility, in-home care services to support day-to-day needs, healthcare services, assistance with proper nutrition through the home delivered meals and congregate meals programs, providing activities and programs through the three senior activity centers to help older adults remain active and vibrant, assistance with navigating Medicare benefits, providing volunteer opportunities through the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), educating the community about the varied programs and services, hosting many large-scale community events throughout the year, and transportation services.

Emergency Response

Many community members mentioned the importance of emergency response and law enforcement capabilities, supporting improvements in these areas. Community members also called for enhanced community policing and crime prevention.



St. Mary's County Emergency Services Vehicle

HEALTH & SAFETY NEEDS

GOAL PH-1: MEET THE HEALTH & SAFETY NEEDS OF THE GROWING POPULATION

Ensure access to healthcare, community services, public health services, and public safety services for all county residents.

Policy PH-1.1: Strengthen Health Care and Public Health Systems

Maintain a strong, resilient, and coordinated health system that integrates a comprehensive health care delivery system with a robust public health infrastructure. A comprehensive health care delivery system includes timely access to primary care, behavioral and mental health, specialty care, and allied health and wellness services, supported by workforce, facilities, housing (see Housing Element), and land use policies. The healthcare delivery system should coordinate with the Local Health Department as the coordinating nexus, working alongside public and private partners to advance prevention, health promotion, and community wellness.

This policy reflects the recommendations of the Maryland Commission on Public Health and aligns with nationally recognized Foundational Public Health Capabilities and Foundational Public Health Areas that local public health infrastructure should address (see the box to the right for more details).

Eight Foundational Public Health Capabilities

1. Assessment and surveillance
2. Community partnership development
3. Equity
4. Organizational competencies
5. Policy development and support
6. Accountability and performance management
7. Emergency preparedness and response
8. Communications

Five Foundational Public Health Areas (programmatic focus)

1. Communicable disease control
2. Chronic disease and injury prevention
3. Environmental public health
4. Maternal, child, and family health
5. Access to and linkage with clinical care
6. Behavioral health (added per Maryland Commission on Public Health)

Together, these capabilities and areas ensure that St. Mary's County can deliver effective public health functions, coordinate with health care and community partners, and maintain a resilient system to protect and promote the health of all residents.

Action PH-1.1.1: Continue to Coordinate a Comprehensive Health and Public Health System

The Health Department shall continue to convene community members to sustain a comprehensive ecosystem of health care and public health services, ensuring coordination across primary care, behavioral health, specialty care, and allied health, alongside prevention, health promotion, and other public health functions. This should include attention to a comprehensive continuum of care across the lifespan. The Health Department, as the chief health strategist, will facilitate data-driven planning, cross-sector collaboration, and alignment with Foundational Public Health Capabilities and Areas.

Action PH-1.1.2: Continue to Assess Health Care and Public Health Capacity and Address Gaps

Continue to conduct regular assessments of health care delivery and public health system capacity, including workforce, facilities, technology, data, services, and community partnerships. Identify gaps in access to primary care, behavioral health, specialty care, and public health programs, including for underserved and vulnerable populations. Develop a coordinated action plan to address gaps, aligned with Foundational Public Health Capabilities and the six-year Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) cycle, prioritizing population health impact.

Action PH-1.1.3: Continue to Convene the Local Board of Health and Provide Regular Health System Briefings

In accordance with Maryland Health-General §3-501 et seq., the Health Officer shall convene the Local Board of Health at least twice annually, or more often if necessary. These continued meetings shall provide reports on community health status, system capacity, gaps, CHIP progress, and public health emergency readiness, ensuring transparency, accountability, and alignment with Foundational Capabilities.

Action PH-1.1.4: Continue to Align County Health Actions with the CHIP

Continue to implement County-specific health and public health strategies in alignment with the six-year Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) cycle, with technical leadership from the Health Department. Review and update actions as CHIP priorities evolve to maintain consistency with population health needs, Foundational Public Health Capabilities, and public health areas including behavioral health.

Action PH-1.1.5: Continue to Sustain Core Behavioral Health and Wellness Services

Continue to collaborate with public, private, and non-governmental partners to ensure access to mental health, substance use, and wellness services. Integrate these efforts with public health initiatives and CHIP priorities to advance population-level behavioral health outcomes. Provide training and support to law enforcement officers and criminal justice

system partners to identify behavioral health needs and make appropriate referrals in coordination with the Health Department.

Action PH-1.1.6: Continue to Address the Health Needs of Veterans

In continued collaboration with the Veterans Affairs Clinic in Charlotte Hall and the St. Mary's County Health Department, develop programs and partnerships to help veterans access primary care, behavioral health, and other critical health services while using their medical benefits.

Action PH-1.1.7: Continue to Advance Early Intervention and Prevention Programs

Work with community partners to continue to implement early intervention and prevention programs across behavioral, physical, and environmental health. Utilize data from the Health Department and Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) to target services for children, youth, and other at-risk populations, ensuring integration with public health and health care delivery systems. Ensure collaboration across the health department, schools, law enforcement, and other service providers to identify youth in need and make appropriate referrals to early intervention and prevention activities.

Action PH-1.1.8: Continue to Strengthen and Sustain Health and Wellness Workforce

Continue to develop a comprehensive workforce strategy to attract, train, and retain professionals across public health, health care (including primary care, behavioral health, oral health, specialty care, and allied health), and wellness services. Workforce development shall also focus on recruiting and supporting community health workers, care coordinators, and peer recovery support specialists to enhance population health outcomes. Strategy shall be informed by the workforce recommendations of the Maryland Commission on Public Health and the St. Mary's County CHIP. Key strategies include:

- Southern Maryland Area Health Education Center (AHEC) that coordinates with local schools to promote a local pipeline of health and wellness professionals
- Locally available student internships, medical residency rotations, and certificate or degree programs designed to meet local workforce needs
- Incentives such as loan repayment, tuition assistance, relocation support, and housing financing assistance to support recruitment and retention
- Structured mentorship programs and career advancement pathways to improve retention and professional development
- Engagement and support for community health workers, care coordinators, and peer recovery support specialists to ensure culturally competent, community-centered care

Action PH-1.1.9: Continue to Advance Technology and Data Modernization to Support Health and Wellness Systems

Continue to implement technology and data-driven solutions to enhance the efficiency, reach, and effectiveness of St. Mary's County's health and public health workforce. These solutions shall support both clinical

and population health functions, strengthen care coordination, and improve access to services for residents. Technology and data modernization initiatives shall align with the County's CHIP priorities, support Public Health 3.0 principles, and extend the capacity of the health and wellness workforce while promoting accessibility and high-quality care. Key strategies include:

- Expansion of telehealth and telemedicine services to increase access to primary care, behavioral health, and specialty care
- Implementation and optimization of interoperable data systems, health information exchanges, and electronic health record systems to support coordinated care
- Integration of clinical decision support tools to enhance evidence-based practice and workflow efficiency
- Use of remote patient monitoring technologies to enable proactive care management and reduce avoidable hospitalizations
- Application of artificial intelligence and analytics to inform population health interventions
- Provision of virtual education, simulation, and training tools for workforce development and continuing education
- Deployment of digital community health tools to support prevention, health promotion, and chronic disease management
- Implementation of workforce efficiency tools to optimize scheduling, task management, and collaborative care

Policy PH-1.2: Support a Health in All Policies Approach

Support projects and programs that primarily focus on recreation, quality of life, economic opportunity, public facilities, or other areas that also benefit the health of St. Mary's County residents.

Action PH-1.2.1: Consider Health Impacts as Part of Development Review Process

As part of the review process for legislatively decided development projects, provide an assessment of health impacts in the staff reports provided to the Planning Commission.

Action PH-1.2.2: Update the CZO to Consider Community Health

Evaluate the CZO for opportunities to address community health through updated use regulations, development regulations, or development review procedures. Priority actions could include:

- Add requirements in the development review process for multimodal connectivity, complete streets, green infrastructure, mixed uses, and access to facilities and services. These requirements support active living, access to healthy food, and access to key healthcare services. Include healthcare access in staff reports on potential development impacts.
- Evaluate additional ways for the CZO to reduce environmental health risks, such as reducing air and noise pollution, minimizing exposure to extreme heat, and reducing wildfire risk.

- Identify other CZO changes that can support public health, in alignment with the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). For example, the current CHIP identifies a chronic disease strategy of addressing tobacco-related health disparities. A zoning ordinance change in support of this could include limiting tobacco and vaping retailer density to limit the total number of retailers, mandating minimum distances between retailers, or prohibiting retailers in certain areas (such as near schools, parks, or residential neighborhoods).

Action PH-1.2.3: Establish Level of Service Standards for Parks, Green Spaces, and Community Hubs

Establish level of service standards for the provision of parks and green spaces within walking distance of all residents, which would improve resident health and quality of life.

Action PH-1.2.4: Continue to Support Efforts of Recreation and Parks to Promote Healthy and Safe Physical Activities

Recreation and Parks and the Local Health Department will continue to collaborate to promote healthy and safe activities for all seasons and all ages, and to enhance the physical and mental health of community members.

Action PH-1.2.5: Continue to Promote and Implement Disaster and Emergency Plans

Collaboration with the Local Health Department (SMCHD) and Department of Emergency Services (DES), the Sheriff's Office (SMCSO), the Department of Information Technology (IT), and the Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T) for continued disaster and emergency management planning, disaster response, and interagency coordination. This may include but is not limited to; heating and cooling centers during normal business hours or overnights for isolated incidents, or for widespread incidents, emergency or mass care sheltering as outlined in the St. Mary's County Emergency Operations Plan. Active collaboration and plan implementation protects the health of the community and improves the capacity and capabilities of the local public health and healthcare delivery systems.

Action PH-1.2.6: Continue to Support Environmental Health Projects and Programs

Continue to support environmental health projects and programs that minimize exposure to polluted air, unsafe drinking and recreational water, flood and wildfire risk, mosquitos and ticks, unsafe housing, noise pollution, and hazardous substances. Such measures would benefit the health of the natural environment while protecting the health of the community.

Action PH-1.2.7: Continue to Include Law Enforcement in Public Health Strategies

Continue to include law enforcement in planning and response strategies for public health emergencies and substance use crises.

Policy PH-1.3: Support Community Services and Social Services

Support community services and social services, including services led by the County and services led by partner organizations.

Action PH-1.3.1: Continue to Support and Administer Federal and State Financial Support Programs

Continue to support and administer federal and state financial programs necessary to assist citizens of the County in areas related to income assistance, welfare programs, medical assistance, adult services, child support, child welfare, and daycare assistance. Ensure that services are available to clients with limited resources.

Action PH-1.3.2: Continue to Provide Support for Organizations, Services, and Facilities Providing Temporary or Transitional Housing

Continue to support organizations, services and facilities which provide temporary or transitional housing for families in the event of an emergency or family crisis.

Action PH-1.3.3: Continue to Partner with Social Service Providers on Programs to Increase Food Access and Security

Continue to work with social service providers, Family and Consumer Sciences at the University of Maryland Extension, Health Department, and the Farmers Feeding St. Mary's Program, with the Department of Aging and Human Services (A&HS) as the lead, to increase reliable access to nutritious food to residents facing food insecurity.

Action PH-1.3.4: Continue to Provide Continued Support to and Expand Local Farmers' Markets

In collaboration with Tri-County Council (TCC), the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC), and the St. Mary's County Department of Economic Development (DED), continue to increase the availability of healthy, locally produced food by supporting and expanding local farmers' markets.



Loveville Auction House

Policy PH-1.4: Support Public Safety Resources

Support adequate public safety resources to reduce crime, injuries, and property damage.

Action PH-1.4.1: Achieve and Maintain Adequate Emergency Services and Law Enforcement Staffing Levels

Achieve and maintain adequate emergency services and law enforcement staffing levels and employee retention to serve the current and future population of the county. Ensure the availability of fire and rescue companies to report to multiple or high value alarms.

Action PH-1.4.2: Achieve and Maintain Rapid Response Times

Strive for response times that are appropriate to the geography and service model of the county, with performance benchmarks tailored to urban, suburban, and rural areas.

Action PH-1.4.3: Continue to Ensure Adequate Public Safety Coverage Across the County

Continue to provide adequate new stations and office space in Growth Areas to accommodate current and future public safety needs. Ensure that remote areas of the county have adequate coverage. Use the CZO and other enforcement mechanisms to delay or condition development if emergency response capacity would be inadequate.

Action PH-1.4.4: Continue to Develop and Monitor Key Performance Indicators for Law Enforcement

Continue to develop and monitor key performance indicators for law enforcement, including response times, clearance rates, deputy to resident ration, and service coverage to support accountability and inform resource allocation assessments.

Action PH-1.4.5: Examine Opportunities to Utilize Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

In targeted areas experiencing higher crime rates, examine opportunities to reduce crime and increase perception of safety through the design of the built environment, using the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).

Action PH-1.4.6: Continue Support of Fire Suppression and Emergency Services

Continue to require adequate fire suppression for approval of major subdivisions and major site plans. Require contributions from developers towards fire stations, rescue squads, and related apparatus and equipment when the development can be directly linked to the need for additional capital improvements.

Action PH-1.4.7: Continue to Ensure Adequate Water Supplies to Provide Fire Protection

Continue to ensure that adequate water supplies and other specialized suppression agents, such as those needed for lithium battery fires, are available to support fire

protection for all land uses in the County. In Growth Areas, use central supply systems. In rural areas where water service is from small central systems or individual wells, provide standpipes or other infrastructure to draw on existing water impoundment areas, such as lakes and farm ponds.

Action PH-1.4.8: Support Adequate Facilities, Services, and Programs for Animal Control

Support adequate facilities and services to collect, house, and care for stray, abandoned, abused, or nuisance animals. Encourage programs for animal adoption and spaying and neutering to control population growth.

Action PH-1.4.9: Continue to Promote Safer Communities by Expanding Access to Education, Employment, Housing, and Other Social Services

Alongside key community partners, continue to implement the policies and actions described in this plan to expand access to and improve education, health, economic opportunity, housing, and other social services. Improving these aspects of quality of life can reduce crime and improve income levels and social opportunities.

Action PH-1.4.10: Continue to Build Public Trust in Law Enforcement Through Community Engagement

Continue to encourage community policing strategies and public engagement programs to build public trust and improve public safety outcomes.

Action PH-1.4.11: Continue to Invest in Technology Infrastructure for Law Enforcement, Emergency Services, and Related Public Services

Continue to support investment in law enforcement, emergency services, and related public service technology infrastructure, including mobile data systems, digital evidence management, and communications upgrades to support operational efficiency.

GOAL PH-2: ENHANCE THE AVAILABILITY OF PUBLIC SERVICES FOR AGING RESIDENTS

Enhance the availability of public services for aging residents to ensure they can live and age well in St. Mary's County.

Policy PH-2.1: Invest in the Department of Aging and Human Services (A&HS)

Invest in the Department of Aging and Human Services (A&HS) so that it not only maintains, but expands, its variety and scope of services and programs, from volunteering programs and activity center resources for seniors, to adding support for children and families with whom the department works.

Policy PH-2.2: Support Aging in Place Services and Activities

Support aging in place services that allow residents to stay in their homes, such as the Senior Care and other programs, along with healthcare and well-being services and connections to public and private programs that help keep older adults well.

Action PH-2.2.1: Continue to Expand Services and Activities for Aging Populations

Continue to expand services for aging populations, including meal delivery, caregiver support, in-home support, social programming, community outreach, volunteering opportunities, and sharing information about housing, Medicare, Social Security, and other benefit programs.

Support efforts of the Department of Aging and Human Services (A&HS) to promote healthy and safe activities with a focus on older adults.

Policy PH-2.3: Facilitate the Development of Affordable Senior Housing

Facilitate the development of more attainably priced senior housing so that older residents are able to stay in their communities as they age.

Action PH-2.3.1: Promote Attainable Housing and Home Maintenance Programs That Meet the Needs of Older Adults

Support new attainable housing developments accessible to older adults. Support home maintenance programs that allow older adults to stay in their homes.

Policy PH-2.4: Maintain and Expand Special Transportation Services for Seniors

Maintain and expand special transportation services for seniors, such as the Senior Rides Program. Such transportation services help older adults access healthcare, services, shopping, and entertainment, while remaining in their homes.

9

Natural Hazards, Vulnerability, and Resiliency Element

In This Section

Planning for Natural Hazards, Vulnerability, & Resiliency

Resiliency



Planning for Natural Hazards, Vulnerability, & Resiliency

This element establishes a framework to reduce risk, protect people and property, and sustain St. Mary's County's working landscapes and waterfront economy in the face of severe weather, flooding, shoreline change, sea level rise, and other hazards. It connects current risk conditions to land use choices, capital planning, building standards, and resource conservation. It also aligns community values by preserving rural character, supporting agriculture and aquaculture, protecting waterways, and focusing growth in appropriate areas with specific resiliency actions. The policies and implementation of items that follow derive directly from this framework.

How to Read & Use This Element

Exurban Growth Pressure

The element begins with an assessment of risk, using County maps and analyses to identify where people, structures, and infrastructure are exposed to flooding, erosion, storm surge, high winds, or wildfire. It then applies guiding principles that direct growth away from vulnerable areas, harden essential facilities, use natural systems first, and focus on public investment where risk reduction has the greatest return. It outlines key tools such as zoning updates, floodplain and building standards, shoreline and habitat projects, drainage and transportation retrofits, and public education. It emphasizes sequencing investments to prioritize repetitive loss areas and critical infrastructure and concludes with a framework for monitoring and adjustment as conditions evolve.

Current Risk Context

St. Mary's County lies between the Potomac and Patuxent Rivers and the Chesapeake Bay, with much of its population, employment, and infrastructure near tidal waters and floodplains. This geography creates concentrated exposure to coastal flooding, storm surge, nuisance inundation, and shoreline erosion across multiple communities and transportation corridors.

The County faces four dominant hazard pathways. Coastal and riverine flooding cause repetitive losses and damage to homes, businesses, and emergency routes. Shoreline erosion and bluff instability along the Bay, Patuxent River, and the Potomac River result in property loss and sediment loading. Sea level rise creates chronic inundation and amplifies storm impacts, while high winds and compound storm events increase both

physical damage and recovery costs. Periodic drought also heightens wildfire risks in rural and forested areas.

These hazards affect people, working lands, public infrastructure, and natural systems. Residents face rising insurance costs, property loss, and health concerns related to flooding and septic failure. Farms experience saltwater intrusion, drainage changes, and crop viability issues. Watermen, marinas, and aquaculture operators contend with infrastructure vulnerability and shoreline degradation. Public facilities, roads, and utilities in low-lying areas require protection or relocation, while wetlands and floodplain forests face increasing stress from erosion and habitat shifts.

Cross-Cutting Themes from Engagement

Community engagement reinforced the importance of aligning hazard mitigation with broader land use and conservation goals. Participants consistently emphasized protecting rural character and water quality while focusing on growth in designated centers. There was broad support for limiting sprawl, preserving farmland, and directing investment to places that already have infrastructure. These views closely align with reducing development pressure in flood-prone and erosion-vulnerable areas.

Residents expressed growing concern about inland drainage issues, rising groundwater, and failing septic systems that threaten water quality and public health. They called for coordination between County agencies and MetCom to address failing systems and plan future transitions to centralized services where appropriate. Emergency access, particularly for older residents in isolated communities, was identified as a critical issue during severe weather events.

The County's agricultural and waterfront economies emerged as key themes. Participants highlighted the need to sustain working lands and seafood operations through adaptation strategies. Priorities included mapping and managing saltwater intrusion hotspots, cost-share programs for on-farm drainage improvements and expanded riparian buffers to slow runoff and protect water quality. At the shoreline, community members supported living shoreline approaches and pilot projects that protect marinas, seafood landings, and aquaculture hubs while enhancing habitat.

Education and shared responsibility were also recurring themes. Residents seek clear, accessible information on risks, insurance options, and mitigation actions. There is support for mandatory disclosure of flood and sea level rise risks in real estate transactions. Community members emphasized coordination across agencies and partnerships with Naval Air Station Patuxent River (NAS PAX) to ensure that land use decisions align

with defense community resilience goals, including implementation of recommendations from the Military Installation Resilience Review (MIRR) for NAS PAX.

Framework: Principles, Levers, & Applications

This framework rests on five guiding principles that connect community priorities with actionable policy. The first principle is to keep people and critical services out of harm's way through updated maps, clear disclosure, strategic growth management, and resilient building standards. The second principle is to use natural systems as the first line of defense, prioritizing conservation of floodplain forests, wetlands, and buffers, and promoting living shorelines wherever feasible. The third principle focuses on retrofitting infrastructure and working lands for function under stress by targeting road elevations, culvert upgrades, on-farm storage, and risk-based siting for critical facilities. The fourth principle seeks to align rules, incentives, and partnerships by strengthening floodplain standards, coordinating conservation investments, and integrating defense community resilience planning. The fifth principle emphasizes building public capacity through education, technical assistance, and access to reliable risk data.

Application: Where the Framework Connects to Policy

Each policy theme in this element operationalizes one or more of the guiding principles. Policies to limit development in vulnerable areas apply the principles of risk avoidance and natural system protection by tightening floodplain limits and preserving steep slopes and hydric soils. Floodplain and storm resilience policies emphasize infrastructure retrofits, vegetation retention, and community participation in FEMA's Community Rating System. Building standards integrate elevation, abandonment, and risk-based siting requirements to reduce long-term exposure. Shoreline protection actions promote living shorelines and demonstration projects that balance property protection with ecological goals. Sea level rise and long-term adaptation strategies incorporate projections into land use decisions and facilitate conservation of wetland migration corridors. Natural systems integration ensures buffers and wetlands are treated as infrastructure, while community capacity initiatives provide residents, farmers, and businesses with the tools and knowledge to adapt. Public investment policies ensure that County capital projects support risk reduction and long-term service continuity.

Implementation Priorities

Implementation in the near term will focus on embedding risk-informed standards in development regulations, scaling up natural infrastructure, and protecting critical access and utility systems. The County will expand wetland and stream buffers and preserve steep and erodible slopes. It will establish a living shoreline policy and develop conservation targeting maps for floodplain forests and migration corridors. Roadway and culvert improvements will reduce repetitive closures on key routes. Coordination with the hazard mitigation plan will guide investment in water and sewer infrastructure. Pilot programs will demonstrate on-farm storage and working waterfront resilience, while data and outreach initiatives will improve risk communication and disclosure. Integration of NAS PAX resilience strategies will ensure compatible land use and capital planning.

Metrics & Monitoring

Progress will be tracked through a concise performance dashboard. Key metrics will include the number of repetitive loss properties mitigated, miles of storm-hardened roads, and acres of natural buffers and living shorelines created. Exposure management will be measured by the share of new development outside mapped hazard areas and the use of risk disclosure in permitting. Community capacity will be gauged through participation in education programs and improvements in Community Rating System (CRS) classification. The County will also monitor on-farm and waterfront adaptation projects to document economic and environmental benefits.

Alignment with the Comprehensive Plan Vision

This framework advances the Comprehensive Plan vision to protect rural character and water quality, support agriculture and aquaculture, focus growth in appropriate places, and sustain a resilient local economy. It translates community values into specific, measurable steps that strengthen the County's capacity to prepare for, adapt to, and recover from the hazards it faces today and will confront more frequently in the future.

RESILIENCY

GOAL HAZ-1: INCREASE THE COUNTY'S RESILIENCY BY PREPARING FOR SEVERE WEATHER EVENTS

Strengthen the County's ability to withstand, adapt to, and recover from severe weather, flooding, sea level rise, and other hazards through proactive planning, regulation, and investment. Resiliency in St. Mary's also means sustaining the County's working farms, forests, and aquaculture - which are key to rural character, heritage, and economic stability - by directing conservation investment to priority landscapes and adapting coastal and agricultural operations to rising water and storm impacts.

Policy HAZ-1.1: Limit Development in Vulnerable Areas

Protect tidal and nontidal floodplains, steep slopes, erodible soils, and hydric soils from disturbance to reduce flood risks, erosion hazards, and ecological degradation.

Action HAZ-1.1.1: Continue to Limit Development in the Floodplain

Continue to limit and manage development in the 100-year floodplain through buffers, easements, and prohibitions on new lots, fill, and stormwater detention structures.

Action HAZ-1.1.2: Continue to Preserve Steep Slopes

Continue to preserve steep slopes over 25% from disturbance; discourage development on 15–25% slopes unless no alternative exists.

Action HAZ-1.1.3: Continue to Manage Erosion-Prone Soils

Continue to minimize disturbance of highly erodible soils and establish protective buffers adjacent to streams, wetlands, and shorelines.

Action HAZ-1.1.4: Continue to Facilitate Natural Land Conversion

Continue to apply buffer expansion criteria to hydric soils and facilitate natural conversion to wetlands to accommodate sea level rise.

Policy HAZ-1.2: Strengthen Floodplain and Storm Resilience

Protect county residents and properties by strengthening floodplain and storm resilience.

Action HAZ-1.2.1: Continue to Enforce Floodplain Regulations

Continue to enforce floodplain regulations by maintaining natural vegetation, prohibiting clearing, and requiring reforestation in sparsely vegetated floodplains.

Action HAZ-1.2.2: Continue to Maintain Eligibility for Insurance Programs

Continue maintain eligibility for the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and maintain

reduced rates through FEMA's Community Rating System (CRS).

Action HAZ-1.2.3: Explore a Countywide "No Adverse Impact" Program

Evaluate adoption of a "No Adverse Impact" approach to floodplain management to complement the 2016 Floodplain Ordinance.

Action HAZ-1.2.4: On-Farm Flood Mitigation

Explore the options for cost-share for farm BMPs that attenuate peaks (on-farm ponds/micro-storage, controlled tile/ditch structures, grassed waterways) in 100-year contributing areas; prioritize fields over Highly Erodible Soils.

Policy HAZ-1.3: Strengthen Resilient Infrastructure and Building Standards

Ensure infrastructure and structures are designed, sited, and managed to withstand hazards including flooding, high winds, and sea level rise.

Action HAZ-1.3.1: Continue to Require Resilient Building

As needed, continue to require elevated building design, resilient foundation systems, flood-resistant materials, and abandonment/removal standards for impacted structures.

Action HAZ-1.3.2: Integrate Risk Assessment

Integrate risk assessment and vulnerability analysis into all public infrastructure siting, upgrades, and replacements.

Action HAZ-1.3.3: Incorporate the Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan

Incorporate the Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan by reference into County facility planning and to help protect critical water and sewer infrastructure.

Action HAZ-1.3.4: Prioritize High-Risk Mitigation Projects

Prioritize high-risk roadways and repetitive loss properties for targeted mitigation projects.

Action HAZ-1.3.5: Incorporate the Patuxent Military Installation Resilience Review

Prioritize investment in the resilience projects identified in the Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation (OLDCC)-funded Military Installation Resilience Review (MIRR) project for NAS PAX.

Policy HAZ-1.4: Enhance Risk Assessment, Mapping, and Public Awareness

Increase awareness of risks through risk assessment, mapping vulnerable lands, and public education.

Action HAZ-1.4.1: Continue to Map Vulnerable Lands

St. Mary's County Department of Information Technology (IT) staff will use GIS to continue to map remaining vulnerable lands, infrastructure, and facilities subject to flooding, erosion, or sea level rise that have not already been mapped by the County or State.

Action HAZ-1.4.2: Continue to Maintain Risk Assessment Maps

Continue to maintain updated risk assessment maps for public review and consider mandatory disclosure of projected risks in real estate transactions.

Action HAZ-1.4.3: Expand Public Education on Resilience

Expand public education on flood hazards, insurance options, and household resilience practices.

Action HAZ-1.4.4: Identify and Dedicate Mobility and Readiness Corridors

In anticipation of military exercises and actual emergencies, establish routes and procedures for rapid deployment of military personnel and equipment, in coordination with state and federal partners.

Action HAZ-1.4.5: Continue to Establish a Strategic Highway Network (STRAHNET)

Continue to explicitly map and prioritize the maintenance of STRAHNET routes, which are public highways essential to U.S. strategic defense and mobilization.

Policy HAZ-1.5: Strengthen Shoreline Protection and Hazard Mitigation

Strengthen shoreline protection, hazard mitigation, and land conservation practices that balance property protection with habitat preservation.

Action HAZ-1.5.1: Continue to Promote Living Shorelines

Continue to promote riparian property owners' efforts to mitigate shoreline erosion through appropriate measures, including structure stabilization measures where permitted by state law, and nonstructural shoreline stabilization measures such as sand, wetland plants, and submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV).

Action HAZ-1.5.2: Continue to Allow Conditional Shoreline Protection Measures

As needed, continue to allow shoreline protection measures only when they minimize erosion on adjacent properties and protect habitat resources.

Action HAZ-1.5.3: Identify Shorelines in Need of Enhancement

Evaluate shoreline conditions and prioritize areas needing enhanced protection.

Action HAZ-1.5.4: Continue to Advocate for Local Organizations to Strengthen Stewardship of Marine Resources

St. Mary's County benefits greatly from the engagement of local organizations in the stewardship of its marine resources. The significance of the roles these organizations play needs to be recognized and supported in planning for the future.

Policy HAZ-1.6: Mitigate Social and Workforce Vulnerability

Explore the provision of alternatives to on-base housing if such housing is not available immediately following a natural disaster.

GOAL HAZ-2: STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENTAL ADAPTATION FOR LONG-TERM RESILIENCY

Prepare the County's residents, ecosystems, and built environment for long-term risks such as sea level rise, storm surge, flooding, and shifting habitats.

Policy HAZ-2.1: Plan for Sea Level Rise and Long-Term Impacts

Anticipate and accommodate projected long-term risks in land use and resource planning.

Action HAZ-2.1.1: Incorporate Sea Level Rise Projections

Incorporate sea level rise projections into all relevant land use plans and zoning updates.

Action HAZ-2.1.2: Continue to Conserve Upland Migration Corridors

Continue conservation of upland migration corridors for wetlands in land preservation efforts.

Action HAZ-2.1.3: Support Adaptive Retreat Strategies

Promote retreat strategies for vulnerable natural resources and public infrastructure where protection is infeasible.

Action HAZ-2.1.4: Saltwater-Intrusion Hotspot Plan

Map and prioritize farm fields experiencing brackish inundation and implement adaptation pathways (crop shifts, transition to marsh, or easements) synchronized with upland migration corridors.

Policy HAZ-2.2: Integrate Natural Systems into Resiliency Planning

In resiliency planning efforts, integrate and utilize natural systems.

Action HAZ-2.2.1: Continue to Prioritize Natural Buffers

Continue to prioritize conservation of floodplain forests, hydric soils, and wetlands as natural buffers.

Action HAZ-2.2.2: Continue to Enforce Expanded Buffers in Development Plans

Continue to incorporate expanded wetland and stream buffers into subdivision plats and site plans.

Action HAZ-2.2.3: Continue to Coordinate Wetland Protection

Continue to coordinate enforcement of wetland and buffer protections across County and State agencies.

Action HAZ-2.2.4: Continue to Enforce Agricultural Riparian Buffers

Continue to enforce expanded forested buffer requirements along ditches and streams on farms to slow runoff, trap sediment, and cool waters; coordinate with the County's wetland/buffer enforcement.

Policy HAZ-2.3: Build Community Capacity for Resiliency

Empower residents and businesses with tools, education, and resources to prepare for and adapt to natural hazards.

Action HAZ-2.3.1: Continue to Expand Public Outreach

Continue the expansion of public outreach on flood risk, insurance programs, and available incentives for retrofits.

Action HAZ-2.3.2: Continue to Partner on Retrofits

Continue to partner with local organizations to provide technical assistance for resilient retrofits and hazard mitigation.

Action HAZ-2.3.3: Continue to Encourage Household Preparedness

Continue to encourage household-level preparedness through stormwater management, rain gardens, and emergency planning.

Action HAZ-2.3.4: Continue to Promote Producer Education

Continue to partner with organizations such as the Soil Conservation District (SCD) and land trusts on workshops for farm/aquaculture retrofits, insurance literacy (including National Flood Insurance Program/Community Rating System (NFIP/CRS) benefits), and business continuity planning.

Action HAZ-2.3.5: Support Adaptation of Historic and Archeological Resources at Risk

Support adaptation of historic architecture and archeological sites that may be threatened by natural hazards and other vulnerabilities. The National Park Service and the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) have guidelines that can provide technical support and guidance.

Policy HAZ-2.4: Ensure Resilient Infrastructure and Public Investments

Design, site, and manage public infrastructure and facilities to reduce vulnerability, extend service life, and support rapid recovery after severe weather events and long-term environmental shifts.

Action HAZ-2.4.1: Continue to Assess Risk and Vulnerability for Siting and Design

Continue to incorporate risk and vulnerability assessments into siting and design decisions for all new and replacement public facilities, including critical infrastructure.

Action HAZ-2.4.2: Reduce Repetitive Loss

Reduce repetitive flood losses by prioritizing mitigation investments in high-risk properties and roadways.

Action HAZ-2.4.3: Develop Shared Infrastructure and Energy Resilience

According to NAS PAX, local governments are increasingly using Intergovernmental Support Agreements (IGSAs) to manage complex utility and infrastructure projects that benefit the base and the local community.

Action HAZ-2.4.4: Utilize Shoreline Condition Assessments

Utilize shoreline conditions assessments to guide infrastructure investments and protective measures.

Action HAZ-2.4.5: Continue to Integrate Hazard Mitigation and Nuisance Flood Plans

Continue to incorporate hazard mitigation plans by reference into the County's public facilities planning process.

Action HAZ-2.4.6: Continue to Protect Rural Roads and Access

Prioritize storm-hardening and elevation of farm-to-market roads and seafood landing access routes that experience repetitive closures, coordinated with the Shoreline Conditions Assessment and road-closure inventory.

Action HAZ-2.4.7: Explore Projects and Programs that Support Energy Resilience

Explore projects and programs that support energy resilience and independence while maintaining rural landscapes and does not have a negative effect on NAS PAX operations or the St. Mary's Regional Airport.



St. George Island

10
Implementation

In This Section

Enacting the Plan
Monitoring & Updating Action Plan



Flowers at a produce auction. Image by the Maryland Department of Agriculture via Flickr.

Enacting the Plan

Effective implementation is the cornerstone of transforming a community's vision into reality. This chapter provides a strategic framework for implementing the St. Mary's 2050 Comprehensive Plan, ensuring that the collective voice of county residents translates into meaningful action. The implementation strategies outlined here establish clear pathways for achieving the goals identified throughout this planning process while maintaining accountability and adaptability over time.

Community-Centered Implementation

The development of the St. Mary's 2050 plan was built on the foundation of robust community engagement, incorporating resident input through three Community Engagement Windows from project inception through plan completion. To maintain this community focus during implementation, this chapter synthesizes public input into actionable priorities that are achievable. The implementation framework recognizes that successful comprehensive planning requires ongoing community involvement beyond plan adoption. St. Mary's residents should be engaged throughout this plan's lifetime.

Strategic Partnership with County Leadership

Annual Implementation Reporting

To ensure accountability and maintain implementation momentum, the County will undertake an annual reporting process to both the Planning Commission and the Commissioners of St. Mary's County. These reports will:

- Track progress on key implementation priorities
- Identify strategies requiring adjustment or additional resources
- Maintain ongoing community dialogue on implementation of the plan

Budget Integration & Capital Planning

The Comprehensive Plan should serve as a guiding framework for budget development and capital improvement programming. This approach enables the Commissioners of St. Mary's County to make informed decisions about resource allocation while ensuring that budget decisions will support implementation. This plan recommends:

- Aligning annual budget requests with plan priorities, when possible
- Using the plan as evaluation criteria for capital improvement projects
- Integrating comprehensive plan goals into departmental budget requests

Monitoring & Updating

Triennial Reporting

The County will prepare a report by July 1st every three years to monitor ongoing implementation of St. Mary's 2050 plan. This report will summarize the actions taken consistent with the Implementation Matrix as described below. This report will document and evaluate the performance measures and indicators tracking progress toward Plan objectives.

5-Year Implementation Performance Review

To track implementation progress, the County will conduct a mid-cycle performance review at the five-year mark. This assessment will evaluate advancement of the Plan's policies in accordance with Maryland Land Use Code Section 1-207(c)(6), which will include the following:

- Summary of development trends since the last five-year review
- Status of comprehensive plan implementation tools, such as comprehensive rezoning, to carry out the provisions of the comprehensive plan
- Identification of any significant changes to existing programs, zoning ordinances, regulations, financing programs, or State requirements necessary to achieve the visions and goals of the comprehensive plan during the remaining planning timeframe
- Identification of any State or federal laws, regulations, or requirements that have impeded local implementation of the comprehensive plan and recommendations to remove any impediments
- Future land use challenges and issues
- Summary of any potential updates to the comprehensive plan

10 Year Mandatory Review Cycle

Maryland state law requires a review and update of a local jurisdiction's comprehensive plan at least once every ten years (Section 1-416 of the Land Use Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland). St. Mary's 2050 fulfills this required review as outlined in Maryland Land Use Code Section 1-416, establishing a framework that will be reassessed and, if needed, updated every ten years to reflect evolving community needs and priorities.

Action Plan

Implementation Matrix

Successful implementation of St. Mary's 2050 requires coordination among county departments, state and federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, private sector partners, and property owners throughout the community. The implementation matrix will serve as a tool to monitor progress toward achieving the goals and policies outlined in St. Mary's 2050. This matrix organizes actions by responsible departments or agencies and establishes initiation timeframes. County staff will reference this matrix during performance monitoring and the five-year implementation review to assess accomplishments and identify areas requiring additional attention or resources.

The implementation matrix is in Table 4 below.

Table 4 : Implementation Matrix

Number	Action	Timeframe for Initiation	Agency	Adequate Resources
Growth Management				
GM-1.1.1	Update the Countywide Priority Funding Area (PFA) Boundaries	Long Term	LUGM/CAO/ CSMC	N
GM-1.2.1	Evaluate and Amend CZO as Necessary	Short Term	LUGM	N
GM-1.3.1	Coordinate with NAS Pax on Development of New Compatible Use Plan (CUP)	Medium Term	LUGM/DED	N
GM-2.1.1	Update Planning for Lexington Park Development District	Medium Term	LUGM/DED/ DPW&T	N
GM-2.9.1	Update Design Requirements in the CZO	Medium Term	LUGM	N
GM-2.11.1	Continue to Promote Transfer of Development Rights to Potential Developers	Ongoing	LUGM	Y
GM-3.1.1	Continue to Strategize Infill Development	Ongoing	LUGM	N
GM-3.1.2	Continue to Practice Shared Infrastructure Planning	Ongoing	DPW&T/LUGM	N
GM-3.1.3	Establish a Transferable Development Rights (TDR) Program to Support Military Buffer	Medium Term	DED/LUGM	N
GM-4.2.1	Prepare Master Plans for Each Town Center	Long Term	LUGM	N
GM-4.3.1	Implement Highway Access Policies for Three Notch Road	Long Term	DPW&T/SHA	N
GM-4.6.1	Add Sidewalks and Multimodal Trails	Long Term	DPW&T/R&P	N
GM-5.1.1	Prepare Master Plans for Each Village Center	Long Term	LUGM	N
GM-9.1.1	Partner with MetCom to Secure Funding for Priority Service Areas	Long Term	MetCom	N
GM-9.1.2	Explore Ability to Expand Infrastructure or Establish Private Wastewater Systems in Growth Areas	Long Term	MetCom	N
GM-10.1.1	Evaluate Land Acquisition Opportunities for Potential Wastewater Systems	Long Term	MetCom/ LUGM/CAO	N
GM-10.1.2	Explore Funding Options for Addressing Problem Water and Sewer Areas	Long Term	SMCHD	N
GM-10.1.3	Explore Sewage Disposal Options for Addressing Problem Water and Sewer Areas	Long Term	SMCHD/MDE	N
GM-10.1.4	Explore and Advocate for Innovative Alternatives to Traditional Septic Systems	Long Term	SMCHD/ MetCom/ LUGM	N

Number	Action	Timeframe for Initiation	Agency	Adequate Resources
	Housing			
HO-1.1.1	Consider Development of an Attainable Housing Work Group	Short Term	DED/LUGM/ Leonardtown	Y
HO-1.1.2	Consider the Preparation of a Housing Study to Determine the Optimum Mix of Housing Types for Existing and Future Needs	Short Term	DED/LUGM/ Leonardtown	N
HO-1.1.3	Explore the Creation of a Plan for Continued Collaboration with Leonardtown	Long Term	LUGM/ Leonardtown	N
HO-1.1.4	Track Housing Development	Medium Term	DED/LUGM/ Leonardtown	Y
HO-1.1.5	Continue to Award Bonus Densities for the Provision of Workforce and/or Affordable Housing	Ongoing	LUGM	Y
HO-1.2.1	Evaluate Expedited Review Process for Housing Developments	Short Term	LUGM/DED	Y
HO-1.2.2	Streamline Approvals for Aging in Place Home Modifications	Short Term	LUGM/DED	Y
HO-1.4.1	Adjust Permitting and Incentives to Maintain an Appropriate Balance of Housing Types	Medium Term	LUGM/DED	N
HO-1.5.1	Evaluate Need for Equivalent Dwelling Units (EDUs) that Define Water/Sewer Infrastructure Capacity for Accessory Dwelling Units	Short Term	LUGM/ MetCom	Y
HO-1.7.1	Consider Surveying Housing Support Users	Short Term	AHS/Housing Authority/ DPW&T	N
HO-2.1.1	Support Incentive Programs for the Rehabilitation of Housing	Short Term	LUGM/DED	N
HO-2.1.2	Undertake Regular Review of the Livability Code and Enhance Enforcement	Long Term	LUGM/CAO	Y
HO-2.1.3	Support Housing Improvement and Homeownership	Short Term	DED/LUGM	N
HO-2.1.4	Enforce Existing Quality and Safety Regulations	Long Term	LUGM/CAO	Y
HO-2.1.5	Require Demolition or Protections of Unsafe or Abandoned Structures	Short Term	LUGM/CAO	N
HO-2.1.6	Advertise Available State Home Repair Programs	Short Term	LUGM/CAO	N

Number	Action	Timeframe for Initiation	Agency	Adequate Resources
HO-4.1.1	Evaluate Ways to Augment Traditional Notification Requirements for Residential Development Projects	Short Term	LUGM/CAO	N
HO-4.3.1	Explore an Audit of Public Right-of-Way Assets in Older Neighborhoods	Medium Term	DPW&T	N
HO-4.3.2	Consider Funding Options for Investing in Neighborhood Improvements	Long Term	CSMC	N
HO-4.4.1	Prepare Design Guidelines to Guide Development of New Neighborhoods	Long Term	LUGM/DED/ DPW&TR&P	N
HO-4.8.1	Develop a Program to Incentivize Enhanced Design	Long Term	LUGM	N
Economic Development				
ED-1.2.1	Continue to Work with NAS PAX on Recommended AICUZ Overlays, Including Noise Contours and Accident Potential Zones (APZs)	Ongoing	DED/LUGM/ CoAd	Y
ED-1.3.1	Continue to Provide Incentives, Training, and Other Tools to Encourage Business Growth and Diversification	Ongoing	DED/SBDC/ TCC SoMD/ CSM/DHCD/ MD Commerce	Y
ED-1.3.2	Continue to Market to and Recruit High-Quality Enterprises	Ongoing	DED/MD Commerce	Y
ED-1.6.1	Update the Zoning Ordinance to Facilitate Mixed-Use Redevelopment	Short Term	LUGM/DED	N
ED-2.2.1	Continue to Prioritize Joint-Use Infrastructure	Ongoing	DPW&T/DES/ TCC/MetCom/ SMECO	N
ED-2.2.2	Continue to Explore Use of Federal Grant Programs	Ongoing	DPW&T/DED/ TCC	N
ED-2.3.1	Economic Impact Assessments	Medium Term	DED	N
ED-3.1.1	Continue to Develop Partnerships to Support Employment Opportunities for Vulnerable Populations	Ongoing	DED/TCC SoMD/CDC	Y
ED-3.1.2	Continue to Support Programs That Connect Students with Employment Opportunities	Ongoing	DED/TPP/TCC/S MCPS/ SMNA/SMCM/ CSM/UMD/ SMCHD	Y

Number	Action	Timeframe for Initiation	Agency	Adequate Resources
ED-3.1.3	Continue to Support Technical Education Opportunities in the Trades	Ongoing	DED/SMCM/ CSM/SMCPS/ UMD	Y
ED-3.4.1	Continue to Attract Businesses Supporting Recreation and a High Quality of Life	Ongoing	DED/VSMMD	Y
ED-3.4.2	Continue to Encourage Public Art and Art Installations	Ongoing	SMC Arts Council	N
ED-4.1.1	Continue to Streamline the Development Approval Process	Ongoing	DED/LUGM	Y
ED-4.1.2	Continue to Support Co-Working Spaces	Short Term	DED	N
ED-4.3.1	Update The CZO to Allow Appropriate Small Business Ventures in Agricultural Areas	Medium Term	DED/LUGM	Y
ED-5.1.1	Continue to Promote Heritage Education	Long Term	DED/R&P/SOM D National Heritage Area/TCC	N
ED-5.1.2	Continue to Regularly Update and Maintain an Inventory of Natural, Recreational, Historical, and Cultural Resources in the County	Ongoing	R&P/VSMMD/ SOMD National Heritage Area/TCC	Y
ED-5.1.3	Continue to Update Existing and Add Additional Signage to Promote, Link, and Interpret Sites	Ongoing	DPW&T/R&P/V SMMD	N
ED-5.1.4	Continue to Document the Significance of Structures Slated for Demolition	Medium Term	DED/LUGM	N
ED-5.1.5	Continue to Document Local Cultural Traditions Through the St. Mary's County Historical Society	Short Term	R&P Museum Division/ St. Mary's County Historical Society	Y
ED-5.1.6	Continue to Promote the Designation of and Investment in Historical Sites, Historic Districts, and Heritage Resources	Short Term	DED/LUGM/ VSMMD	N
ED-5.1.7	Continue to Provide Local Tax Incentives for the Preservation of Important Historical and Cultural Resources	Medium Term	DED/LUGM	N
ED-5.1.8	Continue to Inform Landowners of the Resources Available for Conservation and Adaptive Reuse of Significant Historic Structures	Short Term	DED/LUGM	N

Number	Action	Timeframe for Initiation	Agency	Adequate Resources
ED-5.1.9	Support a New Interpretive Center/Visitors Center	Short Term	DED/VSMMD	N
ED-5.2.1	Continue to Utilize the Historic Landmarks and Districts Overlay in the CZO and Protect Other Important Areas	Short Term	DED/LUGM	N
ED-5.2.2	Require Identification and Documentation of Archaeological Sites on a Property Prior to Any Disturbance of the Site	Short Term	LUGM	Y
ED-5.2.3	Encourage Compatible Development in Designated Historic Districts	Short Term	DED/LUGM	N
ED-5.2.4	Promote Adaptive Reuse of Historic Structures	Short Term	DED/LUGM	N
ED-5.2.5	Continue to Ensure Implementation of Ordinance Requirements for Protection of Designated Scenic and Historic Corridors	Short Term	LUGM	Y
ED-5.3.1	Encourage Small Businesses Near Historic Sites and Rural Crossroads	Short Term	DED/LUGM	Y
ED-5.5.1	Continue to Maintain and Improve County-Owned Parks	Short Term	R&P	Y
ED-5.5.2	Continue to Support New Parks and Parks Improvements Efforts for State and National Parks, Monuments, and Trail Networks	Short Term	R&P/DED	N
ED-5.6.1	Continue to Support Leonardtown in Developing Contextually Appropriate Mixed-Use Areas	Ongoing	DED	Y
ED-5.7.1	Continue to Promote Destination-Based Transportation Partnerships	Ongoing	DED/DPW&T/VSMMD	N
ED-6.1.1	Continue to Expand Farm-to-School Purchasing Program	Ongoing	SMCPS/DED	N
ED-6.3.1	Continue to Streamline the Development Review Process for Agricultural Businesses	Ongoing	DED/LUGM/ MDA/ SMCHD	N
ED-6.3.2	Continue to Update Agricultural Uses and Definitions	Ongoing	DED/LUGM	N
ED-6.6.1	Continue to Encourage Landowner and County Participation in Forest and Woodlands Programs	Ongoing	DED/DPW&T	N
ED-7.1.1	Encourage the Conversion of Residential Mining Sites to Recreational Areas	Long Term	DED/DPW&T	N

Number	Action	Timeframe for Initiation	Agency	Adequate Resources
ED-8.1.1	Continue to Support Local, State, and Regional Efforts to Effectively Manage and Regulate Aquaculture Activities for Continued Productivity	Ongoing	DED/MDA/ DNR	N
ED-8.1.2	Continue to Provide Infrastructure and Support Related Uses for a More Robust Fishing Industry	Medium Term	DED	Y
Environment and Natural Resources				
ENV-1.1.1	Continue to Map Natural Landscape Features and Sensitive Areas	Ongoing	LUGM/IT	Y
ENV-1.1.2	Map Green Infrastructure	Short Term	LUGM/IT/ DPW&T	Y
ENV-1.2.1	Continue to Implement the Maryland Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Program Policy	Ongoing	LUGM	Y
ENV-1.2.2	Maintain Riparian Buffers in Accordance with State Standards	Short Term	LUGM	Y
ENV-1.2.3	Continue to Protect Habitats that Support Species	Ongoing	LUGM/DED	N
ENV-1.3.1	Continue to Apply the Forest Conservation Act	Ongoing	LUGM	Y
ENV-1.4.1	Continue to Require Protective Native Buffers	Long Term	LUGM	Y
ENV-1.4.2	Maintain Natural Hydrology	Long Term	LUGM/ DPW&T/SCD	Y
ENV-1.4.3	Strengthen and Restore Riparian, Wetland, and Aquatic Habitats	Long Term	LUGM/ DPW&T/SCD	N
ENV-1.4.4	Restore Degraded Streams, River Sanctuaries, Buffers, and Aquatic Vegetation	Long Term	LUGM/ DPW&T/SCD	N
ENV-1.4.5	Prohibit Alteration of Wetlands and Sensitive Aquatic Areas	Long Term	LUGM/ DPW&T	Y
ENV-1.4.6	Continue to Protect Submerged Aquatic Habitats	Ongoing	LUGM/ DPW&T	Y
ENV-1.4.7	Prioritize Native Buffers in Headwaters, Wetlands, and Tidal Transition Zones	Long Term	LUGM/ DPW&T	Y
ENV-1.5.1	Continue Compliance with Natural Resource Protection Policies	Ongoing	LUGM/ DPW&T	Y
ENV-1.5.2	Continue to Require the Use Environmental Site Design	Ongoing	LUGM/ DPW&T	Y

Number	Action	Timeframe for Initiation	Agency	Adequate Resources
ENV-1.5.3	Continue to Minimize Disturbance in Development	Ongoing	LUGM/ DPW&T	Y
ENV-1.5.4	Continue Limit Development in the Critical Area Buffer	Ongoing	LUGM/ DPW&T	Y
ENV-2.1.1	Continue to Limit Growth in Rural Areas	Ongoing	LUGM	Y
ENV-2.1.2	Continue to Promote Transferrable Development Rights (TDR) Program	Ongoing	LUGM/DED	Y
ENV-2.1.3	Continue to Expand Farmland Preservation Funding and Programs	Ongoing	DED	N
ENV-2.1.4	Meet the Priority Preservation Area Target	Long Term	DED/LUGM	N
ENV-2.2.1	Continue to Create Local Incentives	Ongoing	DED/LUGM	N
ENV-2.2.2	Continue to Promote Best Management Practices (BMPs)	Long Term	LUGM/DED	Y
ENV-2.2.3	Continue to Promote Participation in Conservation Funding Programs	Short Term	DED/LUGM/ SCD	Y
ENV-2.2.4	Advocate for and Ensure the Protection of Riparian Rights	Ongoing	LUGM/DED	N
ENV-2.3.1	Continue to Expand Participation in Preservation Programs	Ongoing	DED/LUGM	N
ENV-2.3.2	Maximize Available Easement Funding	Long Term	DED	N
ENV-2.3.3	Target Priority Lands	Long Term	DED	N
ENV-2.3.4	Align Investments with Federal, State and Land Trust Priorities	Long Term	DED	N
ENV-3.1.1	Conserve Green Infrastructure in Growth Areas	Long Term	LUGM/ DPW&T/IT	N
ENV-3.1.2	Map and Close Green Infrastructure "Gaps" with Multi-Benefit Projects	Long Term	LUGM/ DPW&T/IT	N
ENV-3.2.1	Continue to Preserve Scenic and Historic Roadway Corridors	Ongoing	LUGM/ DPW&T/IT	Y
ENV-3.2.2	Preserve and Enhance Roadside Forests and Woodland Buffers	Long Term	LUGM/ DPW&T	N
ENV-3.3.1	Implement Greenway and Open Space Projects	Long Term	LUGM/DED	N
ENV-3.3.2	Continue to Demonstrate and Promote Resource Protection Through Education	Long Term	DED/LUGM	N
ENV-3.3.3	Integrate Greenways into Development Design	Long Term	LUGM/ DPW&T/IT	N

Number	Action	Timeframe for Initiation	Agency	Adequate Resources
ENV-3.3.4	Explore the Feasibility of an Urban Tree Program	Medium Term	LUGM/DED/ DPW&T	N
ENV-3.4.1	Require Mineral Extraction Operations to Implement Best Management Practices (BMPs)	Long Term	MDE/SCD	Y
ENV-3.4.2	Maintain Land Use Policies that Preserve Access to Mineral Resource Areas	Long Term	LUGM	Y
ENV-3.4.3	Continue to Require Reclamation and Site Stabilization Plans for All Extraction Activities	Long Term	LUGM/SCD	Y
ENV-3.5.1	Require Reclamation for All Decommissioned Solar Projects	Medium Term	LUGM	N
ENV-4.1.1	Implement Tributary Strategies	Long Term	LUGM/ DPW&T/SCD	N
ENV-4.1.2	Continue Coordination with State and Federal Partners	Ongoing	LUGM/ SMCHD/ DPW&T/SCD	N
ENV-4.1.3	Track and Adapt Implementation	Long Term	LUGM/ DPW&T	N
ENV-4.2.1	Continue to Work with the State to Protect Aquifer Levels and Recharge Areas	Long Term	SMCHD/ MetCom/DES	Y
ENV-4.2.2	Monitor Groundwater Withdrawals	Long Term	MDE/ MetCom	N
ENV-4.2.3	Promote Water Conservation, Reuse, and Risk Mitigation	Medium Term	LUGM/SCD/ SMCHD	N
ENV-4.2.4	Continue to Protect Surface Water and Impoundment Sites	Ongoing	SCD	N
ENV-4.2.5	Continue to Promote Diversity of Water Supply	Ongoing	MetCom/ SMCHD/ LUGM/DES/ R&P	N
ENV-4.2.6	Continue to Conduct a Feasibility Study for Beneficial Reuse of Treated Effluent	Ongoing	MetCom/ SMCHD/ LUGM/DES/ R&P	N
ENV-4.3.1	Continue to Enforce Zoning, Permits, and Resource Protections	Ongoing	LUGM/ DPW&T	Y
ENV-4.3.2	Continue to Provide Incentives for Stewardship	Ongoing	SCD	Y
ENV-4.4.1	Continue to Control Runoff and Monitor Watershed Pollution	Ongoing	SCD	N

Number	Action	Timeframe for Initiation	Agency	Adequate Resources
ENV-4.4.2	Continue to Address Environmental Impacts from Sewage and Septic Systems	Ongoing	SMCHD	Y
ENV-4.4.3	Continue to Coordinate Nutrient Reduction and SAV Restoration	Ongoing	SCD	Y
ENV-4.4.4	Enforce Adaptive Management	Long Term	LUGM/ SMCHD	N
ENV-4.5.1	Establish Shoreline Work Guidelines	Short Term	LUGM/SCD	Y
ENV-4.5.2	Update Standards for Marinas and Water-Dependent Facilities	Short Term	LUGM/CAC	N
ENV-4.5.3	Continue to Expand Public Water Access	Ongoing	R&P	N
	Transportation			
TR-1.2.1	Continue to Maintain a Program for Sidewalk Repair and Obstruction Removal	Ongoing	DPW&T	Y
TR-1.4.1	Initiate Joint Planning Framework with Leonardtown to Explore Countywide Pedestrian and Bikeways Master Plan	Long Term	R&P/ Leonardtown/C-SMMPO	N
TR-2.2.1	Continue to Explore the Inclusion of Bicycle Lanes and Trails in the Development Districts	Ongoing	R&P/DPW&T/ C-SMMPO/ LUGM	N
TR-2.3.1	Adopt Official Design Standards for Bicycle Facilities	Medium Term	DPW&T	Y
TR-2.3.2	Provide Secure and Convenient Bicycle Parking and Storage at Key Locations	Medium Term	DPW&T	N
TR-2.3.3	Continue to Work with St. Mary's Transit System to Equip All Transit Vehicles with Bicycle Accommodations	Ongoing	DPW&T	Y
TR-3.1.1	Update Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance (CZO) and Subdivision Regulations to Require Connectivity	Short Term	LUGM/ DPW&T	Y
TR-3.3.1	Continue to Encourage Private and Public Roads that Slow Traffic Speeds	Ongoing	DPW&T	Y
TR-3.4.1	Continue to Evaluate and Support Regional Transportation Opportunities	Ongoing	DED/DPW&T	Y
TR-4.1.1	Continue to Leverage a Diverse Portfolio of Funding Sources	Ongoing	DPW&T/R&P	N
TR-5.2.1	Continue to Incorporate Trails into the Development of New Parks and Community Projects	Ongoing	DPW&T/R&P	Y

Number	Action	Timeframe for Initiation	Agency	Adequate Resources
TR-5.2.2	Continue to Require Developers to Either Construct or Pay a Fee-in-Lieu to Support the Three Notch Trail	Ongoing	LUGM/ DPW&T	N
TR-5.2.3	Continue to Consider Connections to Community Points of Interest in Route Planning	Ongoing	DPW&T/R&P	Y
TR-6.3.1	Complete FDR Boulevard Planning Study with the Metropolitan Planning Organization	Ongoing	C-SMMPO/ DPW&T	Y
TR-6.3.2	Continue to Promote Well-Connected Roadway Networks to Support Planned Growth	Ongoing	DPW&T	Y
TR-6.3.3	Continue to Work with Maryland State Highway Administration to Manage State Roads Access Points for Development	Ongoing	DPW&T	Y
TR-6.3.4	Continue to Prepare and Implement Specific Highway Access Policies for Key Corridors	Ongoing	DPW&T	Y
TR-6.3.5	Commission a Comprehensive Corridor and Land Use Study for Three Notch Road and FDR Boulevard	Ongoing	C-SMMPO/ DPW&T	N
TR-6.3.6	Collaborate with the Town of Leonardtown and the C-SMMPO to Advocate for Roadway Enhancements	Medium Term	DPW&T/ Leonardtown/C-SMMPO/ LUGM	N
TR-7.1.1	Prioritize Maintenance of Existing County Roadway Network and Associated Drainage Assets Including a Pavement Management Program Consistent with Sound Asset-Management Practices	Long Term	DPW&T	N
TR-7.3.1	Continue to Identify Future Congestion and Determine Roadway Improvements	Short Term	DPW&T	N
TR-7.3.2	Develop and Implement Transportation Plans and Standards that Support Community Goals	Ongoing	DPW&T	N
TR-7.3.3	Continue to Coordinate New Roadway Development with Leonardtown	Ongoing	DPW&T/ Leonardtown	Y
TR-8.3.1	Continue to Initiate Improvements to Enhance Safety and Reduce Conflict Locations	Ongoing	DPW&T	Y
TR-8.3.2	Continue to Identify and Evaluate Conflicts Between Horse-and-Buggy Traffic and Motorized Vehicles	Ongoing	DPW&T	N

Number	Action	Timeframe for Initiation	Agency	Adequate Resources
TR-8.3.3	Continue to Develop a List of Recommended Upgrades and Downgrades in the Road Classification System	Ongoing	DPW&T	Y
TR-9.1.1	Continue to Require Joint-Use Access Driveways and Driveway Consolidation	Ongoing	LUGM/ DPW&T	Y
TR-9.1.2	Continue to Minimize Access Points to Major Roads	Ongoing	DPW&T/SHA	Y
TR-10.3.1	Continue to Address Inadequate Storm Conveyance Systems and Bridge Structures	Ongoing	DPW&T	Y
TR-10.3.2	Continue to Develop Transportation Plans that Support Resource Protection and Corridor Preservation	Ongoing	DPW&T	Y
TR-10.3.3	Continue to Utilize Mitigation Efforts to Minimize Damage to Properties	Ongoing	LUGM/ DPW&T	Y
TR-11.3.1	Continue to Meet or Exceed Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) Performance Standards	Ongoing	DPW&T	Y
TR-11.3.2	Maintain a Needs Assessment and Evaluation of Funding Sources	Ongoing	DPW&T	Y
TR-12.1.1	Continue to Strategically Expand Transit Services to Reach Regional and Metropolitan Destinations	Ongoing	DPW&T	N
TR-12.3.1	Continue to Promote Public Transit Systems through Local and Regional Collaboration	Ongoing	DPW&T	Y
TR-12.3.2	Continue to Actively Encourage Transit Use for Persons Without Motor Vehicles	Ongoing	DPW&T	Y
TR-13.3.1	Continue to Seek Funding to Improve Transit Access to Vulnerable Communities	Ongoing	DPW&T	N
TR-13.3.2	Continue to Identify the Evolving Needs of Public Ridership	Ongoing	DPW&T	Y
TR-13.3.3	Continue to Support and Promote Public Transportation Options to Address Deficits in Targeted Populations	Ongoing	DPW&T	N
TR-15.3.1	Continue to Promote Transit Benefits to Attract New Riders	Ongoing	DPW&T	Y
TR-15.3.2	Explore the Development of a Plan to Integrate Transit Opportunities with Tourism Goals	Long Term	DPW&T/DED/VSMMD/ C-SMMPO	Y
TR-16.1.1	Continue to Ensure the Permitting Process Explicitly Reviews for Obstructions	Ongoing	DPW&T/FAA/ LUGM	Y

Number	Action	Timeframe for Initiation	Agency	Adequate Resources
TR-17.2.1	Continue to Utilize the Airport Environs to Guide Zoning and Permitting	Ongoing	LUGM	Y
TR-17.2.2	Continue to Continue to Support Funding Allocations for the Airport's Expansion	Ongoing	DPW&T	N
TR-18.2.1	Continue to Review and Evaluate AICUZ Recommendations for Adoption	Ongoing	LUGM/IT	N
TR-18.2.2	Continue to Periodically Review Letter of Authorization (LoA)	Ongoing	DPW&T/CAO	Y
TR-19.3.1	Continue to Market the Airport's Capabilities	Ongoing	DPW&T/DED	Y
TR-19.3.2	Continue to Protect the Airport's Operational Capacity	Ongoing	DPW&T	Y
TR-20.2.1	Continue to Support and Apply for the Federal Airport Capital Improvement Program (ACIP)	Ongoing	DPW&T	Y
TR-20.2.2	Continue to Plan for Continued Airport Expansion	Ongoing	DPW&T/ LUGM	Y
TR-20.2.3	Continue to Implement Projects Funded by ACIP	Ongoing	DPW&T	Y
Public Facilities and Infrastructure Investment				
PFI-1.1.1	Continue to Provide Central Water in Growth Areas and Upgrade Community Systems	Ongoing	LUGM/ MetCom	Y
PFI-1.1.2	Continue to Provide Planned Sewer Service and Design to County Standards	Ongoing	LUGM/ MetCom	Y
PFI-1.1.3	Continue to Update CWSP to Reflect Actual Service Areas, Support Development in Growth Areas, and Identify Areas of Concern	Ongoing	LUGM/IT	N
PFI-1.1.4	Update the Adequate Public Facilities Provisions of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance (CZO)	Short Term	LUGM	Y
PFI-1.1.5	Continue to Address Problem Sewer Areas and Problem Water Areas	Ongoing	MetCom/ SMCHD/ LUGM/CAO	N
PFI-1.2.1	Implement Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrades and Septic Mitigation	Long Term	MetCom/ SMCHD	N
PFI-1.3.1	Continue to Implement the MS4 Program and Stormwater Best Practices	Ongoing	DPW&T/ LUGM	Y
PFI-1.4.1	Continue to Manage Groundwater and Private Community Water Systems	Ongoing	SMCHD/MDE	Y

Number	Action	Timeframe for Initiation	Agency	Adequate Resources
PFI-3.1.1	Continue to Implement Hazard Mitigation Policies	Ongoing	LUGM/DES/IT	N
PFI-3.1.2	Continue to Provide Development Data and Growth Trends to Sheriff's Office	Ongoing	LUGM/DED	Y
PFI-3.1.3	Explore Updates to the Essential Public Facilities in CZO	Short Term	LUGM/ DPW&T/DES/ SMCPS	N
PFI-3.2.1	Continue to Invest in Water Tanks for Fire Protection	Ongoing	DES/DPW&T	N
PFI-4.2.1	Continue to Provide Efficient Electric Power and Communications and Support Telecommuting Infrastructure	Ongoing	DPW&T/IT	N
PFI-4.2.2	Continue to Foster Expanded Availability of High-Speed Internet Service	Ongoing	IT	N
PFI-6.1.1	Expand a County-Wide System of Recreation Facilities in and Near Growth Areas	Long Term	R&P	N
PFI-6.1.2	Continue to Provide Additional Fields, Court Facilities, and Shared-Use Trails	Ongoing	R&P	N
PFI-6.2.1	Continue to Expand Recreation on the Water and at Waterfront Sites	Medium Term	R&P	Y
PFI-6.2.2	Build Additional Water-Access Facilities	Long Term	R&P	N
PFI-6.2.3	Evaluate Myrtle Point Park for Public Access to the Patuxent River	Short Term	R&P	Y
PFI-7.1.1	Continue to Assist St. Mary's County Public Schools (SMCPS) in the Preparation of the Educational Facilities Master Plan	Ongoing	LUGM	Y
PFI-7.1.2	Continue to Recognize and Support a Full-Spectrum Educational System	Ongoing	SMCPS/ UMD/SMCM/ CSM/DPW&T	N
Public Health & Community Services				
PH-1.1.1	Continue to Coordinate a Comprehensive Health and Public Health System	Ongoing	SMCHD	N
PH-1.1.2	Continue to Assess Health Care and Public Health Capacity and Address Gaps	Ongoing	SMCHD	N
PH-1.1.3	Continue to Convene the Local Board of Health and Provide Regular Health System Briefings	Ongoing	SMCHD/ CSMC	Y

Number	Action	Timeframe for Initiation	Agency	Adequate Resources
PH-1.1.4	Continue to Align County Health Actions with the CHIP	Ongoing	SMCHD	N
PH-1.1.5	Continue to Sustain Core Behavioral Health and Wellness Services	Ongoing	SMCHD	N
PH-1.1.6	Continue to Address the Health Needs of Veterans	Ongoing	SMCHD	Y
PH-1.1.7	Continue to Advance Early Intervention and Prevention Programs	Ongoing	SMCHD	N
PH-1.1.8	Continue to Strengthen and Sustain Health and Wellness Workforce	Ongoing	SMCHD/DED	N
PH-1.1.9	Continue to Advance Technology and Data Modernization to Support Health and Wellness Systems	Ongoing	SMCHD/IT	N
PH-1.2.1	Consider Health Impacts as Part of Development Review Process	Short Term	LUGM/ SMCHD	Y
PH-1.2.2	Update the CZO to Consider Community Health	Short Term	LUGM/ SMCHD	Y
PH-1.2.3	Establish Level of Service Standards for Parks, Green Spaces, and Community Hubs	Long Term	R&P/DPW&T	N
PH-1.2.4	Continue to Support Efforts of Recreation and Parks to Promote Health and Safe Physical Activities	Ongoing	R&P/SMCHD	Y
PH-1.2.5	Continue to Promote and Implement Disaster and Emergency Plans	Ongoing	DES	Y
PH-1.2.6	Continue to Support Environmental Health Projects and Programs	Ongoing	SMCHD	Y
PH-1.2.7	Continue to Include Law Enforcement in Public Health Strategies	Ongoing	SMCHD/ SMSCO	Y
PH-1.3.1	Continue to Support and Administer Federal and State Financial Support Programs	Ongoing	SMCHD/AHS	N
PH-1.3.2	Continue to Provide Support for Organizations, Services, and Facilities Providing Temporary or Transitional Housing	Ongoing	AHS/SMCHD	N
PH-1.3.3	Continue to Partner with Social Service Providers on Programs to Increase Food Access and Security	Ongoing	DSS/AHS/ SMCHD	N
PH-1.3.4	Continue to Provide Continued Support for and Expand Local Farmers' Markets	Ongoing	DED	Y

Number	Action	Timeframe for Initiation	Agency	Adequate Resources
PH-1.4.1	Achieve and Maintain Adequate Emergency Services and Law Enforcement Staffing Levels	Short Term	DES	Y
PH-1.4.2	Achieve and Maintain Rapid Response Times	Short Term	DES	Y
PH-1.4.3	Continue to Ensure Adequate Public Safety Coverage Across the County	Long Term	DES	N
PH-1.4.4	Continue to Develop and Monitor Key Performance Indicators for Law Enforcement	Ongoing	SMCSO	Y
PH-1.4.5	Examine Opportunities to Utilize Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design	Long Term	LUGM/R&P/ SMCSO/ DPW&T/IT	N
PH-1.4.6	Continue Support of Fire Suppression and Emergency Services	Ongoing	DES	Y
PH-1.4.7	Continue to Ensure Adequate Water Supplies to Provide Fire Protection	Long Term	MetCom/ MDE/SMCHD	N
PH-1.4.8	Support Adequate Facilities, Servies, and Programs for Animal Control	Long Term	DES	N
PH-1.4.9	Continue to Promote Safer Communities by Expanding Access to Education, Employment, Housing, and Other Social Services	Ongoing	SMCHD/ DSS/SMCPS/ DPW&T	N
PH-1.4.10	Continue to Build Public Trust in Law Enforcement Through Community Engagement	Ongoing	SMCSO	Y
PH-1.4.11	Continue to Invest in Technology Infrastructure for Law Enforcement, Emergency Services, and Related Public Services	Ongoing	DES/IT/ SMCSO	N
PH-2.2.1	Continue to Expand Services and Activities for Aging Populations	Ongoing	AHS/SMCHD	Y
PH-2.3.1	Promote Attainable Housing and Home Maintenance Programs That Meet the Needs of Older Adults	Long Term	AHS/SMCHD	N
Natural Hazards, Vulnerability, & Resiliency				
HAZ-1.1.1	Continue to Limit Development in the Floodplain	Ongoing	LUGM/ DPW&T	Y
HAZ-1.1.2	Continue to Preserve Steep Slopes	Ongoing	LUGM/ DPW&T	Y
HAZ-1.1.3	Continue to Manage Erosion-Prone Soils	Ongoing	LUGM/ DPW&T/SCD	Y

Number	Action	Timeframe for Initiation	Agency	Adequate Resources
HAZ-1.1.4	Continue to Facilitate Natural Land Conversion	Ongoing	LUGM/ DPW&T/SCD	Y
HAZ-1.2.1	Continue to Enforce Floodplain Regulations	Ongoing	LUGM/ DPW&T	Y
HAZ-1.2.2	Continue to Maintain Eligibility for Insurance Programs	Ongoing	LUGM/DES	Y
HAZ-1.2.3	Explore a Countywide "No Adverse Impact" Program	Medium Term	LUGM/ DPW&T/DES/ IT	N
HAZ-1.2.4	On-Farm Flood Mitigation	Long Term	SCD	Y
HAZ-1.3.1	Continue to Require Resilient Building	Ongoing	LUGM/DES/ IT	N
HAZ-1.3.2	Integrate Risk Assessment	Long Term	LUGM/ DPW&T/DES/ IT	N
HAZ-1.3.3	Incorporate the Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan	Short Term	DES	Y
HAZ-1.3.4	Prioritize High-Risk Mitigation Projects	Medium Term	DES	Y
HAZ-1.3.5	Incorporate the Patuxent Military Installation Resilience Review	Long Term	LUGM/DES/ DPW&T/IT	N
HAZ-1.4.1	Continue to Map Vulnerable Lands	Long Term	IT/DPW&T	N
HAZ-1.4.2	Continue to Maintain Risk Assessment Maps	Ongoing	LUGM/DES/ IT	Y
HAZ-1.4.3	Expand Public Education on Resilience	Short Term	DES	Y
HAZ-1.4.4	Identify and Dedicate Mobility and Readiness Corridors	Ongoing	DES/DPW&T/ LUGM/SHA	N
HAZ-1.4.5	Continue to Establish a Strategic Highway Network (STRAHNET)	Ongoing	DES/DPW&T/ LUGM/SHA	N
HAZ-1.5.1	Continue to Promote Living Shorelines	Ongoing	R&P/DPW&T/ LUGM/SCD	Y
HAZ-1.5.2	Continue to Allow Conditional Shoreline Protection Measures	Ongoing	DPW&T/ LUGM/SCD	Y
HAZ-1.5.3	Identify Shorelines in Need of Enhancement	Medium Term	LUGM/ DPW&T/ SCD/MDE	N
HAZ-1.5.4	Continue to Advocate for Local Organizations to Strengthen Stewardship of Marine Resources	Ongoing	DED	N
HAZ-2.1.1	Incorporate Sea Level Rise Projections	Long Term	LUGM/SCD/ MDE/IT	N

Number	Action	Timeframe for Initiation	Agency	Adequate Resources
HAZ-2.1.2	Continue to Conserve Upland Migration Corridors	Ongoing	LUGM/SCD/ MDE/DED	N
HAZ-2.1.3	Support Adaptive Retreat Strategies	Long Term	LUGM/ SCD/ MDE/ DPW&T/IT/ DED/R&P/ SMCPS/DES	N
HAZ-2.1.4	Saltwater-Intrusion Hotspot Plan	Long Term	SCD/DED/IT/ MDE	N
HAZ-2.2.1	Continue to Prioritize Natural Buffers	Ongoing	LUGM/SCD/ MDE	Y
HAZ-2.2.2	Continue to Enforce Expanded Buffers in Development Plans	Ongoing	LUGM	Y
HAZ-2.2.3	Continue to Coordinate Wetland Protection	Ongoing	LUGM	Y
HAZ-2.2.4	Continue to Enforce Agricultural Riparian Buffers	Ongoing	SCD	Y
HAZ-2.3.1	Continue to Expand Public Outreach	Ongoing	DES	Y
HAZ-2.3.2	Continue to Partner on Retrofits	Ongoing	LUGM/DES/ DPW&T/IT	Y
HAZ-2.3.3	Continue to Encourage Household Preparedness	Ongoing	DES/SMCHD	Y
HAZ-2.3.4	Continue to Promote Producer Education	Long Term	LUGM/SCD/ DED	N
HAZ-2.3.5	Support Adaptation of Historic and Archeological Resources at Risk	Long Term	LUGM/DED	N
HAZ-2.4.1	Continue to Assess Risk and Vulnerability for Siting and Design	Ongoing	DPW&T/R&P	Y
HAZ-2.4.2	Reduce Repetitive Loss	Long Term	DES	Y
HAZ-2.4.3	Develop Shared Infrastructure and Energy Resilience	Medium Term	DPW&T/R&P	N
HAZ-2.4.4	Utilize Shoreline Condition Assessments	Long Term	DPW&T	N
HAZ-2.4.5	Continue to Integrate Hazard Mitigation and Nuisance Flood Plans	Ongoing	LUGM/DES/ DPW&T	Y
HAZ-2.4.6	Continue to Protect Rural Roads and Access	Ongoing	DPW&T	Y
HAZ-2.4.7	Explore Projects and Programs that Support Energy Resilience	Long Term	SMECO	N

Development Regulations

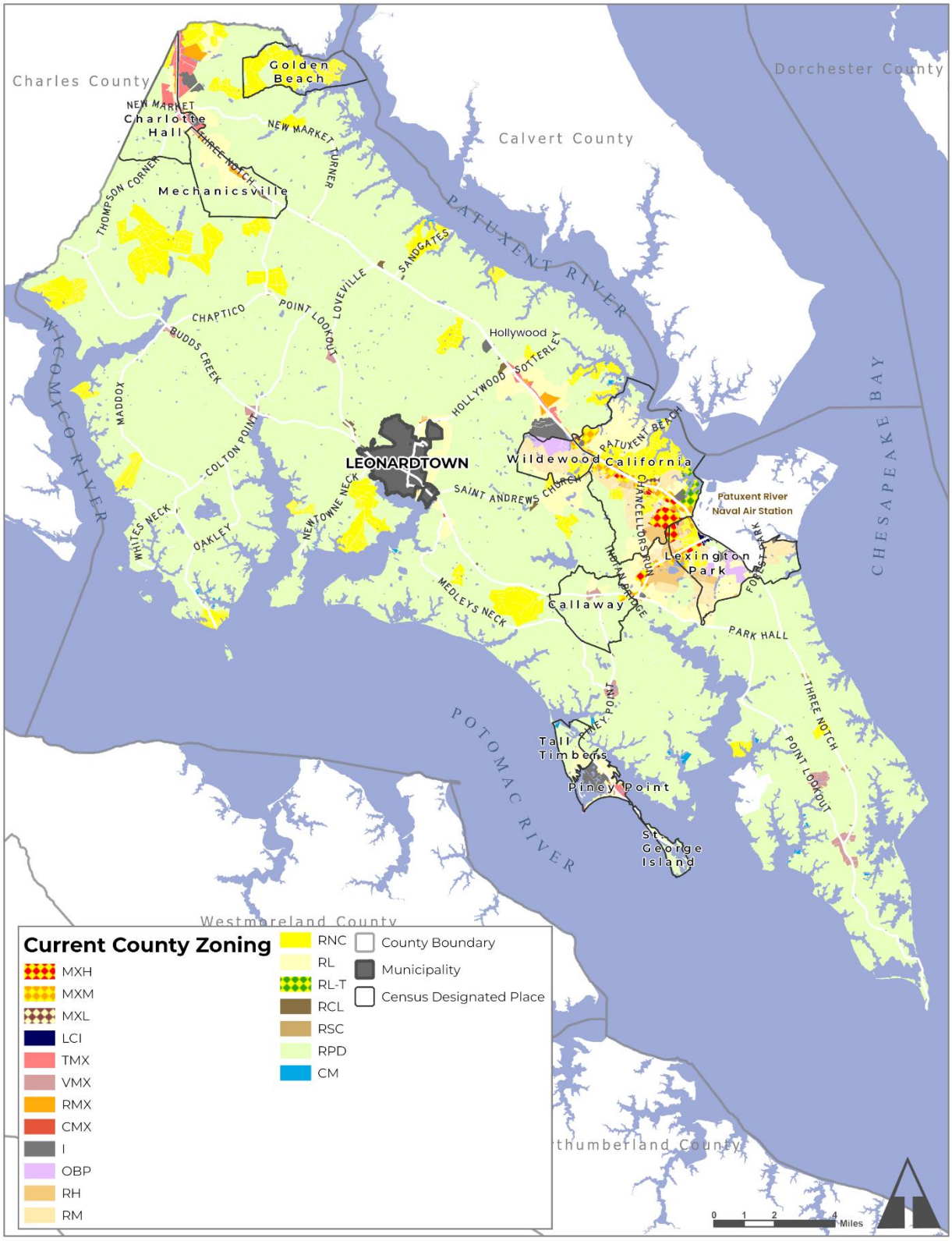
Zoning ordinances regulate land use by dividing a jurisdiction into districts that specify permitted uses, development density, building standards, and other requirements. St. Mary's County's Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance establishes these controls to guide growth patterns, protect community character, and ensure health and safety objectives are upheld with new developments. Within each zoning district, certain uses are permitted by right, while others require special approval or are prohibited entirely.

Successful implementation of St. Mary's 2050 will require updates to the County's development regulations to ensure consistency between the Comprehensive Plan's vision and the zoning ordinance. As the Plan advances new policies related to housing diversity, sustainable growth, infrastructure coordination, and environmental protection, corresponding amendments to zoning standards, permitted uses, and development review procedures will be necessary.



Barns at New Market

Figure 6: County Zoning Map



Appendix A: Glossary

Active recreation

Recreational activities that require the use of facilities, courses, fields, or equipment. Some examples of active recreation include, but are not limited to, baseball, football, soccer, golf, hockey, tennis, skateboarding, or using exercise equipment or a playground.

Accident Potential Zones (APZs)

Areas created to protect persons living and working in or property in the vicinity of airports, landing strips.

Aeropark Innovation District

The area in and around the St. Mary's County Regional Airport. This Innovation District is a place where large institutions and businesses cluster with start-ups and incubators to drive innovation, accelerate product development, and assist with commercialization of new technology. For more information, see the St. Mary's County Innovation District Master Plan.

Affordable housing

Housing deemed affordable to residents earning at or below a set income level, such as the HUD designation that refers to 70% of the Area Median Income (AMI) as adjusted for a specific region and household size. Generally, housing is considered affordable when the occupants spend no more than 30% of their gross income on housing costs (rent/mortgage) and utilities.

Aging in place

Residents staying in their homes as they get older, often with updates to the home's physical accessibility along with in-home care services and similar support.

Agritourism

Events and activities conducted on a working farm or vineyard offered to the public or to invited groups for the purpose of recreation, education, or active involvement in the farm operation. Agritourism includes, but is not limited to, farm tours, hayrides, corn mazes, petting zoos, pick-your-own, classes related to agricultural products or skills, and picnic and party facilities offered in conjunction with such activities.

Aquaculture

The cultivation and harvesting of aquatic animals and plants in a recirculating environment to produce whole fish and shellfish that are distributed to retailers, restaurants, and consumers.

Aquifer

The underground layer of water-bearing, permeable rocks, gravel, sand, or silt stores or transmits usable groundwater.

Attainable housing

A wide variety of housing (owner occupied and rental) options that reflect the needs of county residents, including those that struggle to afford market-rate housing without the use of subsidies. This definition is intended to include a broad spectrum of housing, including, but not limited to market-rate housing, missing-middle housing (housing that is compatible in scale and form with single-family homes but may include pocket neighborhoods, duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, etc.), workforce housing and affordable housing (as defined in this plan), and low-income housing (as defined by state law, which may be amended from time to time).

Co-working space

Shared, flexible work environments where individuals and businesses from different companies work alongside each other, sharing resources such as desks, Wi-Fi, meeting rooms, and kitchens.

Conservation easement

A legal agreement applied to a specific parcel of land between a landowner and a land trust or government agency that permanently limits the uses or general densities of development allowed on the land in order to protect natural areas from development disturbance.

Critical Area

The Critical Area includes all land within 1,000 feet of Maryland's tidal waters and tidal wetlands, it also includes the waters of the Chesapeake Bay, the Atlantic Coastal Bays, their tidal tributaries, and the lands underneath these tidal areas.

Desalination

The process of removing dissolved salts and minerals from seawater or brackish groundwater to produce fresh, potable water suitable for human consumption, irrigation, or industrial use.

Development Districts

Primary growth centers that are urban in pattern and form; designated for intensive residential, commercial, and industrial development; and are the priority locations for community facilities, services, and amenities, as described in the Growth Management chapter.

Diversification

Broadening an economy beyond a narrow range of sectors into a wider, more varied range of industries and services. Diversification reduces reliance on a single income source, enhancing resilience against market shocks and fostering sustainable, long-term growth.

Economic development

Programs, policies, and activities that seek to improve the economic well-being and quality of life of a community by creating and retaining jobs, growing incomes, enhancing economic mobility, and providing a stable tax base.

Emerging families

Families with young children or families who would like to have young children but cannot due to financial circumstances.

End-of-trip support

Facilities that make active transportation, such as bicycling, more practical. Potential facilities include secure bicycle parking, amenities like showers, toilets, and changing rooms, and tools for quick maintenance (like air pumps and hex wrenches).

Environmental stewardship

The responsible management and protection of the natural environment through conservation, sustainable practices, and restoration, ensuring ecological health for present and future generations.

Exurban

A largely residential community located outside of a major city and its suburbs that maintains a connection to the metropolis through jobs and services.

Forest Conservation Act

The Maryland state law that integrates forest protection into land planning and development, ensuring that trees and sensitive natural areas are a foundation for sustainable growth.

Green infrastructure

Used to refer to the value and role of open space and ecosystem services broadly but is now often used in a narrower sense focusing on nature-based approaches to stormwater management.

Green spaces

Designated areas of land, either public or private, that are covered with vegetation such as grass, trees, and shrubs. Examples include parks, gardens, and trails.

Greenways

Corridors of undeveloped land preserved for recreational use or environmental protection.

Growth areas

These areas are identified by the Development Districts, Town Centers, and Village Centers, as described in the Growth Management chapter. Growth Areas will generally be served by centralized water and wastewater infrastructure, and are intended to provide suburban or urban scale housing, commercial, and industrial opportunities.

Hazard mitigation

Any sustained action taken to reduce or eliminate long-term risks to life, property, and the environment from natural or man-made disasters. It involves a proactive, ongoing process of assessing vulnerabilities, and implementing policies or projects to break the cycle of destruction, repair, and repeated damage.

Hydrology

The scientific study of the movement, distribution, and quality of water across Earth, which provides information regarding flood control and water management.

Implementation Matrix

A table that serves as a guide for how to turn a plan into action. Typically includes specific actions, responsible entities, and approximate timelines.

Infill development

The process of building on vacant, bypassed, or underutilized parcels within existing, developed urban areas. Infill is an alternative to expanding into undeveloped land (sprawl).

Infrastructure

The facilities and services necessary for a community to function. This can include utilities (such as water and sewer); transportation systems, like streets and roads; communications, such as broadband and wireless; and public facilities, such as fire stations, libraries, parks, and schools. It can also refer to social infrastructure that support community well-being, like healthcare, community or senior centers, and others.

Land Use Map (LUM)

A visual, geographic representation of the types of land uses appropriate in various parts of St. Mary's County. This map is described in more detail in the Planning Areas Framework section of the Growth Management chapter.

Mixed use

A horizontal or vertical mix of non-residential and residential uses within a common development. The term mixed-use is intended to support flexibility for market-driven development of compatible land uses. It is also intended to create more sustainable forms of development that reduce vehicle miles traveled, support placemaking and walkability, provide needed entertainment and services to residents, and enhance quality of life.

Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Program

The federal program that regulates stormwater runoff from municipal drainage systems.

Multimodal transportation

Transportation that involves different "modes" or types of transportation, including aviation, ferries, vehicles, trains, public transit, bicycles, and pedestrians.

Open space

Land or water that is not intensively developed. Open space can be used for recreation, conservation, scenic beauty, agriculture, or similar uses.

Package plants

A pre-manufactured, modular wastewater treatment system designed for small communities, developments, or industrial sites lacking access to centralized sewer lines.

Passive recreation

Low-intensity, non-competitive outdoor activities that require minimal infrastructure. Examples include walking, hiking, birdwatching, picnicking, and photography.

Planning Area

An area with its own unique designation for growth, as described in the Growth Management chapter.

Public services

The services provided by a local government to the residents and businesses within their jurisdiction. This can include trash and recycling collection, police and fire safety, emergency management, planning and zoning, and other services.

Public transportation

Transportation services provided for the public using specific routes and schedules.

Redevelopment

The process of replacing, remodeling, or reusing existing, often obsolete or underutilized structures and land with new development.

Resiliency

The capacity of communities, ecosystems, and infrastructure to anticipate, absorb, adapt to, and rapidly recover from chronic stresses and acute disasters.

Resiliency Opportunity Areas

Areas which may benefit from increased attention for hazard preparedness by the County and its partners. These areas are identified through use of the Social Vulnerability Index, which uses factors related to socioeconomic status, housing type and transportation, racial and ethnic minority status, and household characteristics to identify areas where a community may have low capacity to prepare for and respond to the stress of hazardous events (both natural disasters, like hurricanes, and human-caused threats, like toxic chemical spills).

Revitalization

A strategic, deliberate process to restore vitality, economic strength, and social value to declining urban areas, neighborhoods, or in architecture to buildings. It involves upgrading infrastructure, rehabilitating buildings, boosting local economics, and improving quality of life through comprehensive, community-supported actions.

Riparian buffers

Areas within a certain distance from streams and other waterways that are left naturally vegetated to reduce runoff that lowers water quality.

Rural character

Land use patterns where open space, natural landscapes, and vegetation predominate over the built environment. It is defined by low-density development, agricultural/forestry land use, and the limitation of urban services like public water and sewer.

Rural Legacy Area

A state-designation region identified for its rich agricultural, forestry, natural, and cultural resources. These areas are targeted for protection via conservation easements to prevent suburban sprawl, to promote resource-based economies, and protect greenbelts.

Rural Legacy Program

A program run by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) that provides funding to preserve large, contiguous tracts of land and to enhance natural resources, agricultural, forestry and environmental protection while supporting a sustainable land base for natural resource-based industries.

Sensitive Areas or Lands

Locations that require special protective regulations due to their high vulnerability to development impacts, ecological, or cultural value. These zones can include 100-year floodplains, steep slopes, wetlands, stream buffers, and habitats of threatened/endangered species.

Smart growth

An overall approach of development and conservation strategies that can help protect public health and natural environments and make communities more attractive, economically stronger, and resilient to climate change.

Social Vulnerability Index

A tool that identifies areas where a community's capacity to prepare for and respond to the stress of hazardous events is low, and areas where such capacity is high.

Sprawl

Rapid, unrestricted, and rapid and unrestricted expansion of housing and commercial development into rural areas. It causes increased traffic, environmental degradation, and inefficient, car-centric, suburban growth.

Sustainability

The integration of environmental, social, and economic goals into development to meet present needs without compromising future generations. It focuses on long-term ecological balance, efficient resource use, and creating resilient communities.

Tidal Transition Zones

Areas where freshwater rivers and tidal influences meet. In these zones, tides modulate river flow and marine water is forced landward, forming a mixing zone.

Town Centers

Secondary growth centers that are urban and pattern and form; designated for moderately intense residential, commercial, and industrial development; and are supported by the provision of community facilities and services, as described in the Growth Management chapter.

Transferrable Development Rights (TDRs)

A program that allows a property owner to separate the right to develop land from the land itself and transfer those rights to another property. Each landowner of a parcel in a sending area ("transferor") has the right to remove all or a portion of the right to develop from the parcel (the "sending parcel"), and to hold, sell, trade, or barter these rights to another person or legal entity ("transferee"). A developer or landowner in a "receiving area" can buy those rights to build at a higher density/intensity than normally permitted. It encourages the protection of farmland and resource protection areas while guiding development toward growth areas.

Village Centers

Tertiary type of growth centers that are intended to serve as the focus for rural community facilities, services, and activities, as described in the Growth Management chapter.

Walkability

A measure of how safe, comfortable, and efficient an area is for pedestrians to navigate, connecting people to daily destinations. It focuses on reducing car dependency through mixed-use development, sidewalks, and close proximity to amenities.

Wastewater treatment plant

Facilities that treat a wide range of wastewater, including industrial and domestic sewage. Wastewater treatment plants operate on a larger scale than other wastewater or sewer options (such as septic tanks and package treatment plants) and can be run by a private wastewater company or public utility.

Workforce housing

Housing that is affordable to households earning 45%-110% of the County's median household income. Workforce housing fills the gap for moderate income earners (such as teachers, nurses, and first responders) who do not qualify for traditional affordable housing programs but still face high housing costs.

Appendix B: Acronyms List

The following acronyms appear in this plan or related planning documents.

Acronym	Meaning
A&HS	Department of Aging and Human Services
ACIP	Airport Capital Improvement Program
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ADU	Accessory Dwelling Unit
AE	Air Environs
AHEC	Southern Maryland Area Health Education Center
AICUZ	Air Installations Compatible Use Zones
AMI	Area Median Income
APF	Adequate Public Facilities
APZs	Accident Potential Zones
BMP	Best Management Practices
BRAC	Base Realignment and Closure
CAC	Critical Area Commission
CAO	County Attorney's Office
CDC	Community Development Corporation
CEDS	Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
CHIP	Community Health Improvement Plan
CIP	Capital Improvement Plan
CLG	Certified Local Government
CoAd	Country Administrator's Office
CPTED	Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design
CRS	Community Rating System
CSM	College of Southern Maryland
CSMC	Commissioners of St. Mary's County
C-SMMPO	Calvert-St. Mary's Metropolitan Planning Organization
CM	Commercial Marine Zoning District
CMX	Corridor Mixed-Use Zoning District
CUP	Compatible Use Plan

Acronym	Meaning
CWSP	Comprehensive Water and Sewerage Plan
CZO	Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance
DED	Department of Economic Development
DES	Department of Emergency Services
DHCD	Maryland State Department of Housing and Community Development
DNR	Department of Natural Resources
DPW&T	Department of Public Works and Transportation
DSL	Digital Subscriber Line
DSS	Department of Social Services
EDUs	Equivalent Dwelling Units
EFMP	Educational Facilities Master Plan
EIS	Economic Impact Statement
EMS	Emergency Medical Services
ESD	Environmental Site Design
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FAR	Floor Area Ratio
FCC	Federal Communications Commission
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FIDS	Forest Interior Dwelling Species
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
HOA	Homeowners Association
HPC	Historic Preservation Commission
IGSAs	Intergovernmental Support Agreements
I	Industrial Zoning District
IT	Department of Information Technology
LoA	Letter of Authorization
LPDD	Lexington Park Development District
LPDDMP	Lexington Park Development District Master Plan
LRPRP	Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan and Park Master Plans
LUGM	Department of Land Use and Growth Management

Acronym	Meaning
LUM	Land Use Map
MAA	Maryland Airport Authority
MALPF	Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation
MDA	Maryland Department of Agriculture
MDE	Maryland Department on the Environment
MD Commerce	Maryland Department of Commerce
MDE	Maryland Department of the Environment
MDOT	Maryland Department of Transportation
MetCom	Metropolitan Commission
MHT	Maryland Historical Trust
MIRR	Military Installation Resilience Review
MS4	Municipal Separate Strom Sewer System Program
MTA	Maryland Transit Administration
MXH	Mixed-Use High Intensity
MXM	Mixed-Use Low Intensity
MXM	Mixed-Use Medium Intensity
NAS Pax	Naval Air Station Patuxent River
NFIP	National Flood Insurance Program
NOAH	Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
OLDCC	Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation
PFA	Priority Funding Area
POS	Program Open Space
PPA	Priority Preservation Area
RCL	Rural Commercial Limited
REPI	Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration Program
R&P	Department of Recreation and Parks
RF	Radio Frequency
RH	Residential High-Density
RL	Residential Low-Density

Acronym	Meaning
RL-T	Residential Low-Density Transitional
RM	Residential Medium-Density
RMX	Residential Mixed-Use
RNC	Residential Neighborhood Conservation
RPD	Rural Preservation
RSC	Rural Service Center
RSVP	Retired and Senior Volunteer Program
SAV	Submerged Aquatic Vegetation
SCD	Soil Conservation District
SFDs	Single-Family Dwellings
SHA	State Highway Administration
SMADC	Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission
SMC Chamber	St. Mary's Chamber of Commerce
SMCHD	St. Mary's County Health Department
SMCM	St. Mary's College of Maryland
SMCPS	St. Mary's County Public Schools
SMCSO	St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office
SMECO	Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative
SMNA	Southern Maryland Navy Alliance
STRAHNET	Strategic Highway Network
STS	St. Mary's Transit System
TCC	Tri-County Council of Southern Maryland
TDP	Transit Development Plan
TDRs	Transferable Development Rights
TEAs	Targeted Ecological Areas
TMDL	Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load
TMX	Town Center Mixed-Use
TPP	The Patuxent (PAX) Partnership
UMD	University of Maryland
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service

Acronym	Meaning
VMX	Village Center Mixed-Use
VSMMD	Visit St. Mary's Maryland

Appendix C: Development Capacity Analysis

This development capacity analysis examines the ability of St. Mary's County to house its growing population through an evaluation of two conditions: (1) the land capacity for development of new dwelling units, and (2) the capacity for development of dwelling units based on availability of sewer. Evaluating the potential for new units that could be developed under current zoning, provides an opportunity to assess whether the County's policies need to change to accommodate projected population growth — approximately 38,750 new residents by 2045, according to the Maryland Department of Planning. [1]

Methodology

Using County data on Growth Areas, zoning, sewer service areas, parcels, and improvement value, alongside information from Leonardtown's 2025 Comprehensive Plan, this analysis calculates the potential number of new residential units that could be built in designated Growth Areas (Development Districts, Town Centers, and Village Centers). Growth outside of the designated Growth Areas was not considered in this analysis due to the importance placed on rural preservation by the community during engagement. Solely using the Growth Areas to determine development capacity aligns with the methodology used in previous analyses.

The residential density assumptions for properties that have access to sanitary sewer are based on the base density (not maximum density) allowed for zoning districts per the current Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance (CZO). For non-sewered properties, residential density is either one unit per two acres or the allowed density for that zoning district, whichever is lower, to account for adequate land for private septic systems. Land was determined to have sewer availability if it was designated as S-1 (currently served) in the Comprehensive Water and Sewerage Plan (CWSP).

In this development capacity analysis, only parcels with an improvement value under $20,000 were considered as locations for potential new units. This assumption essentially means that only parcels with no major structures on them were counted as a potential location for redevelopment. While parcels with larger improvement values may be redeveloped, this analysis takes a more conservative approach. Improvement value is calculated for each parcel by identifying

[1] Projections from the Maryland Department of Planning's State Data & Analysis Center (https://planning.maryland.gov/MSDC/Pages/s3_projection.aspx)

the Maryland State Department of Assessments and Taxation's total property value [2] and subtracting from that the land value for the parcel. The result is the value of "improvements" on the land, such as houses, structures, and other forms of development.

Calculations for how many new residents the new units can support are based on the average household size in St. Mary's County of 2.63 people per household. [3]

Land Capacity Analysis

The land capacity analysis asks the question: based on **zoning district designations**, how many potential new units could be built? This analysis uses the base zoning densities to calculate development capacity. Across the Growth Areas, this adds up to 22,401 potential new units (see Table 5), or enough for about 58,914 new residents — well above the projected population growth of 38,750 new residents by 2045. Over 19,000 of the potential new units are in Lexington Park (about 85%) — see Figure 7, Figure 8, and Figure 9 for more details about land capacity (not considering sewer availability) in other Growth Areas.

The Maryland Department of Planning's projected population growth for St. Mary's County through 2045:[1]

38,750

new residents

To house these new residents, the county will need approximately:

14,734

new dwelling units

Calculated by dividing projected new residents by the persons per household factor of 2.63.[3]

In its Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2025, Leonardtown made its own calculations for development capacity within its municipal growth area, and found the town had land capacity for approximately 4,538 new units. Replacing the figures for the Leonardtown Development District growth with the calculations made by the Town, the total potential new units in the county increases to 26,045, or enough for about 68,498 new residents.

Sewer Availability Analysis

The sewer availability analysis asks the question: considering **sewer and septic availability and zoning district**

[2] Data from the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation; see the real property data search (https://sdat.dat.maryland.gov/RealProperty/Pages/default.aspx)

[3] Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2023 data.

designations, how many potential new units could be built?

The potential new units are dramatically lower under these assumptions than when sewer service is not considered — down to 9,967 potential new units, or enough for about 26,213 new residents (see Table 5). This significant drop is because many properties within the growth area are not connected to public sewer service, and the maximum density for septic systems is one unit per two acres (see Methodology above). Again, most of the potential new units are in Lexington Park: 7,870 potential new units, or 79%. See Figure 7, Figure 8, and Figure 9 for more details about potential new units and sewer availability in other Growth Areas.

Leonardtown's development capacity analysis can again be used as an alternative calculation for the Leonardtown Development District growth area capacity. Replacing the potential new units for the Leonardtown Development District growth capacity with the calculations made by the Town, the total potential new units in the county increases to 13,913 potential new units, or enough for about 36,591 new residents.

Table 5 : Summary of Development Capacity Analysis Results

Growth Areas	Land Capacity for New Units	Sewer/Septic Availability for New Units	Leonardtown's Development Capacity from their 2025 Comprehensive Plan
Lexington Park Development District	19,078	7,870	n/a
Leonardtown Development District	894	592	4,538
Town Centers	2,080	1,234	n/a
Village Centers	349	271	n/a
Total Capacity	**22,401**	**9,967**	
% of Total Needed Capacity (14,734 Units Needed)	*152%*	*68%*	

Figure 7: Development Capacity in Development Districts

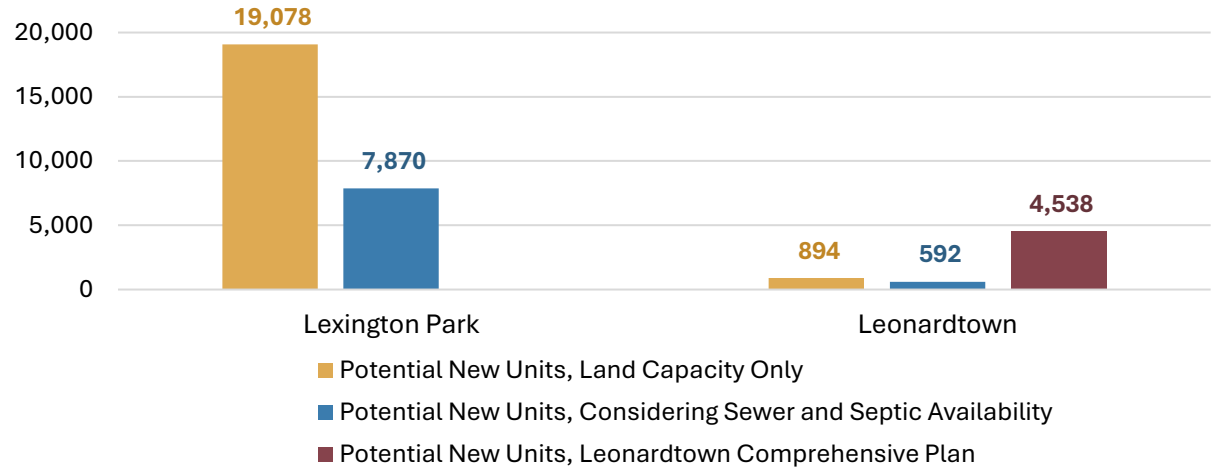


Figure 8: Development Capacity in Town Centers

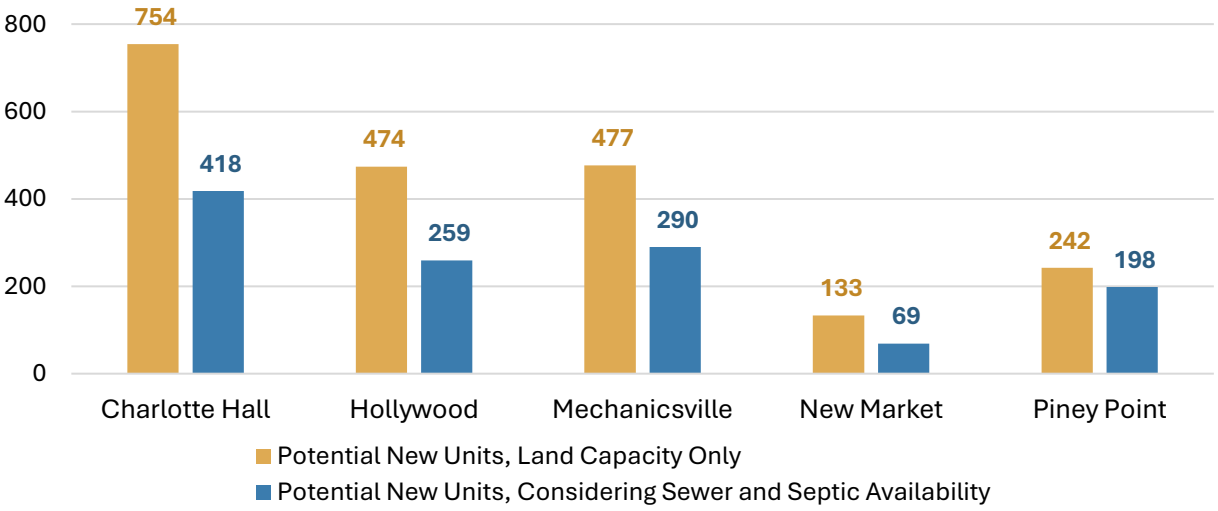
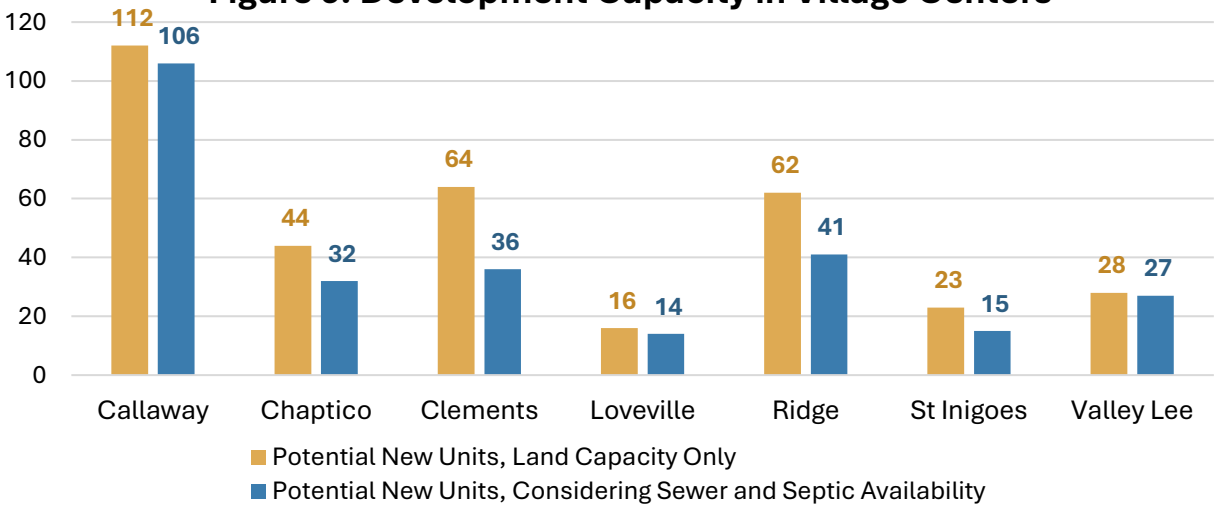


Figure 9: Development Capacity in Village Centers



Implications for Growth

Calculating the actual amount of land available for future development reveals there is adequate capacity – 1.5 times the amount needed – to accommodate future projected population growth. Availability of land for development to accommodate projected population growth is not the challenge.

The availability of sewer to support growth on these lands is where the challenge exists. When looking at lands with available sewer, the County does not have adequate residential development capacity for the projected population growth of 38,750 new residents by 2045.

Even considering Leonardtown's substantial development capacity (4,583 units to house 12,053 new residents), the County would not have housing for about 2,159 projected new County residents, or about 821 dwelling units.

Sewer availability is the main factor limiting development capacity. Consideration of how to increase sewer availability in Growth Areas is needed for St. Mary's County to provide enough housing for its growing population and to address the local attainable housing needs. The Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance (CZO) requires an adequate sewerage system to serve proposed new development, [4] to ensure new development does not strain existing sewerage infrastructure.

[4] See Section 70.8, Sewerage, of the St. Mary's County Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance (CZO)

Appendix D: Water & Sewer Service Area Maps

Maps of water and sewer service areas are included below. These maps were last updated in August 2025; refer to the St. Mary's County Interactive County Map [5] for the most up-to-date information and for parcel-specific inquiries.

Water Service Categories

The Water Service Categories, as defined in the Comprehensive Water and Sewerage Plan (CWSP) (updated in 2017) are:

- NPS: No Planned Service. These areas have no planned service within ten years.
- W-1: Existing service or under construction.
- W-3/W-3D: Areas planned for service in 3-5 years (per 2017 plan). "D" denotes developer-funded systems. Note that a property designation as W-3 does *not* represent a commitment to supply public water service to the property in that timeframe.
- W-6/W-6D: Potential area for future service, in 6+ years (per 2017 plan). "D" denotes developer-funded systems. Note that a property designation as W-6 does *not* represent a commitment to supply public water service to the property in that timeframe.
- RW-1: Existing rural service
- RW-D: Rural service areas appropriate for non-public systems to support clustered development (e.g., through shared wells). "D" denotes developer-funded systems. Switching to this designation requires an amendment to the comprehensive plan.

Sewer Service Categories

The Sewer Service Categories, as defined in the Comprehensive Water and Sewerage Plan (CWSP) (updated in 2017) are:

- NPS: No Planned Service. These areas have no planned service within ten years.
- S-1: Existing service or under construction.
- S-3/S-3D: Areas planned for service in 3-5 years (per 2017 plan). "D" denotes developer-funded systems. Note that a property designation as W-3 does not represent a commitment to supply public sewer service to the property in that timeframe.

[5] The map can be accessed directly through the link above or through https://www.stmaryscountymd.gov/it/gis/.

- S-6/S-6D: Potential area for future service, in 6+ years (per 2017 plan). "D" denotes developer-funded systems. Note that a property designation as W-6 does *not* represent a commitment to supply public sewer service to the property in that timeframe.
- RS-1: Existing rural service
- RS-D: Rural service areas appropriate for non-public systems to support clustered development (e.g., through package wastewater treatment plants). "D" denotes developer-funded systems. Switching to this designation requires an amendment to the comprehensive plan.
- RS-E: Rural Sanitary Service – Environmental Hazard. This service addresses a health and safety issue (e.g., failed septic systems with no feasible options for new septic fields).

Maps

Water Service Areas

- Figure 10: Countywide Water Service Areas
- Figure 11: Northern Water Service Areas
- Figure 12: Leonardtown-Area Water Service Areas
- Figure 13: Lexington Park-Area Water Service Areas
- Figure 14: Piney Point-Area Water Service Areas
- Figure 15: Southern Water Service Areas

Sewer Service Areas

- Figure 16: Countywide Sewer Service Areas
- Figure 17: Northern Sewer Service Areas
- Figure 18: Leonardtown-Area Sewer Service Areas
- Figure 19: Lexington Park-Area Sewer Service Areas
- Figure 20: Piney Point-Area Sewer Service Areas
- Figure 21: Southern Sewer Service Areas

Figure 10: Countywide Water Service Areas

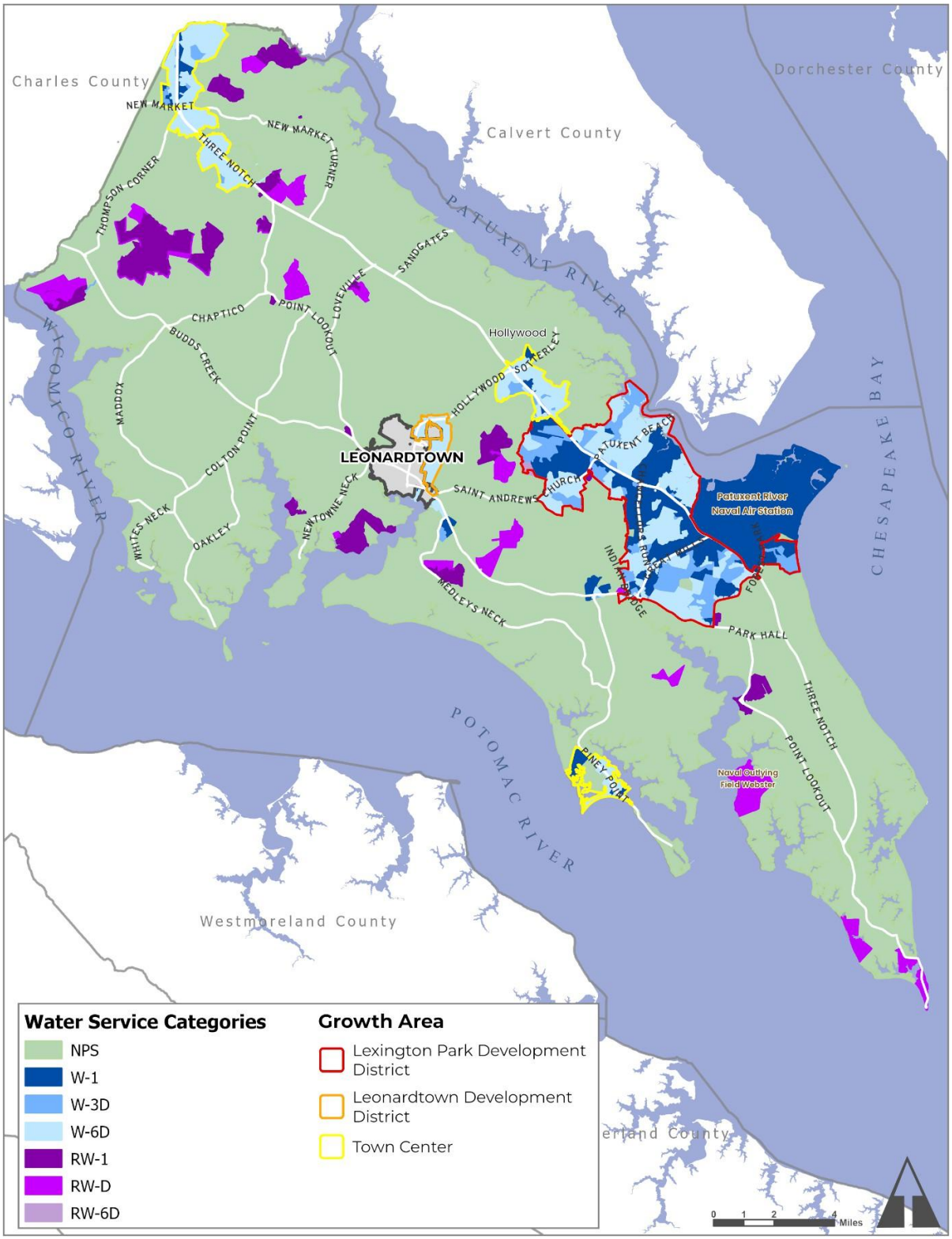


Figure 11: Northern Water Service Areas

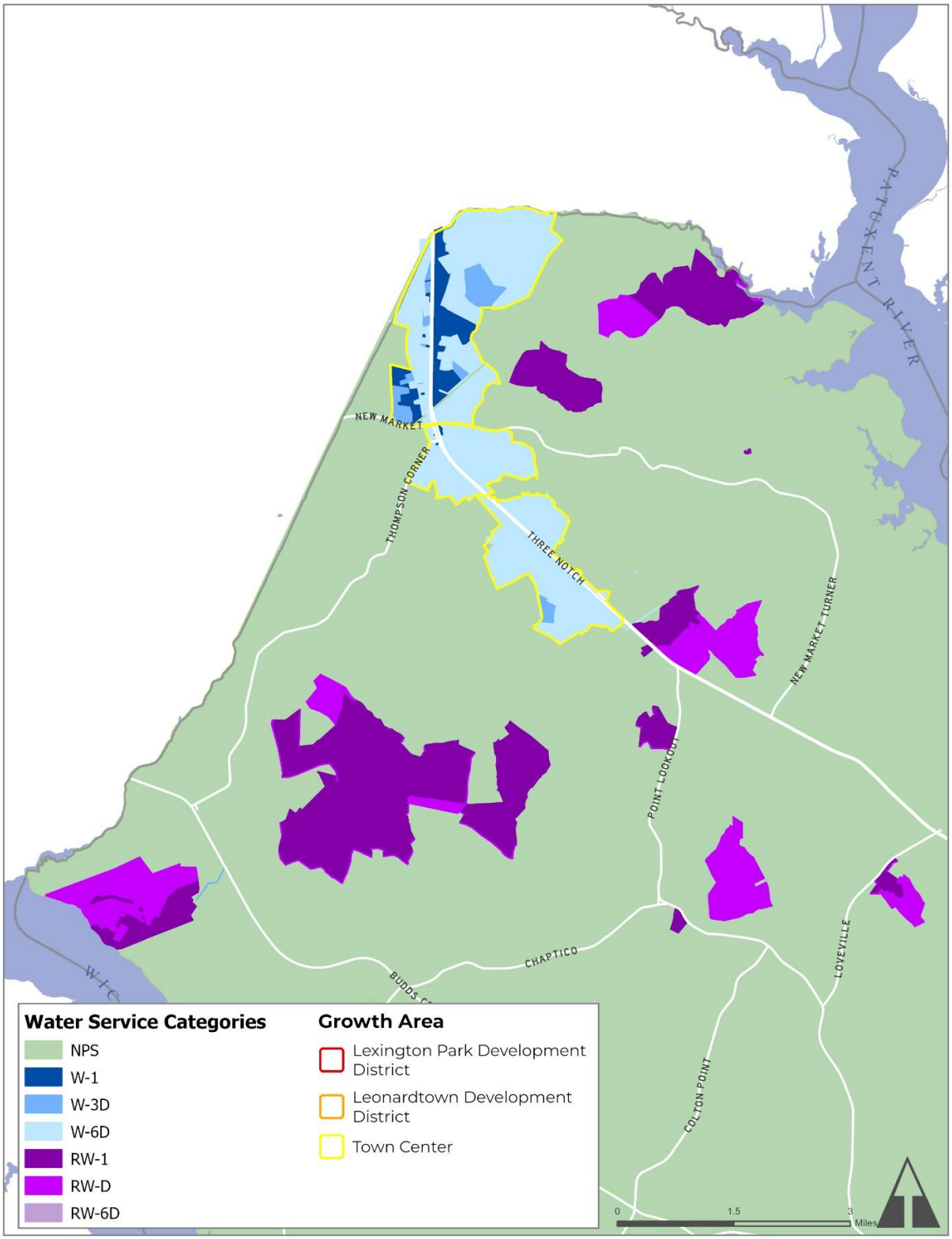


Figure 12: Leonardtown-Area Water Service Areas

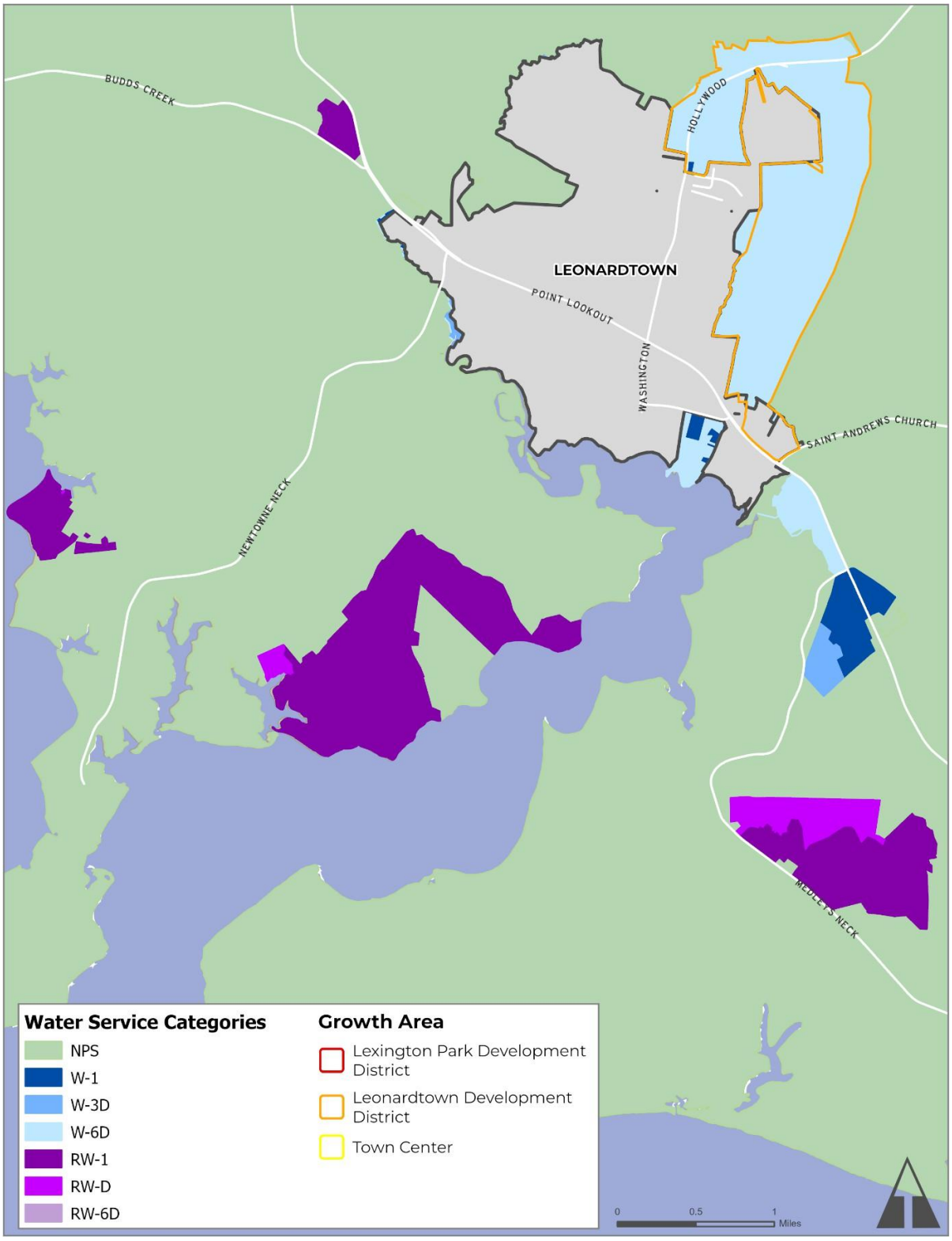


Figure 13: Lexington Park-Area Water Service Areas

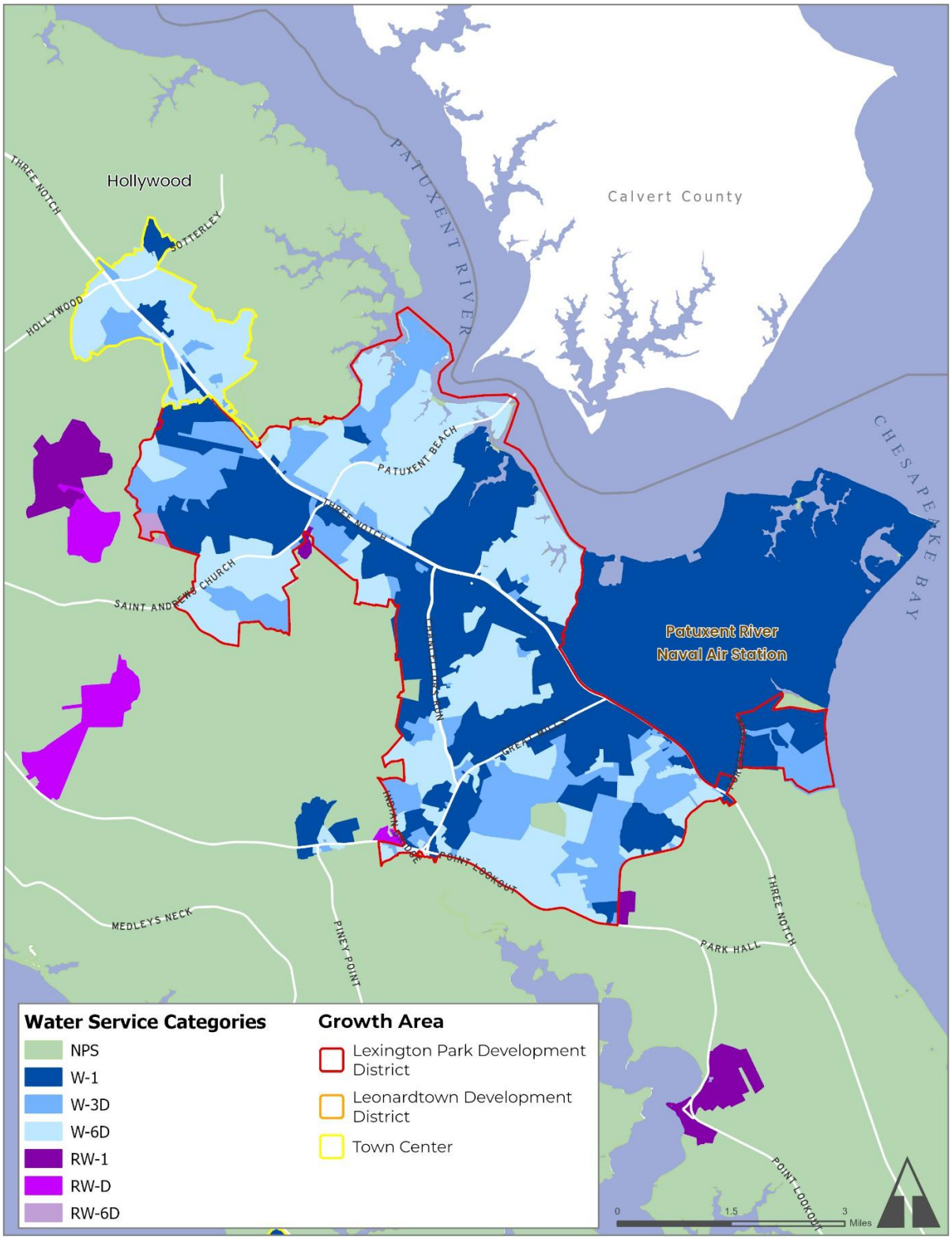


Figure 14: Piney Point-Area Water Service Areas

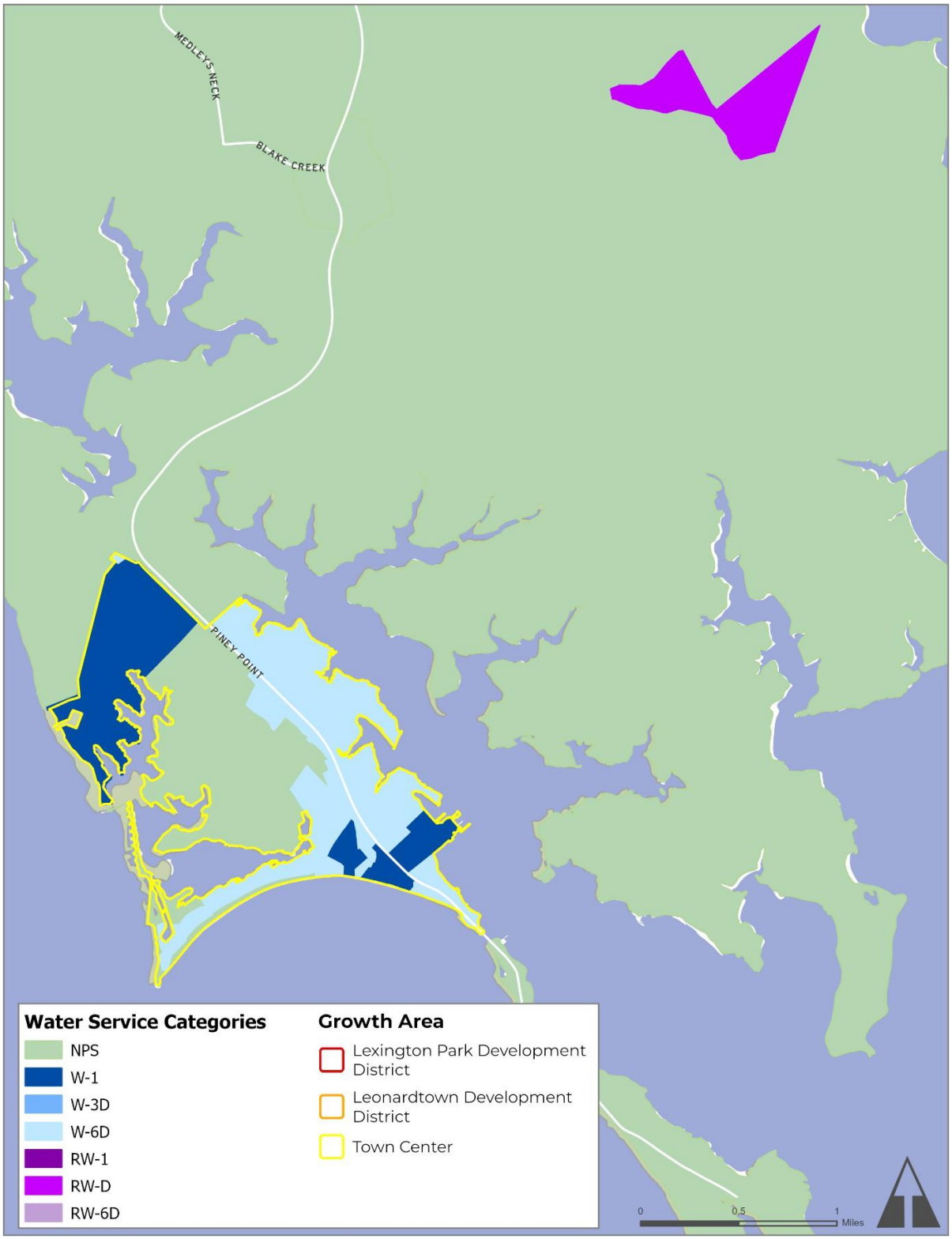


Figure 15: Southern Water Service Areas

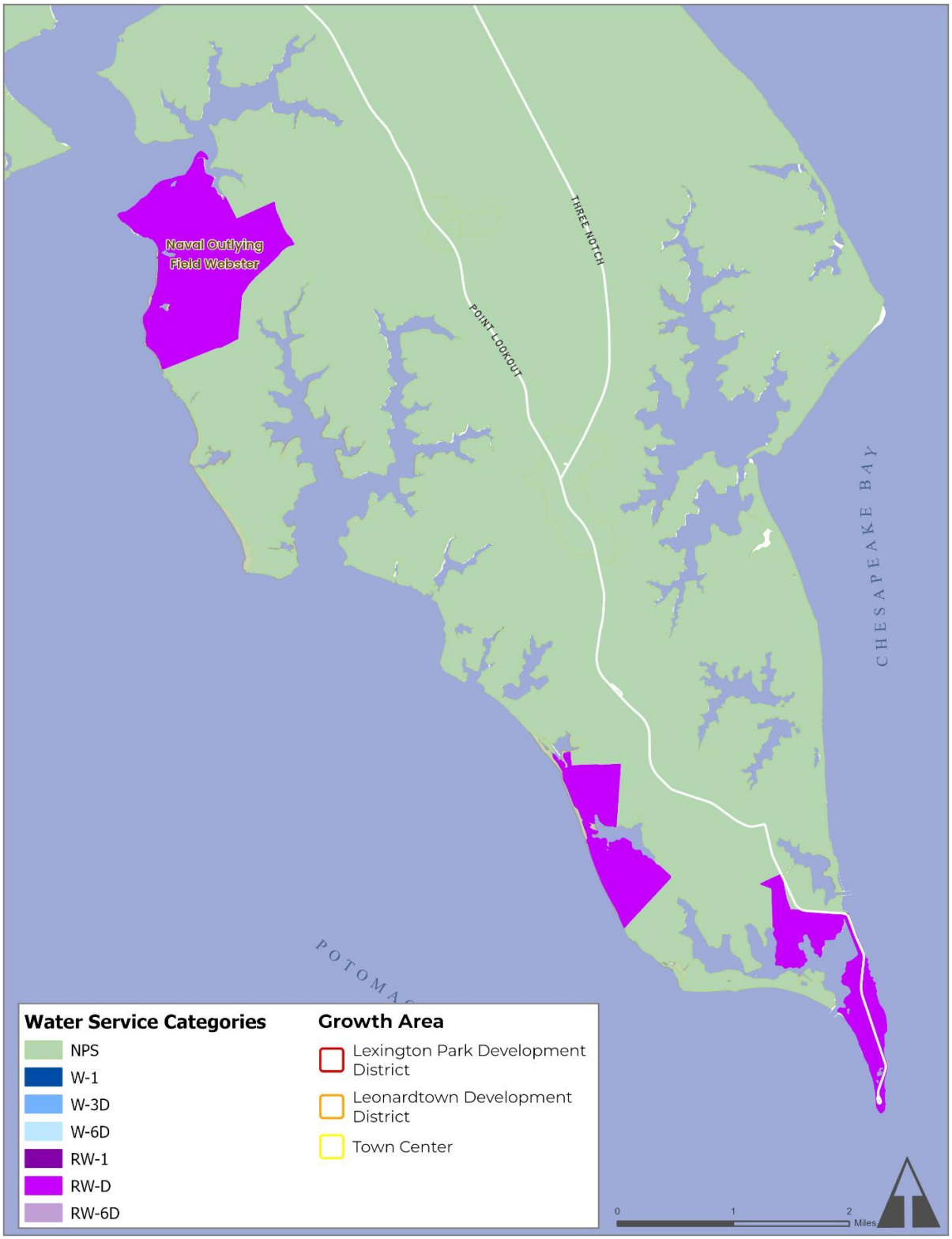


Figure 16: Countywide Sewer Service Areas

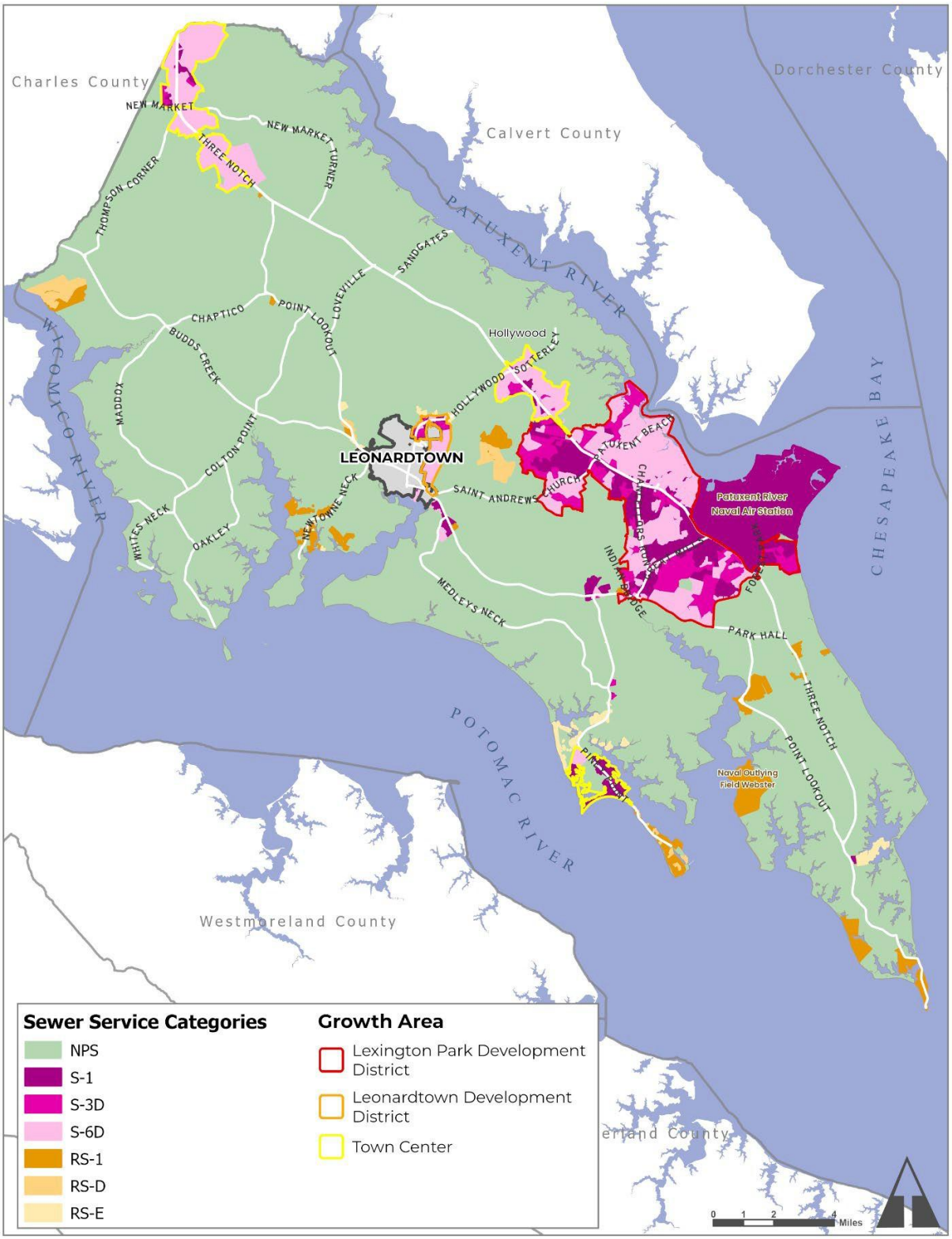


Figure 17: Northern Sewer Service Areas

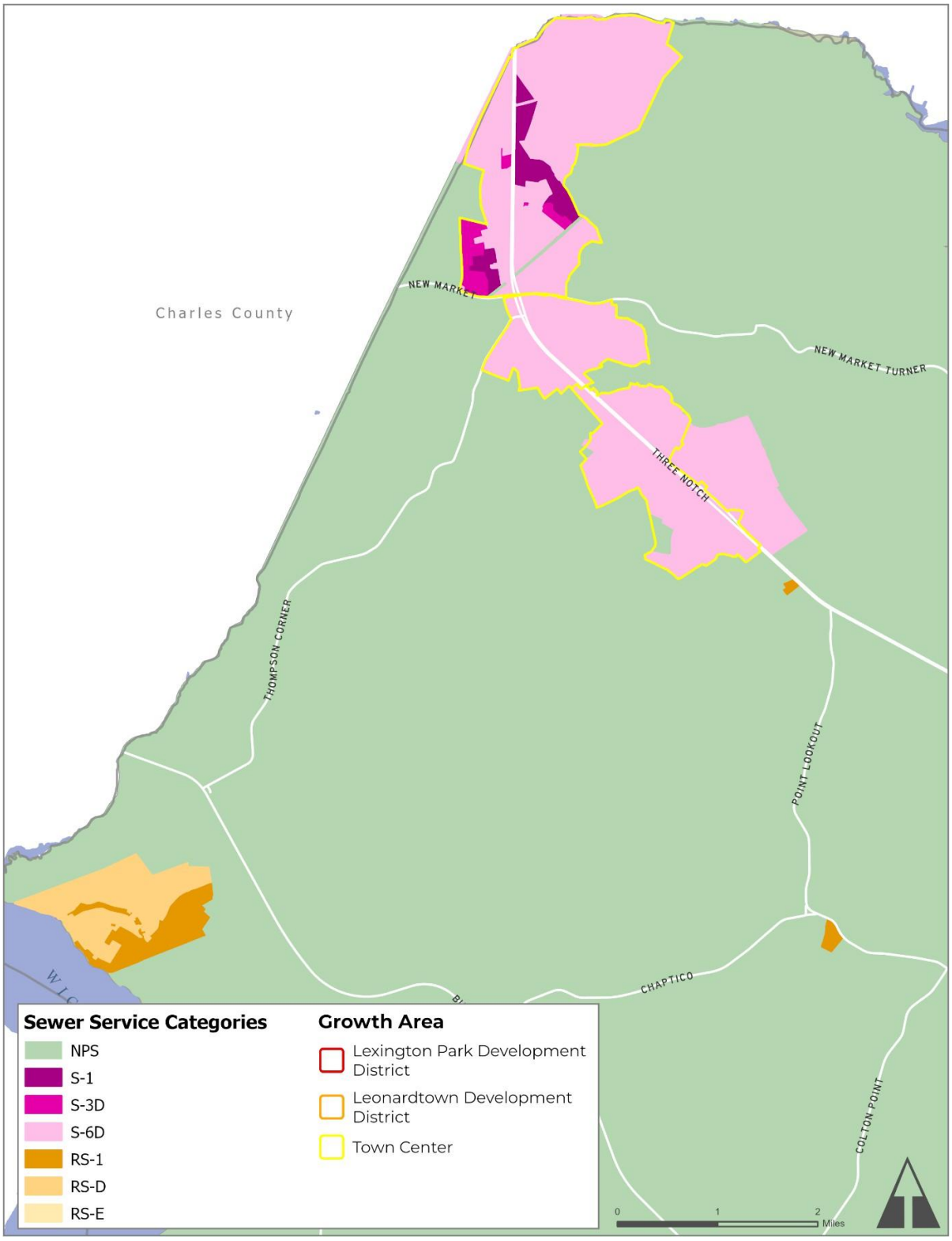


Figure 18: Leonardtown-Area Sewer Service Areas

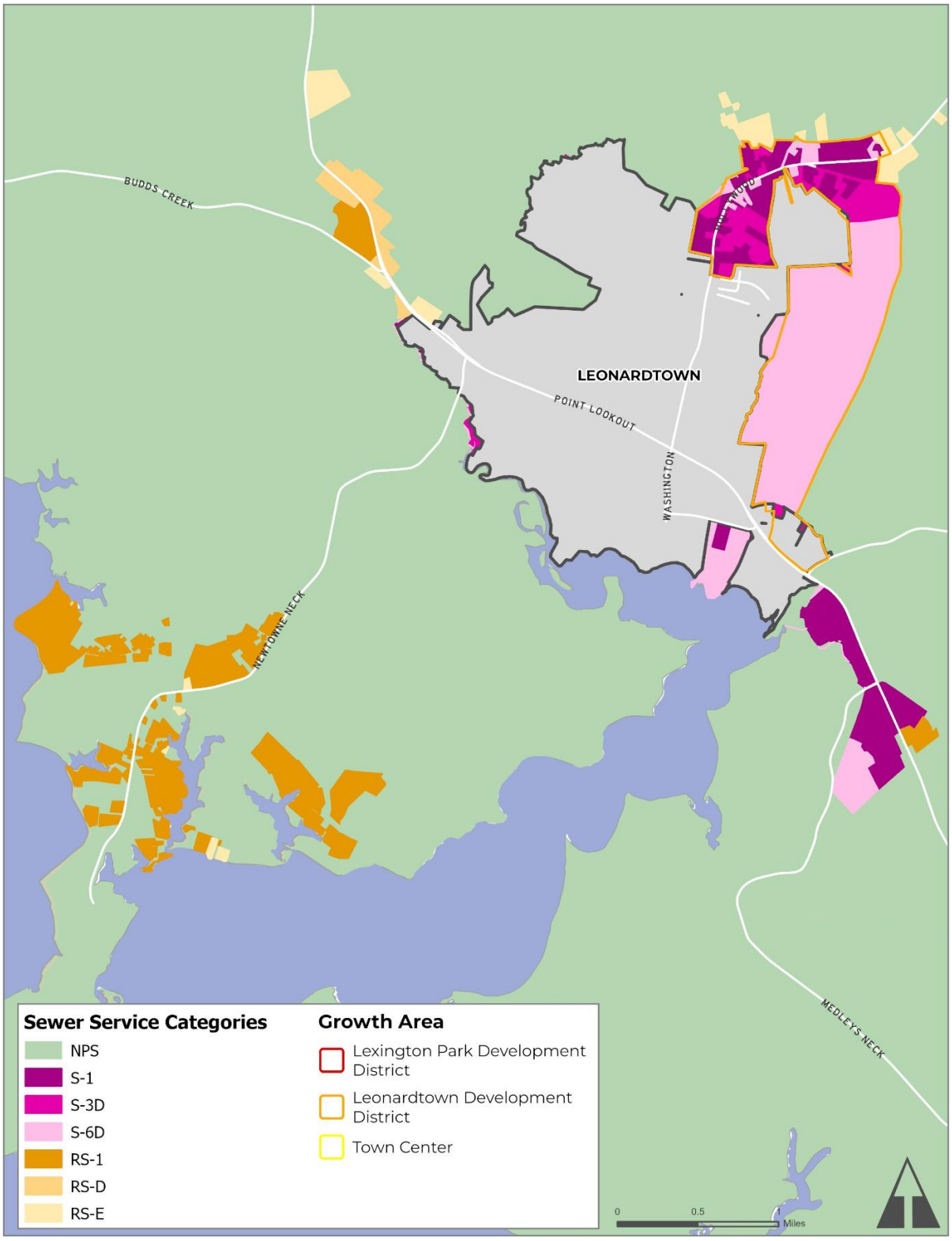


Figure 19: Lexington Park-Area Sewer Service Areas

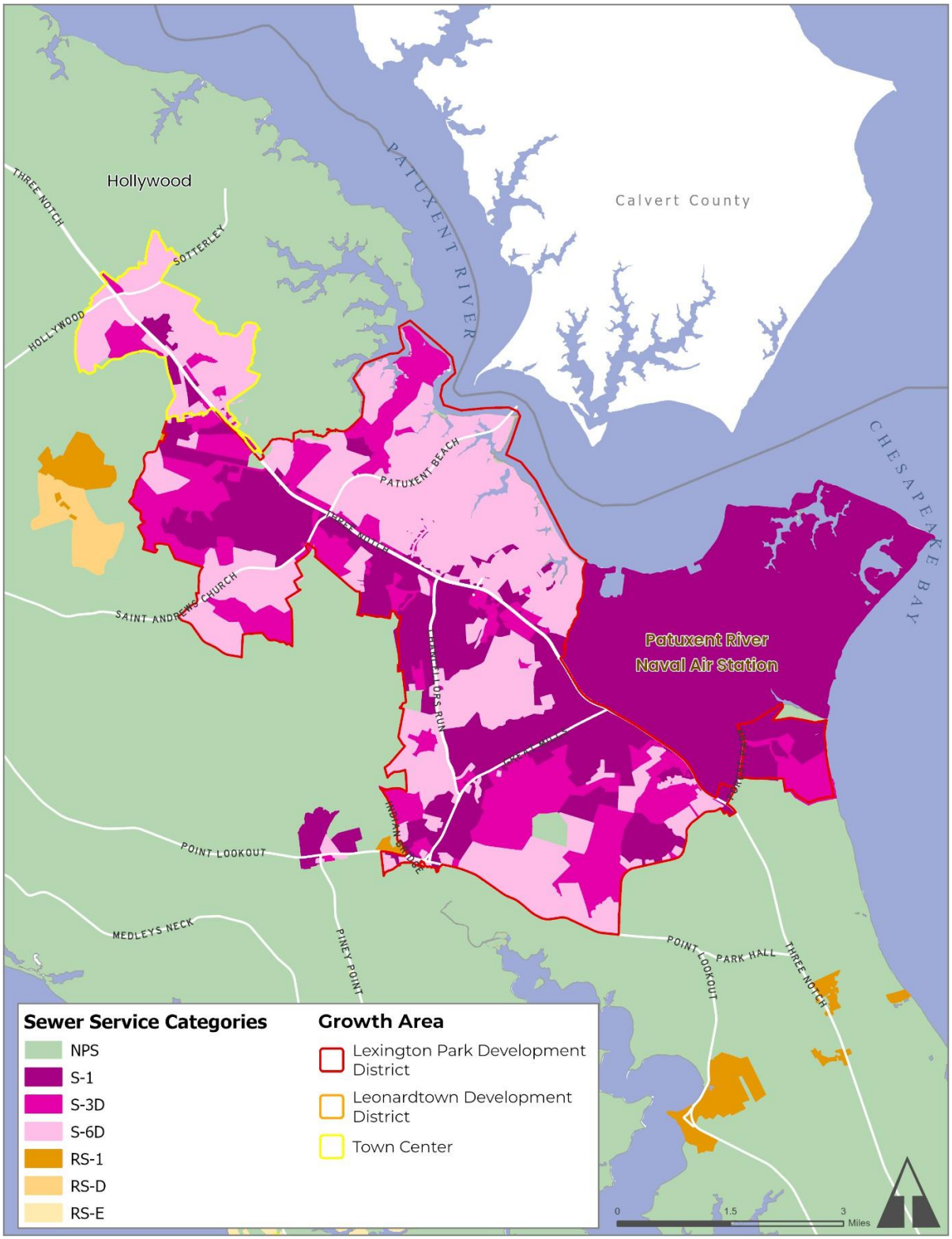


Figure 20: Piney Point-Area Sewer Service Areas

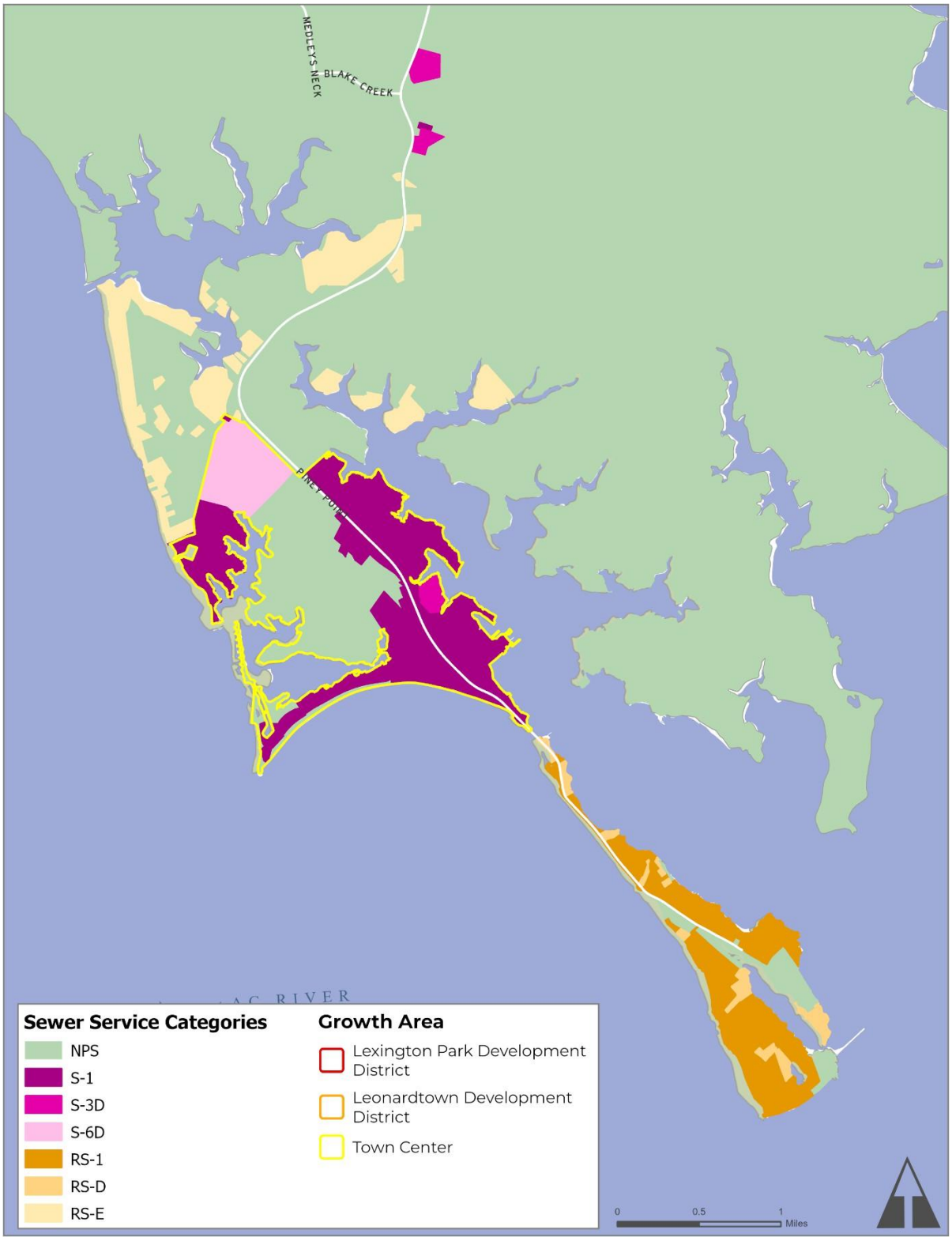


Figure 21: Southern Sewer Service Areas

