



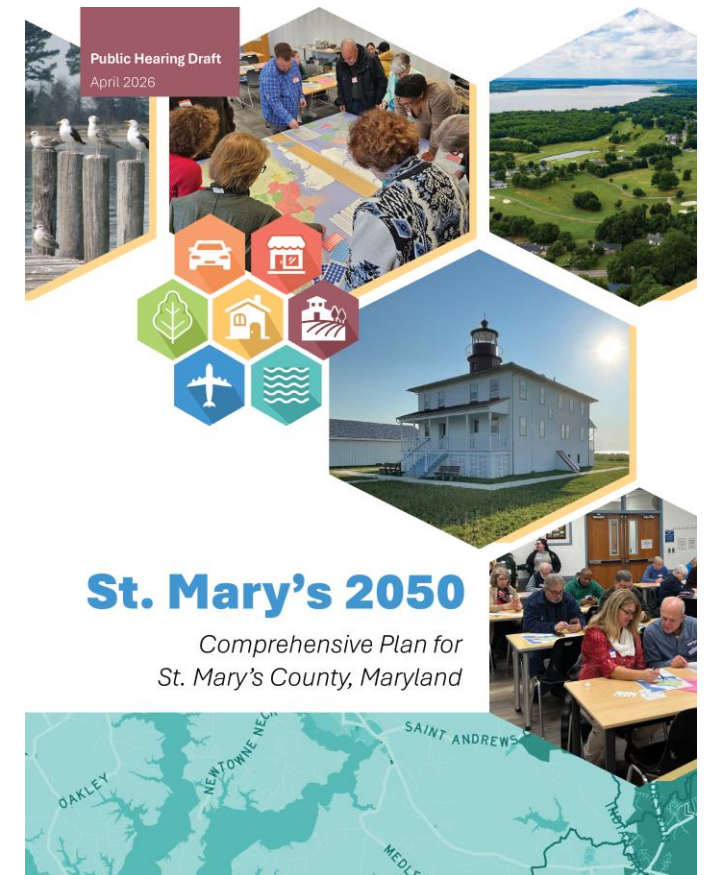
St. Mary's 2050: Charting Our Tomorrow
Comprehensive Plan Update Project

April 2026

Community Engagement Window #3 Briefing

Project Background

- ❖ 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 of the *Annotated Code of Maryland*.



Project Timeline



Community Engagement Window #3: Draft Plan

February – March 2026

Opportunity for community members to learn more about the policy direction of the plan and provide input on its contents

- **Public Open Houses**
- **Online survey** through project website



Participation

170 + 165 = 335

Participated in the
online survey

Filled out paper
surveys

CEW #3
participants

300

CEW #1
participants

1,380

CEW #2
participants

82

Additional Comment
Form Responses

11 Public Open Houses

Date	Time	Location
Feb. 9	9:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m.	Lexington Park Library
Feb. 10	5:00 p.m.–8:00 p.m.	Northern Senior Center
Feb. 11	10:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.	Leonard Hall Rec Center
Feb. 11	5:00 p.m.–8:00 p.m.	Loffler Senior Center
Mar. 2	10:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m.	Lexington Park Library
Mar. 2	5:00 p.m.–8:00 p.m.	St. Mary's College Daughterty-Palmer Commons (DPC)
Mar. 3	5:00 p.m.–8:00 p.m.	Loffler Senior Center
Mar. 4	5:00 p.m.–8:00 p.m.	Northern Senior Center
Mar. 5	5:00 p.m.–8:00 p.m.	Captain Walter Francis Duke Regional Airport
Mar. 7	9:30 a.m.–11:30 a.m.	Lexington Park Library
Mar. 7	2:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m.	Leonardtown Library

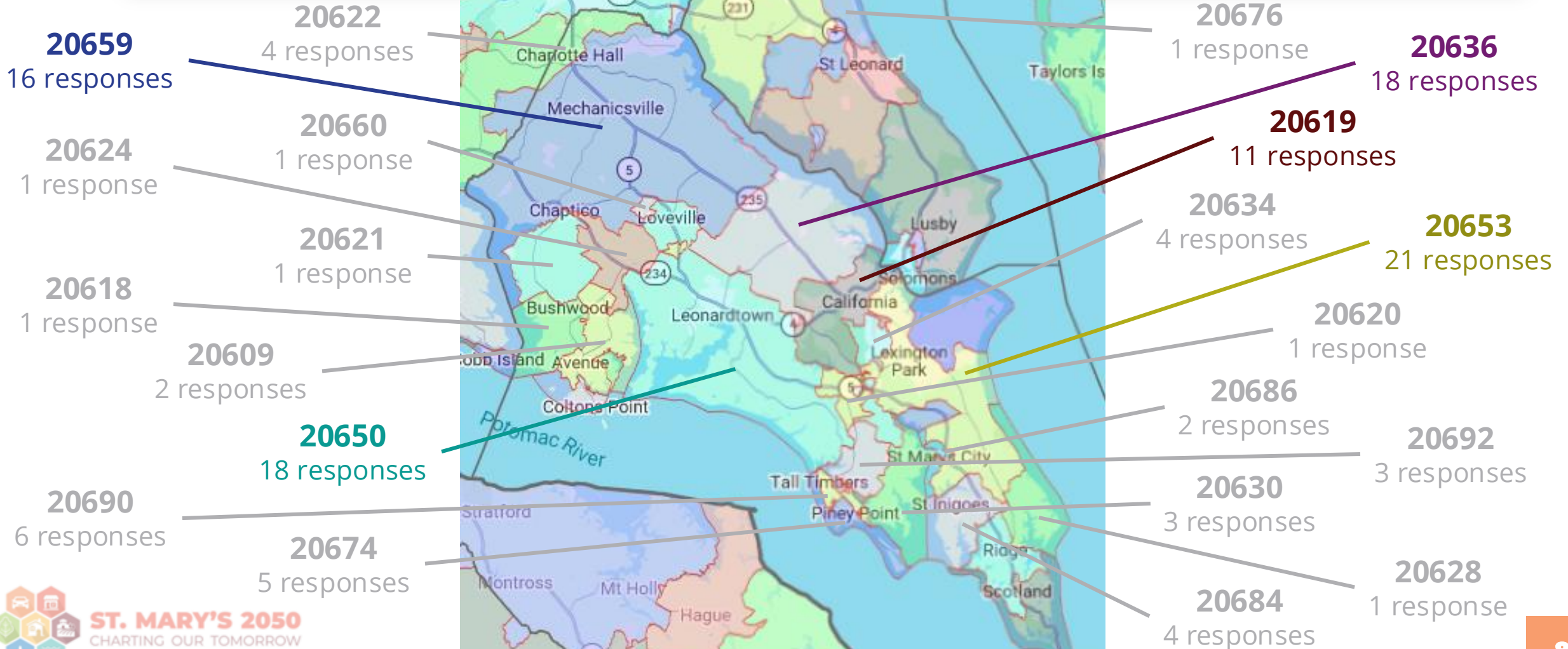
Public Intercept Outreach

Shared information about CEW #3 public open houses and the online survey

Date	Time	Location
Feb. 25	7:30am–9:30am	St. Inie’s Coffee
Feb. 25	10:30am–12:30pm	St. James Deli & Spirits
Feb. 27	2:00pm–3:30pm	Weis Market in Callaway
Feb. 27	2:30pm–4:00pm	Bradfords Neighborhood Market
Feb. 28	10:00am–12:00pm	Weis Market in Charlotte Hall

Note: Information about CEW #3 was published on the County's social media platforms, SMCPS Weekly Newsletter and on NAS Pax's social media platforms. Copies of the Draft Plan and copies of the survey were available at the Health Hub, public libraries, and senior centers in the county.

ZIP Codes of Online Participants



Survey Questions

- Participants were asked for their **level of support for each goal** in the Public Review Draft
- Opportunity for **open-ended comments**
- Paper version and online version
- Survey materials are included at the end of the CEW #3 report

Growth Management Survey

For each goal, please select your level of support by marking the appropriate box.

Goal 1: Utilize the Land Use Map and 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.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Goal 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.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Goal 3: Support Compact Town Centers
Support walkable, mixed-use, compact town centers as an alternative to big-box-style development.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Goal 4: Encourage Rural Services and Moderate Residential Growth in Village Centers
Encourage location and expansion of rural services and moderate residential growth in village centers: Callaway, Chaptico, Clements, Loveville, Ridge, Valley Lee, and St. Inigoes.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Goal 5: Support Infill Development and Adaptive Redevelopment
Support infill, redevelopment, and adaptive reuse of existing structures, when possible.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Growth Management Survey Page 1
For Office Use Only: _____

Growth Management Goals

For each goal, please select the option that most closely matches your level of support.

If you want to learn more, the full draft plan is available for review on the project website: stmaryscountymd.gov/StMarys2050/

Goal 1: Utilize the Land Use Map and 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.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

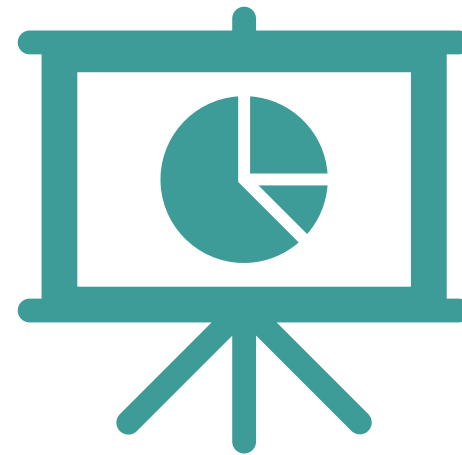
Growth Management



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Overall Support

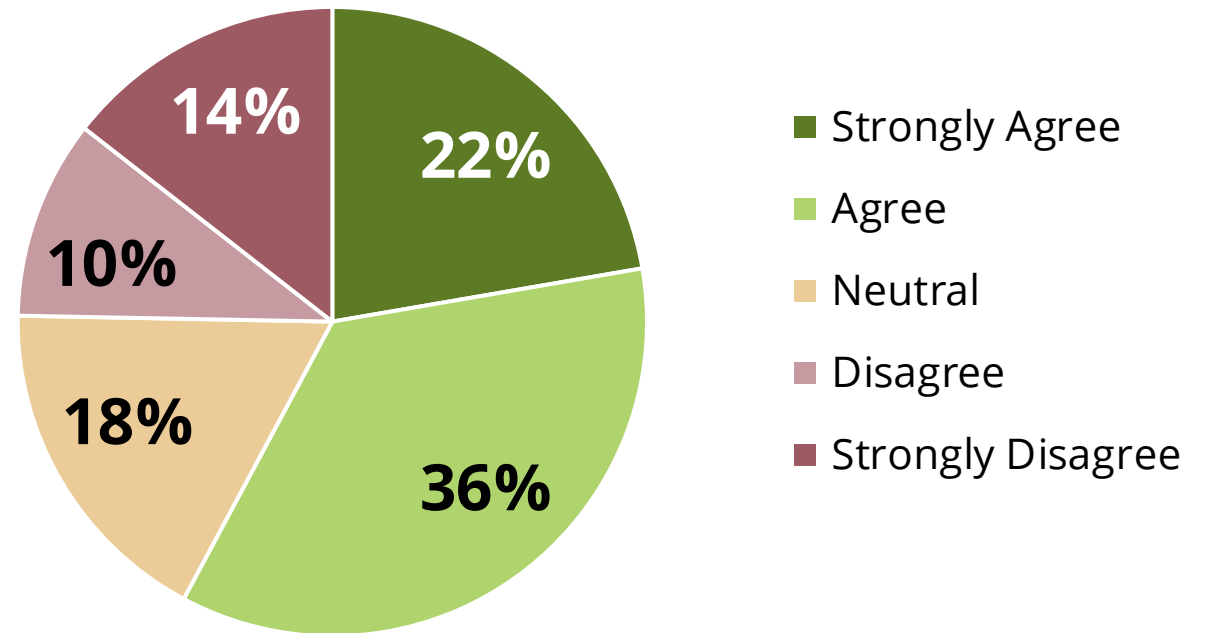
- **8 of the 9 Goals** (89%) were supported by at least 70% of participants
- **Goal #4** was supported by 58% of participants



GOAL 4: ENCOURAGE RURAL SERVICES AND MODERATE RESIDENTIAL GROWTH IN VILLAGE CENTERS

Encourage location and expansion of rural services and moderate residential growth in village centers: Callaway, Chaptico, Clements, Loveville, Ridge, Valley Lee, and St. Inigoes.

Growth Management Goal 4



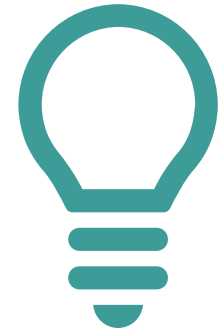
Addressing Goal 4

- Open-Ended Comments
 - Several comments emphasized that water and sewer is not appropriate in Village Centers. (Note that the draft plan does not identify Village Centers as locations for water/sewer expansion)
 - Many comments support more services in Town Centers and Village Centers
- Recommendation:
 - Remove confusing “rural services” language from title and description
 - Replace with language like “residential-supporting commercial” and give examples (like grocery stores and barber shops)



Piney Point

- Numerous comments requested changing Piney Point from a Town Center to a Village Center for a variety of reasons:
 - Transportation access (which impacts emergency safety)
 - Environmental effects (critical area, flooding risk)
 - Water supply constraints
 - Lower levels of existing development than other Town Centers (Charlotte Hall, Hollywood, Mechanicsville, New Market)
- Recommendation: Change Piney Point from a Town Center to a Village Center



Design Standards

- Open-Ended Comments
 - Numerous comments mentioned the need for stronger design standards (especially for big box retail and gas stations)
- Recommendation:
 - New Action 2.9.1: Explore Strengthening Design Requirements in the CZO



Land Use Map

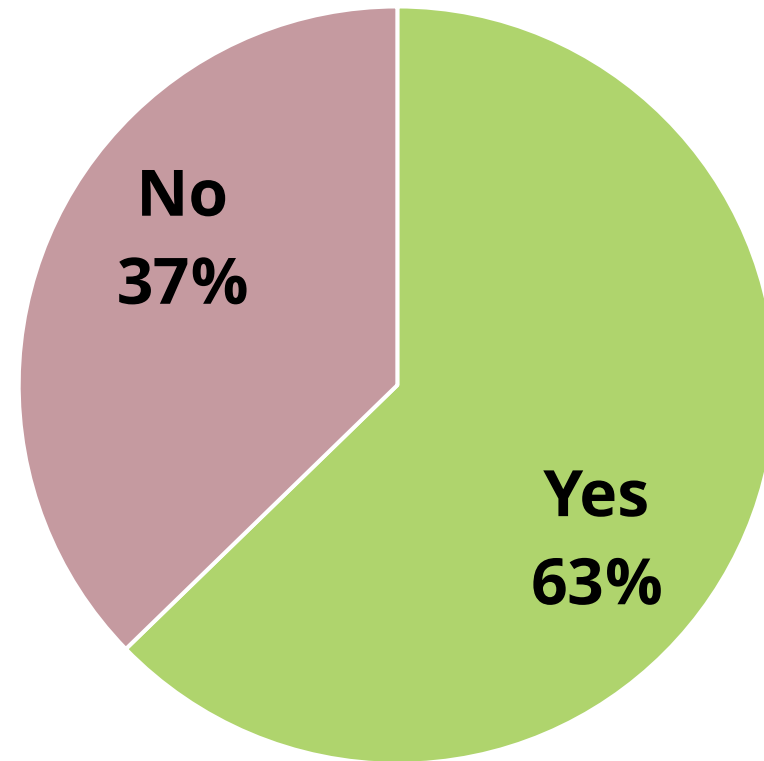


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Land Use Map Support

Do you support the draft
Land Use Map as shown?

Land Use Map



Location-Specific Feedback

- Participants shared location-specific feedback about the draft Land Use Map
- A large-scale printout of the Land Use Map was used at public engagement events
- Map pins and open-ended comment options were used for the online feedback



Feedback: Potential Locations to Change Land Use Map Intensity

Locations identified in 3+ responses

Locations for **higher or moderate density**

- Charlotte Hall
- Mechanicsville
- Lexington Park
- Leonardtown
- Callaway

Locations for **less development**

- Charlotte Hall
- Mechanicsville
- Lexington Park
- Leonardtown
- Southwest of Leonardtown (off Route 243)
- Hollywood
- Piney Point

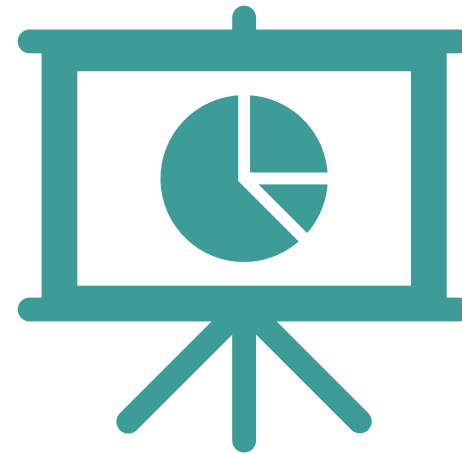
Housing



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Overall Support

- **5 of the 5 Goals** (100%) were supported by at least 70% of participants



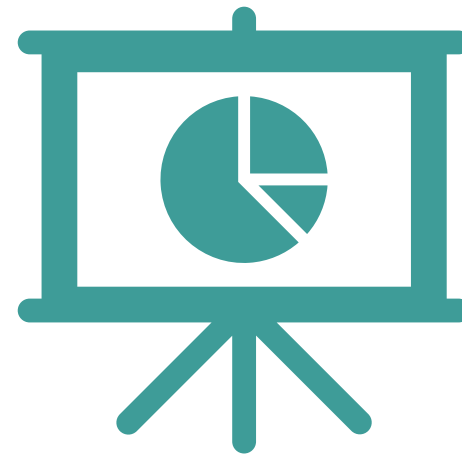
Economic Development



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Overall Support

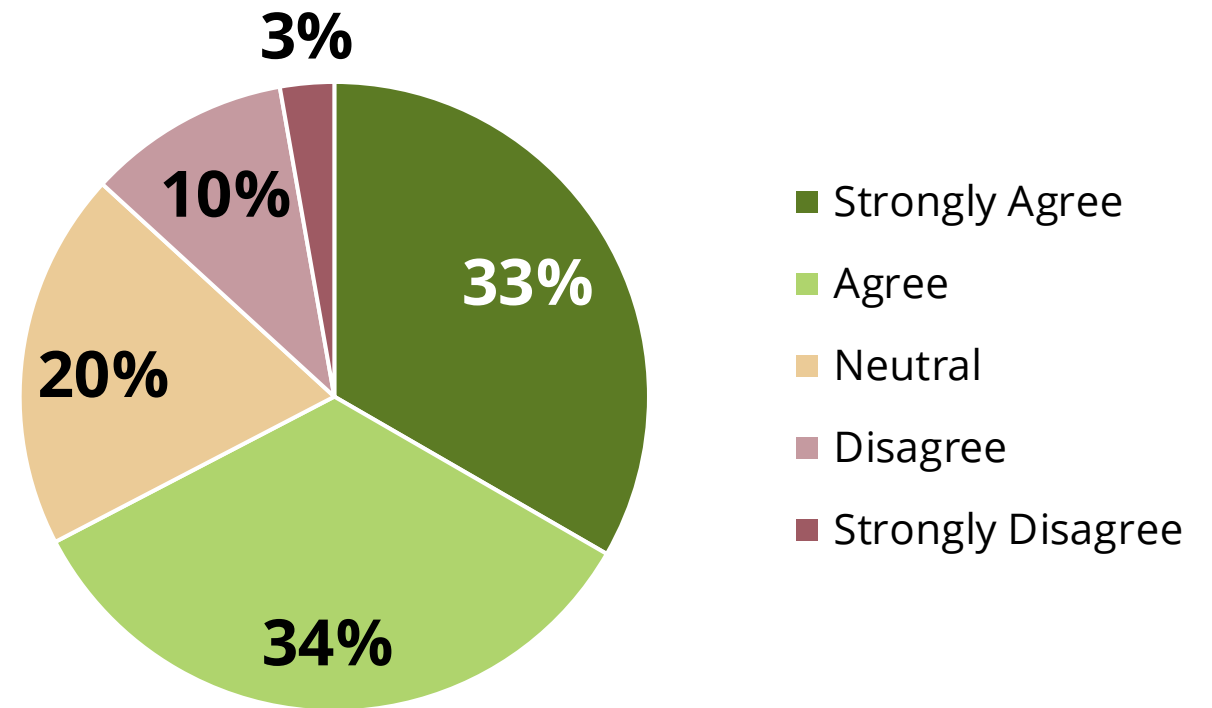
- **5 of the 7 Goals** (71%) were supported by at least 70% of participants
- **Goal #4** was supported by 67% of participants
- **Goal #6** was supported by 32% of participants



GOAL 4: SUPPORT AND EXPAND TOURISM

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).

Economic Development Goal 4



Addressing Goal 4

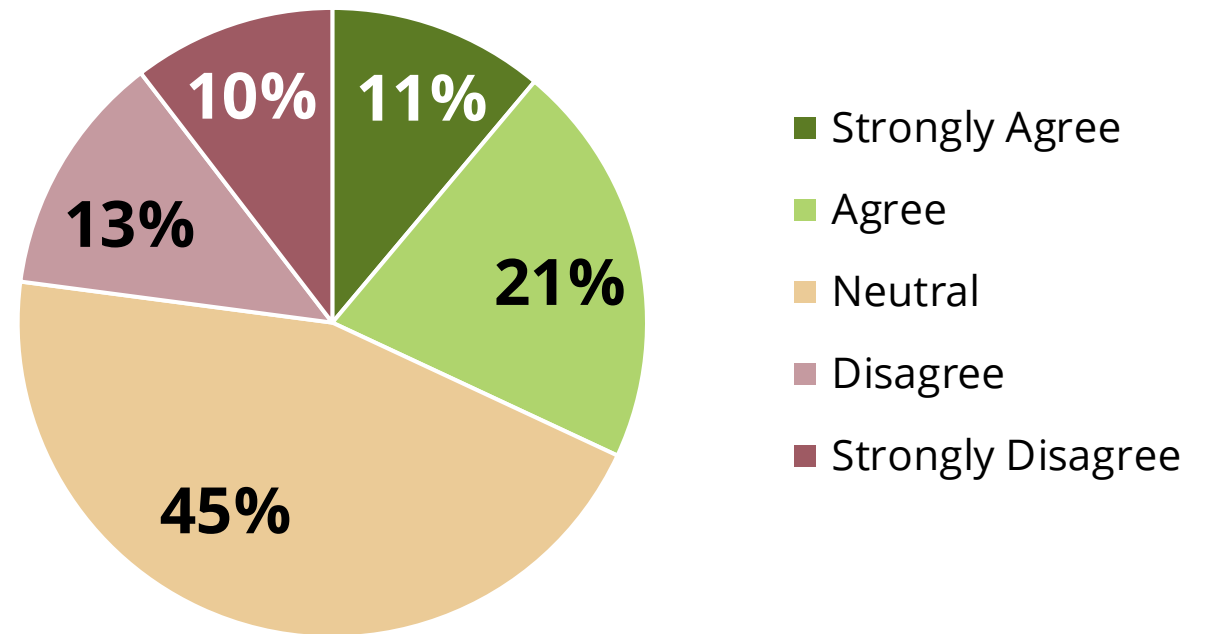
- Open-Ended Comments
 - Several comments stressed the importance of diversifying the County's economy; tourism could help diversify the economy
 - Several comments expressed concern about the current state of services/utilities in the County; tourism could stress those services
- Recommendation:
 - In the goal description, add a reference to the Public Facilities and Infrastructure and Transportation section and clarify that any adverse impacts of tourism on public infrastructure should be addressed



GOAL 6: PROMOTE AND 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).

Economic Development Goal 6



Addressing Goal 6

- Open-ended comments
 - Some comments pushed to minimize mining and dig sites when possible
 - Many comments suggested tightening oversight of mining impacts (including water quality and trucking)
- The MD Land Use Article requires a mineral resources element (§ 3-107)
 - A mineral resources element shall incorporate land use policies and recommendations for regulations:
 - to balance mineral resource extraction with other land uses; and
 - to the extent feasible, to prevent the preemption of mineral resources extraction by other uses.
- Recommendation
 - Maintain Goal 6 as written due to state requirements

Support for Trades and Education

- Open-ended comments
 - Several comments calling for specifically supporting trades
 - Individual text request explicitly add support for education and helping students
- Recommendation:
 - Add a new action under Policy 2.1 to support education in trades
 - Add new policy under Goal 2 to collaborate with local schools to support positive learning outcomes



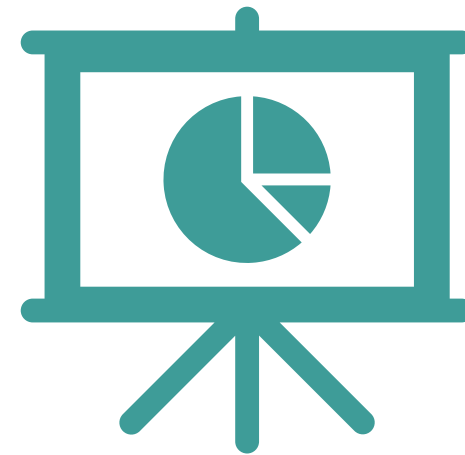
Environment and Natural Resources



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Overall Support

- **4 of the 4 Goals** (100%) were supported by at least 70% of participants



Local Organizations

- Open-ended comments
 - Several commenters mentioned the need to explicitly recognize the work of local environmental organizations (both for land and water) and formalize partnerships with them to promote stewardship and education
- Recommendation
 - Add collaboration with local organizations to Policy 1.2, Policy 1.4, Policy 3.1, Policy 3.3, and Policy 4.5



Improving Wildlife Habitat Through the Built Environment

- Open-ended comments
 - Support bird-safe design
 - Consider becoming a Dark Sky Community
 - Consider becoming a Quiet Community
 - Support understory plants to support wildlife habitat (not just trees)
- Recommendation
 - Create a new policy under Goal 3 to support wildlife habitat in the built environment, and add the four comments above as actions



Protect Forests and Green Infrastructure

- Open-ended comments
 - Request for clarity on implementation of
 - Policy 1.1 Identify and Map Critical Habitats
 - Policy 1.3 Maintain and Enhance Forest Cover
- Recommendation
 - Adjust Policies and Action 1.1, 1.3.1, 1.3.2, 1.3.3 to make intent and implementation more clear



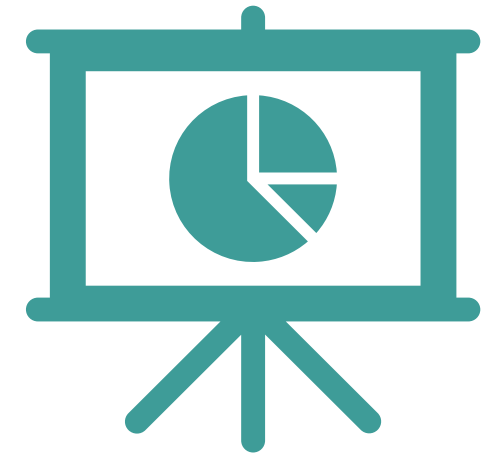
Transportation



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Overall Support

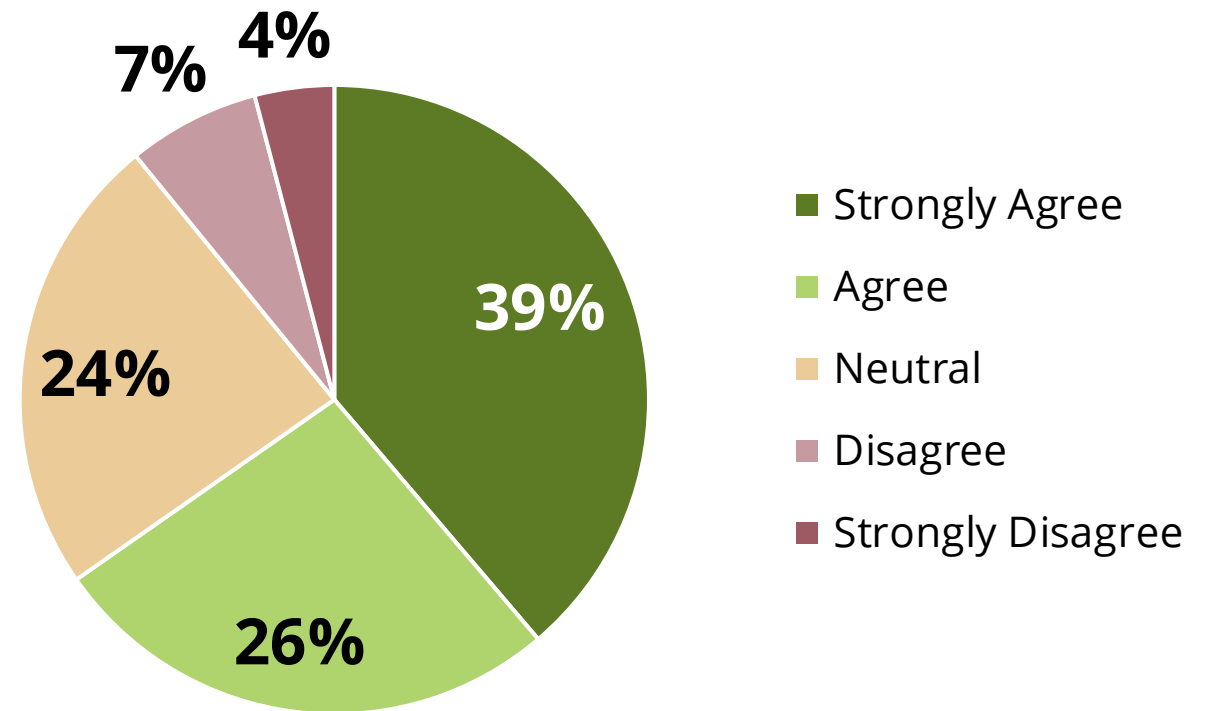
- **16 of the 23 Goals** (70%) were supported by at least 70% of participants
- **Goal #2** was supported by 65% of participants
- **Goal #14** was supported by 67% of participants
- **Goal #16** was supported by 55% of participants
- **Goal #17** was supported by 65% of participants
- **Goal #18** was supported by 58% of participants
- **Goal #22** was supported by 54% of participants
- **Goal #23** was supported by 62% of participants



GOAL 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.

Transportation Goal 2



Addressing Goal 2

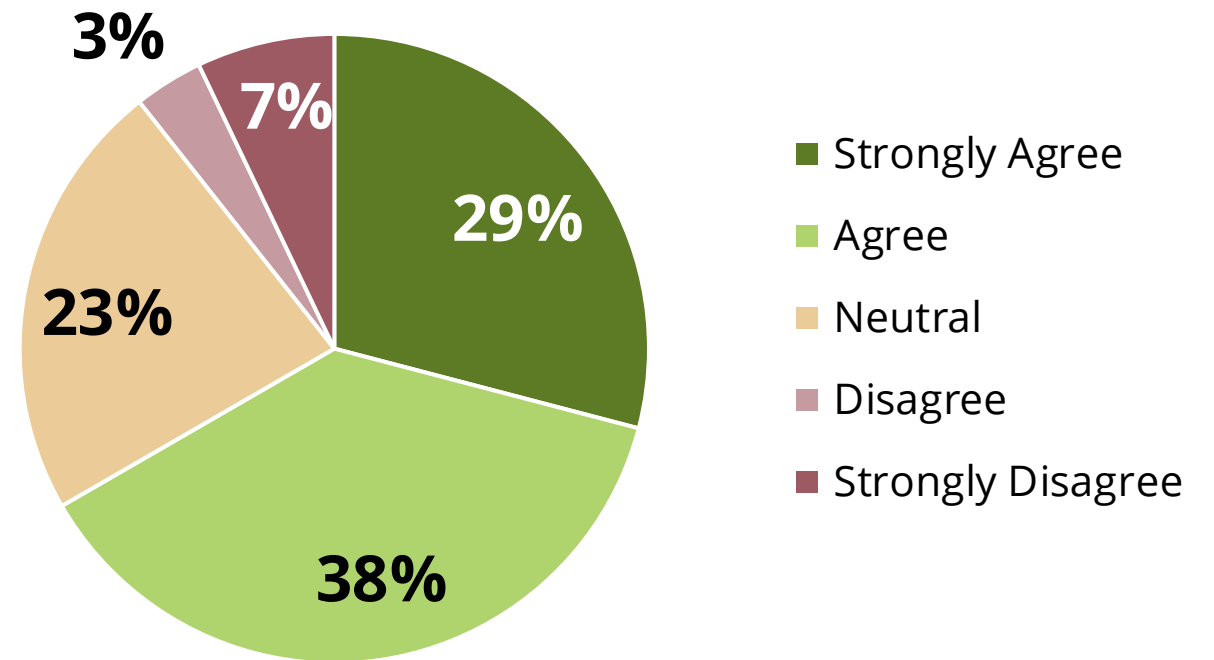
- Open-Ended Comments
 - Several comments requested making space on the roads for buggies and bicycles, with wider shoulders on rural roads and a buggy/bicycle lane on bridge projects
 - No common themes opposing bicycles
- Recommendation:
 - Since 65% of participants supported Goal 2, 11% did not support Goal 2, and the policies and actions in Goal 2 do not indicate that bicycles should be prioritized over other modes, it would be appropriate to keep this goal as-is



GOAL 14: MAINTAIN AND BUILD UPON THE EFFECTIVE AND 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.

Transportation Goal 14



Addressing Goal 14

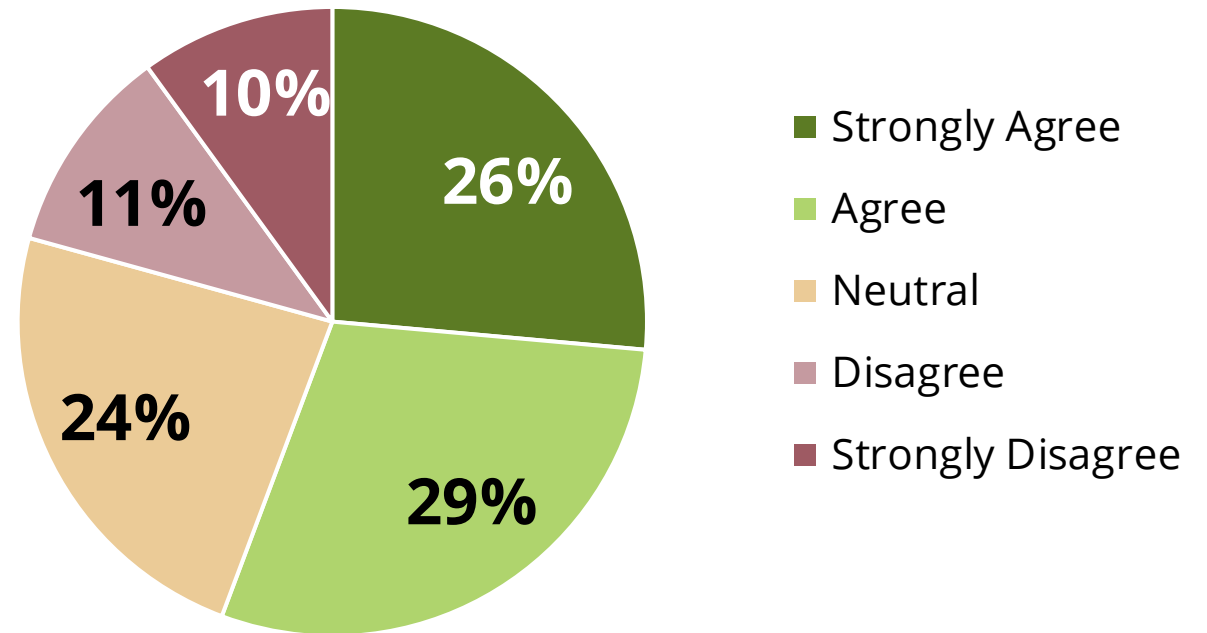
- Open-Ended Comments
 - No clear themes about transit management or administration
 - Split views generally on desired transit scale and funding, but Goals 11, 12, and 13 had at least 74% support
- Recommendation:
 - Since 67% of participants supported Goal 14, 10% did not support Goal 14, and the policies and actions in Goal 14 do not indicate that transit management should be prioritized over other transportation issues, it would be appropriate to keep this goal as-is



GOAL 16: LEVERAGE POTENTIAL PASSENGER FERRY TO DRIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND TOURISM

Transportation Goal 16

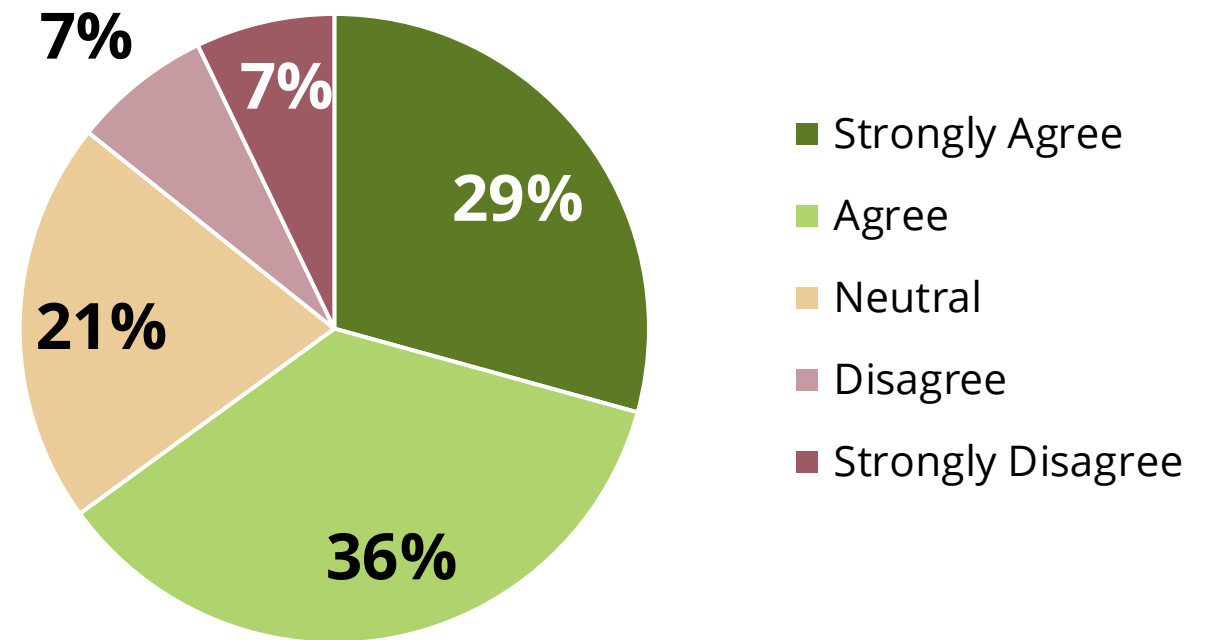
Establish St. Mary's County as a key destination on the Chesapeake Bay by using a new passenger ferry service to attract tourists, support local businesses, and generate sustainable economic activity.



GOAL 17: FOSTER REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY THROUGH INTER-COUNTY COLLABORATION

Strengthen regional partnerships and enhance mobility across the Chesapeake Bay by actively participating in the five-county consortium and ensuring the successful integration of St. Mary's County into a bay-wide ferry network.

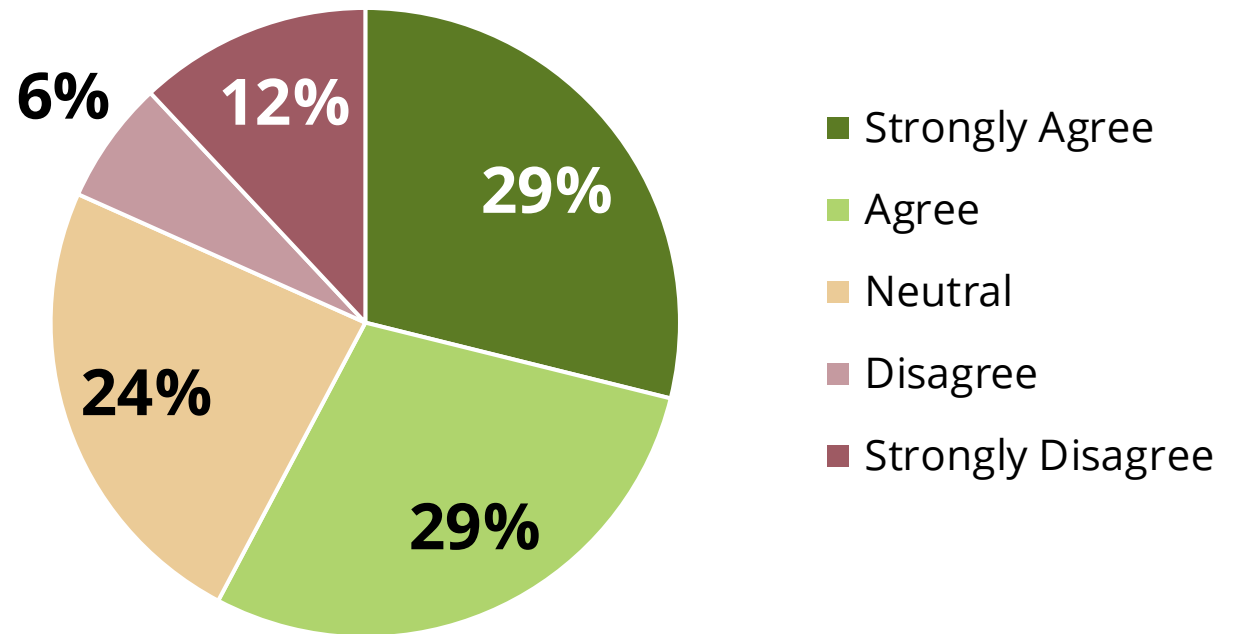
Transportation Goal 17



GOAL 18: PROMOTE THE SUCCESSFUL AND SUSTAINABLE IMPLEMENTATION OF FERRY SERVICE

Develop the necessary infrastructure, secure stable funding, and establish a viable operational plan to launch and maintain a reliable and efficient passenger ferry service in St. Mary's County.

Transportation Goal 18



Addressing Goals 16, 17, and 18

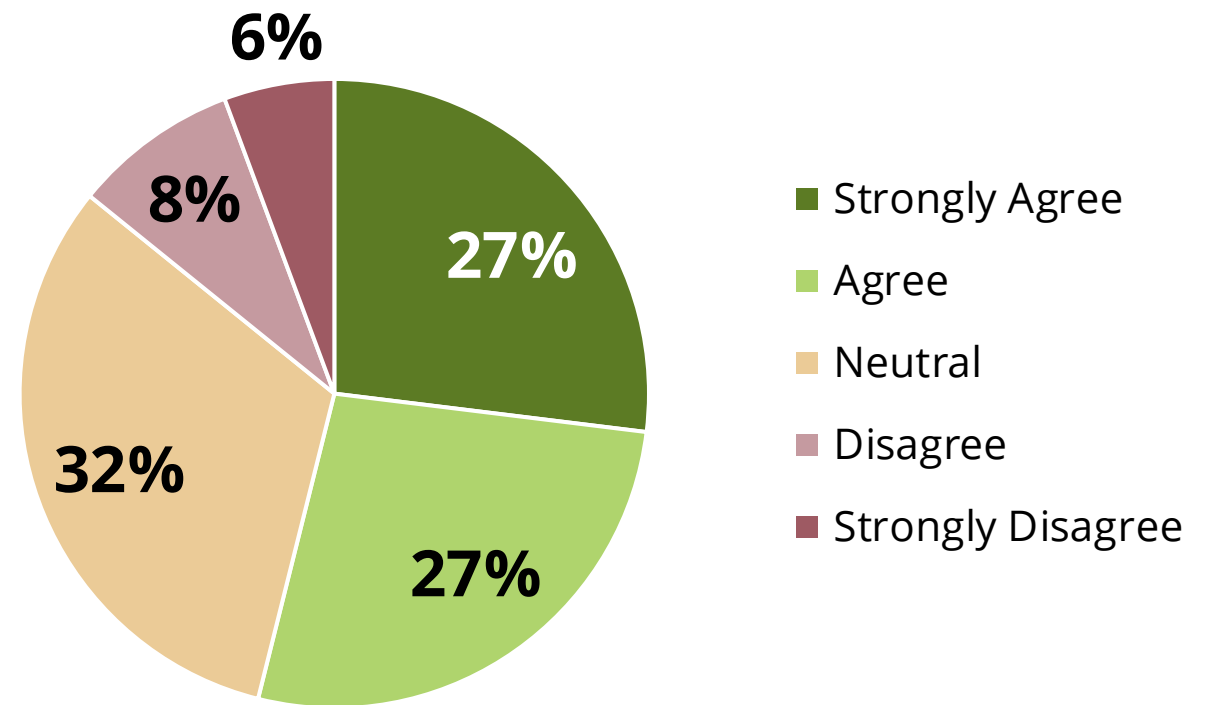
- Open-Ended Comments
 - Confusion and caution around ferry service
 - Purpose (who does it serve?)
 - Impacts (transportation, tourism, etc.)
 - Seasonality (would it operate in winter?)
 - Feasibility (cost and other resources)
- Recommendation:
 - Consolidate all ferry service goals into one goal
 - Focus on inter-county collaboration and *exploration* of ferry service rather than commitment; remove or reword policies and actions that prioritize the ferry or commit to immediate investments in ferry service



GOAL 22: 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.

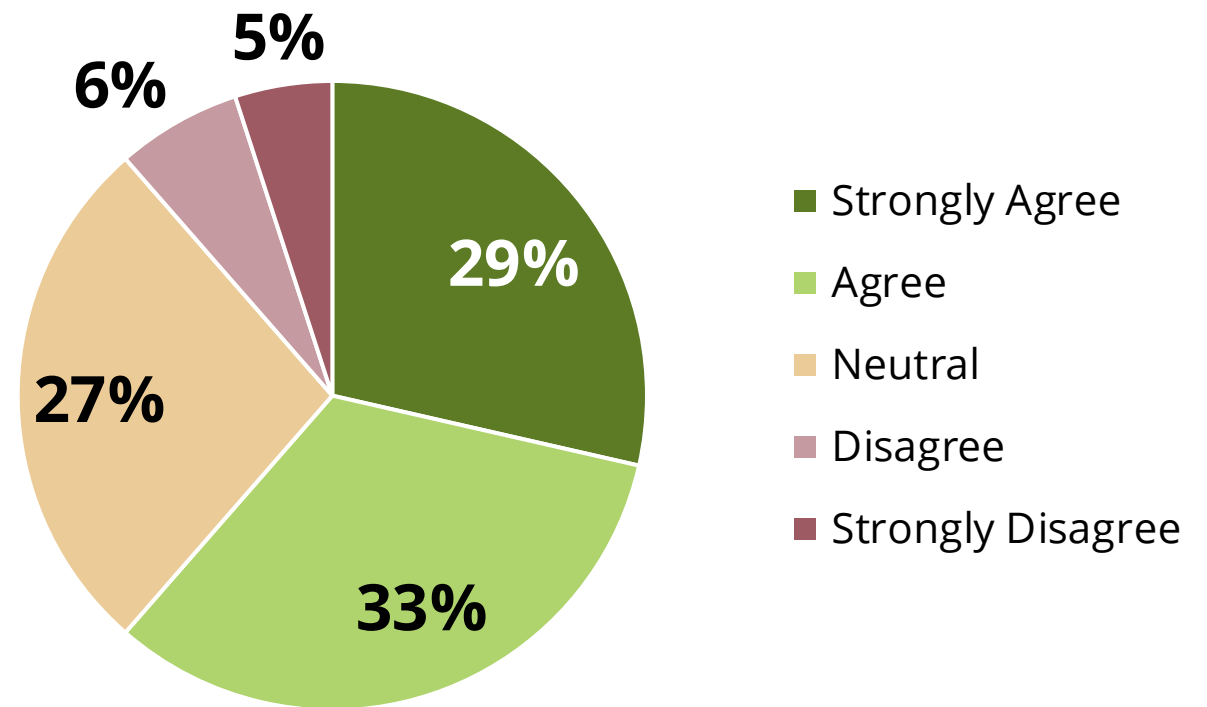
Transportation Goal 22



GOAL 23: SECURE LONG-TERM AIRPORT VIABILITY THROUGH CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND 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.

Transportation Goal 23



Addressing Goals 22 and 23

- Open-Ended Comments
 - Clarify public benefits of airport investment
 - Individual recommendation: combine Goals 22 and 23
- Recommendation:
 - Combine Goals 22 and 23
 - The plan draft currently does not specify any County investment in the airport, but it does commit generally to supporting and promoting the airport. This could be updated to either:
 - Clarify the public benefits of airport investment, or
 - Clarify that the County would not be using public funds to support the airport



Road Connectivity

- Open-ended comments
 - Support for more road connectivity
 - More routes between destinations
 - Require stubs to property lines
 - Require inter-parcel connections
- Recommendation
 - Add a new Policy under Goal 9 to support road connectivity



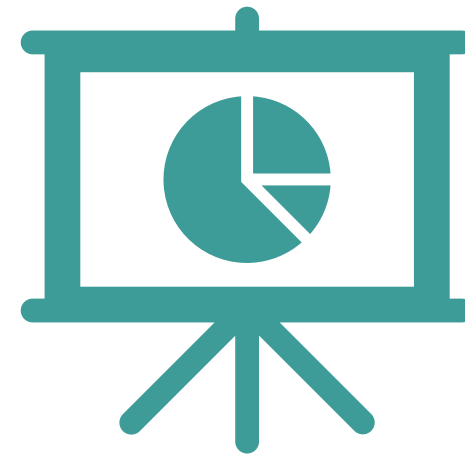
Public Facilities and Infrastructure



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Overall Support

- **7 of the 7 Goals** (100%) were supported by at least 70% of participants



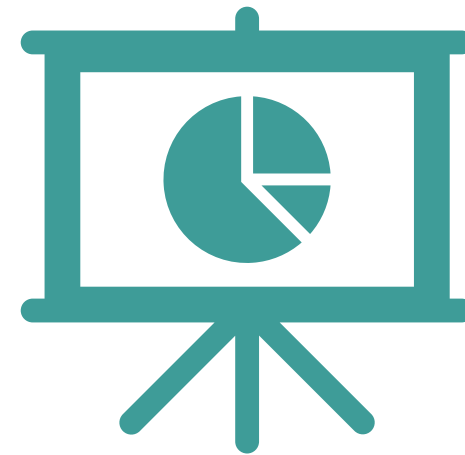
Public Health and Community Services



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Overall Support

- **2 of the 2 Goals** (100%) were supported by at least 70% of participants



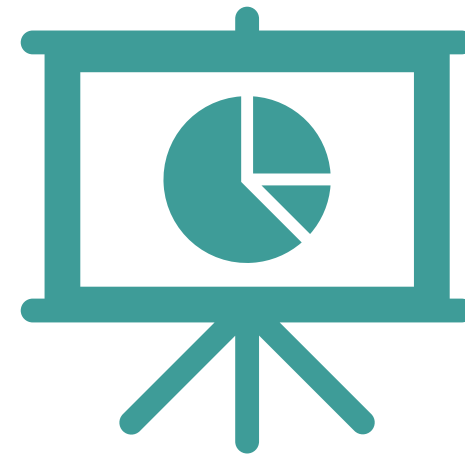
Natural Hazards, Vulnerability, and Resiliency



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Overall Support

- **2 of the 2 Goals** (100%) were supported by at least 70% of participants



Energy Resilience

- Open-ended comments:
 - Several comments mentioned the importance of energy independence and resilience from power outages, including support for microgrids
 - Several comments mentioned solar energy as something to incentivize. Potential solar-related initiatives include:
 - Encourage rooftop and parking lot solar energy installations
 - Support agrisolar projects (e.g., livestock grazing below solar panels) with interested members of the agricultural community
 - Address potential impacts of solar on rural landscapes
- Recommendation:
 - Add a new Policy under Goal 2 to explore projects and programs that support energy resilience and independence while maintaining rural landscapes



Living Shorelines

- Open-ended comments:
 - Request for more clarity on implementation of Policy 1.5 Strengthen Shoreline Protection and Hazard Mitigation
- Recommendation:
 - Adjust Policy 1.5 and Action 1.5.1 to make intent and implementation more clear



For More Information

To learn more about the St. Mary's 2050 Plan and review a full draft of the plan, please visit:

<https://www.stmaryscountymd.gov/StMarys2050/>

