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MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning Commission of St. Mary's County
FROM: SMC Project Team & Clarion Associates
DATE: July 13, 2026
RE: Memo #2 - Summary of State Agency Reviews and Recommendations

INTRODUCTION

As required by state law, a copy of the Public Hearing Draft was sent to the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) to distribute to state agencies as part of the "clearinghouse review" on April 30, 2026. The following state agencies provided feedback on the draft plan: Maryland Department of Planning (MDP), Maryland Department of Commerce and Office of Military and Federal Affairs, Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), and Maryland Historical Trust (MHT).

In general, the feedback identified that the Public Hearing Draft of the plan **addresses state planning requirements**. On July 6, 2026, the Project Team reached out to MDP to seek clarification on a statement included in MDP's cover letter dated June 26, 2026. At the end of the first paragraph, the following statement appears: "MDP's attached review comments reflect the agency's thoughts on ways to strengthen St. Mary's 2050 and satisfy the requirements of Maryland's Land Use Article" (see page 1 of MDP's letter). In his reply to the Project Team's inquiry, Carter Reitman, Lead Housing Planner at MDP, confirmed that the agency's role was not to confirm compliance with the state law, but instead, was limited to offering feedback and **suggestions for consideration** that would advance the plan to meet the highest level of planning best practices. While these recommendations are commendable, they were also made without the benefit of being a part of community conversations held as the draft plan was being developed. To assist with the Planning Commission's consideration of the state agencies' recommendations, this memorandum provides a summary of comments from state agencies and proposed edits prepared by the Project Team and Clarion Associates in response to these comments.

SUMMARY OF STATE AGENCY COMMENTS

1. Maryland Department of Planning (MDP)

Dated June 26, 2026 from Joe Griffiths, Director

MDP's letter:

- a. Explains that the agency's comments "reflect the agency's thoughts on ways to strengthen St. Mary's 2050 and satisfy the requirements of Maryland's Land Use Article." (see page 1 of MDP's "Review Comments" document). Members of the Project Team sought clarification from MDP, which did confirm that "(n)othing in the cover letter assesses whether this or any plan complies with the Land Use Article. The intent of MDP's comments and recommendations is always to improve the plan."
- b. Recommends that St. Mary's consider accessibility when the plan is adopted and posted on the County's website.
- c. States that "Our suggestions are intended to help further the implementation" of the County's own visions. (see page 2 of MDP's "Review Comments" document).
- d. Offers suggestions regarding certain facets of the plan and provides the following conclusions related to Minimum Planning Requirements:
 - i. Development Regulations Element: "St. Mary's 2050 addresses the requirements for Development Regulations in its Growth Management Element" (see page 2 of MDP's "Review Comments" document).
 - ii. Housing Element: "St. Mary's 2050 addresses the requirements for the housing element in its Housing Element chapter" (see page 3 of MDP's "Review Comments" document).
 - iii. Sensitive Areas Element: "St. Mary's 2050 addresses the requirements for the sensitive areas element in its Environment and Natural Resources Element (Sensitive Areas & Critical Areas of State Concern subsection). St. Mary's 2050 appears to meet its statutory requirement to consider wildlife movement and habitat connectivity through the policies and actions associated with Goal 1: Protect and Enhance Sensitive Areas and Areas of Critical State Concern" (see page 4 of MDP's "Review Comments" document).
 - iv. Transportation Element: "St. Mary's 2050 generally addresses the requirements for the transportation element in its Transportation Element" (see page 5 of MDP's "Review Comments" document). It is important to note

that the County did update its Transportation Plan in 2025, which outlines future projects that consider various modes and means of transportation (roadways, buggies, bicycle and pedestrian facilities) as well as improvements/expansion of public transit, airport facilities, emergency evacuation routes, and an electric vehicle infrastructure plan.

- v. Water Element: Several statements acknowledge the inclusion of information in the plan that support water resource plan requirements. The MDP letter recommends additional work to identify ways to increase sewer capacity to meet land development potential and that the County should consider conducting water/sewer capacity/demand analyses to demonstrate whether there is sufficient capacity to support the policies, actions and development capacity (see page 8 of MDP's "Review Comments" document). It is important to note that Growth Management Goal 9, Policy 9.1, and Action 9.1.1 address development of infrastructure to serve water and sewer needs in growth areas.
- vi. Goals and Objectives in Each Element: "St. Mary's 2050 includes goals and objectives in each element that guide the county's development" (see page 8 of MDP's "Review Comments" document).
- vii. Land Use Element: "St. Mary's County 2050 addresses the requirements of the land use element in its Growth Management Element" (see page 8 of MDP's "Review Comments" document). The draft plan also provides a recommendation for improving the colors (for clarity) on the land use map, which was shared with the Planning Commission during its meeting on June 28, 2026.
- viii. Community Facilities Element: "St. Mary's County addresses the requirements of the community facilities element in its Public Facilities and Infrastructure Element" (see page 9 of MDP's "Review Comments" document).
- ix. Mineral Resources Element: "St. Mary's 2050 addresses the requirements of the mineral resources element in the Mineral Resources subsection of its Economic Development Element" (see page 9 of MDP's "Review Comments" document).
- x. Fisheries Element: "St. Mary's 2050 addresses the requirements of the fisheries element in the Fisheries subsection of its Economic Development Element. It also identifies areas for marine use in its land use map" (see page 10 of MDP's "Review Comments" document).

- e. Shares recommendations for additional implementation items, including an update to the County's Priority Funding Area boundaries, evaluation of affordability at targeted income levels, including additional analyses related to furthering fair housing, transportation planning recommendations, supporting implementation of the Lexington Park and Charlotte Hall Sustainable Communities action plans, and additional best practice analyses and related goals, policies, and actions.

2. Maryland Department of Commerce

Dated June 18, 2026 from Matthew Kachura, Senior Research Analyst

At the time that MDOC's letter was submitted, the agency assumed that the boundary of the Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ) would be changing as the result of review by NAS PAX. However, at a Joint Meeting between NAS PAX and the Commissioners of St. Mary's County on June 9, 2026, base leadership confirmed that the AICUZ boundaries would remain unchanged. Nevertheless, MDOC's letter:

- a. Concludes that the Department "finds the plan to be consistent with the State's strategic plan."
- b. Identifies a goal and several policies and actions as important plan components that support the mission of NAS PAX; and
- c. Supports the development of a future updated Compatible Use Study (formerly known as a Joint Land Use Study or JLUS).

3. Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)

Dated May 15, 2026 from John Papagni, Program Officer, Division of Neighborhood Revitalization

DHCD's letter:

- a. Highlights that "Overall, DHCD staff were impressed with the quality of the Plan" (see page 1 of DHCD's letter);
- b. Identifies DHCD resources, online tools, and funding sources that can be leveraged through implementation of the plan's goals, policies, and actions;
- c. Observes that the Plan's Housing Element does not include an assessment of fair housing and that this analysis could be included as part of the proposed housing study identified in Housing Element Action 1.1.2. (see page 3 of DHCD's letter). It is important to note that Plan does include a series of analyses intended to support furthering fair housing on page 54. Additionally, the State's Affirmatively

Furthering Fair Housing [website](#) states, “While Maryland requires its jurisdictions to further fair housing and include an assessment of fair housing in their housing elements, it does not require that a housing element’s assessment of fair housing include any specific analysis. It also does not require that local jurisdictions take any specific action to further fair housing.”

4. [Maryland Department of Natural Resources \(DNR\)](#)

Undated letter from Leah Sheppard

DNR’s letter:

- a. Does not specifically state whether relevant elements adequately address planning requirements;
- b. Questions whether data currently exists that determines “the current and future needs relating to recreation and park development, planning, and acquisition” (see page 1 of DNR’s letter). It is important to note that St. Mary’s County Department of Recreation and Parks (R&P) is currently “developing the 2027 Land Preservation, Parks & Recreation Plan with active community engagement in progress. In working with a consulting firm, the Department has hosted 13 in-person community and stakeholder gatherings” amongst other methods of community engagement.
- c. Provides additional guidance for policy development related to protection of fishery habitats, restoring degraded streams, fostering forest restoration and regeneration, utilizing updated climate change data and living shorelines map layers; and
- d. Provides several lists of state resources to support planning efforts.

In DNR’s letter (see page 1 of DNR’s letter), the agency provides a recommendation regarding the **limitations on impervious surface** (i.e., including numeric caps) in some of the county’s watersheds. DNR asserts that in order to “maintain healthy fish communities, the goal for the watershed development for productive fishery habitat should be a target impervious surface coverage of 5% or less”. The letter goes on to assert that “(t)en % impervious surface represents a threshold for increasingly intractable negative aquatic habitat issues as development continues...”

According to the Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T), DNR’s five and ten percent impervious surface thresholds are appropriately treated as watershed planning guidance. However, **DPW&T does not recommend adopting them as engineering standards** without further study and evaluation, as doing so would risk conflating DNR and Maryland Department on the Environment (MDE) methodologies.

According to DNR's letter (see page 2 of DNR's letter), the Watershed and Climate Services recommended that "all comprehensive plans integrate the **best available climate change data** to inform development, restoration, conservation, and public access decisions" and that St. Mary's County "should reference the 2023 Sea Level Rise Projections for Maryland and the Department's Wetland Adaption Areas data to better understand risk and projected land cover change due to rising sea levels."

The 2023 Maryland Sea Level Rise Projections are acknowledged in the County's 2025 Nuisance Flood Plan however DPW&T has not yet evaluated how to incorporate those projections directly into the design of drainage infrastructure beyond consideration of the draft A-STORM MDE rainfall intensity updates.

5. Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT)

Dated June 29, 2026 from Geoff Anderson

MDOT's letter:

- a. Confirms that "(i)n general, the Comprehensive Plan is consistent with MDOT plans and programs" (see page 1 of MDOT's letter);
- b. Shares information about specific programs that are provided by MDOT and related resources to support these efforts;
- c. Provides a bulleted list of detailed comments for consideration. It is important to note that the County adopted a new Transportation Plan last year that provides specific projects for future roadway, buggy, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, transit, airport, emergency evacuation routes, and an electric vehicle infrastructure plan; several of the detailed comments are addressed in this new Transportation Plan.

6. Maryland Historical Trust

Dated June 26, 2026 from Nell Ziehl, Chief, Office of Planning, Education and Outreach

MHT's letter:

- a. Shares the following feedback: "Overall, we appreciate that the plan emphasizes the importance of the county's cultural heritage and historic properties throughout several of the plan areas..." and "We broadly support the goals, policies, and actions included in the plan for these areas..." (see page 1 of MHT's letter);
- b. Requests that the plan be updated to consistently refer to the Maryland Historical Trust and the Southern Maryland National Heritage Area; and

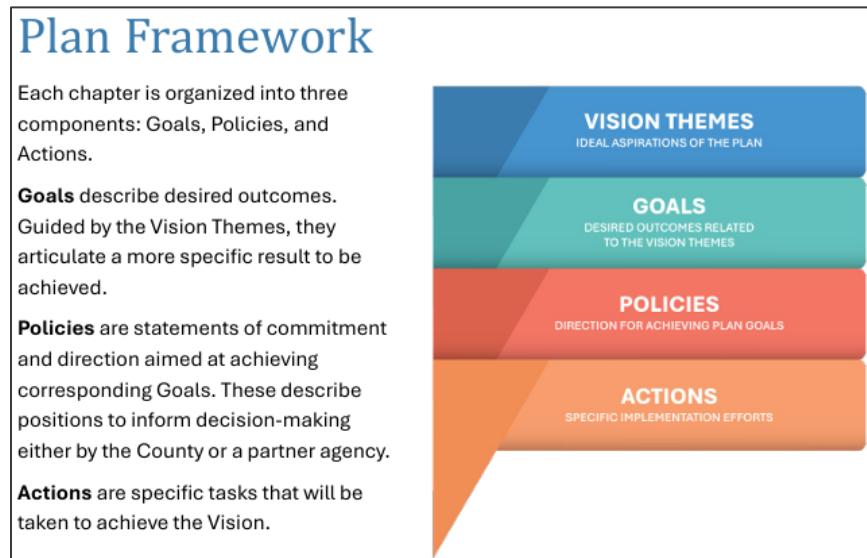
- c. Offers additional comments to incorporate best practices.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADJUSTMENTS TO ST. MARY'S 2050 PLAN

Based upon the information outlined above, the Project Team & Clarion Associates recommend edits to the Public Hearing Draft. These recommendations are organized in the order as they would appear in the St. Mary's 2050 Plan.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Text from page 15 of Public Hearing Draft:



Proposed Edit(s):

Insert the following text to appear as a new paragraph below the text as shown above:

Not all the written policies presented in this plan have corresponding actions associated with them. Instead, many of the policies 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.).

Rationale:

The Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) recommended that the Implementation Element should clarify and discuss how the “Policies” will be implemented if there are no “Action” items provided. The revisions proposed above are intended to address this

comment.

Chapter 2: Growth Management Element

Text from page 40 of Public Hearing Draft:

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.

Policy 1.1: Guide New Development to Growth Areas

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

Policy 1.2: Concentrate Development Activity in Areas

and particularly the Land Use Map and associated categories. Consider changes to better support the development of new smaller starter homes and townhouses.

Policy 1.3: Protect Naval Flight Operations through Land Use Planning

Proposed Edit(s):

Insert the following text to appear as an "Action" item under Policy 1.1 as shown above:

Action 1.1.1. "Update the Countywide Priority Funding Area Boundaries"
- by keeping the boundaries of PFAs current, it helps to enable those areas to be eligible for State funding when needed. Also add this Action to 1.1.1. to the Implementation Matrix.

Rationale:

The Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) recommended the inclusion of an "Action" to update the countywide Priority Funding Area (PFA) boundaries to help guide and influence the State's support for the county's economic growth and development. Typically, PFAs are reviewed on an "as-needed" basis or as part of local jurisdiction review and updates of its Comprehensive Plan.

Chapter 3: Housing Element

Text from page 60 of Public Hearing Draft:

Policy 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), multifamily developments

Action 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 1.1.2: Prepare 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 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 1.1.2: Prepare 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) threshold for workforce and/or affordable housing policies, such as Housing Action 1.1.4: Award Bonus Densities

for the Provision of Workforce and/or Affordable Housing.

Action 1.1.3: 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 1.1.4: Award Bonus Densities for the Provision of Workforce and/or Affordable Housing

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

Action 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 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 1.3: Ensure Age and Ability Friendliness Through Accessible Designs

Proposed Edit(s):

Insert the following text to appear within Action 1.1.2 as shown above:

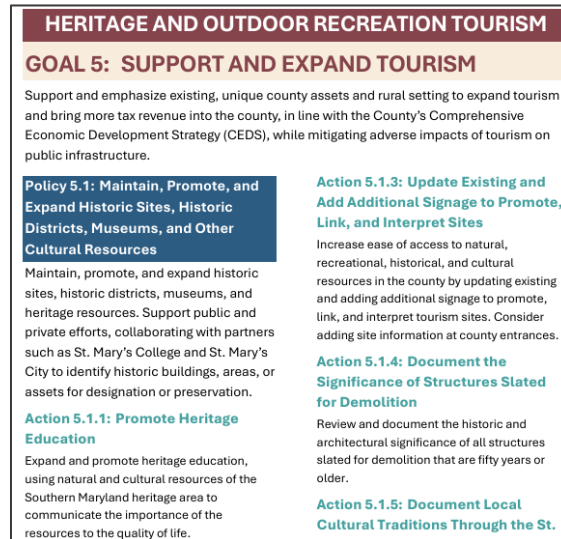
The Housing Study should also consider the use of MDP's "Housing Data Dashboard" and the "Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Guidance" in the completion of its analysis.

Rationale:

The Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) recommended using its "Housing Data Dashboard" to analyze affordability using the income categories and recommends using its "Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Guidance" to provide further assessment.

Chapter 4: Economic Development Element

Text from page 80 of the Public Hearing Draft:



Proposed Edit(s):

Insert the following text to appear in the text below Goal 5 as shown above:

St. Mary's County is a Certified Local Government (CLG) through the Maryland Historic 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 with rural settings 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.

Rationale:

The Maryland Historic Trust (MHT) recommended including a general statement that the County is a Certified Local Government and a part of the Southern Maryland Heritage Area and the County should, where appropriate utilize state incentive programs to accomplish these actions, including (but not limited to) the Maryland Historic Revitalization Tax Credit Program and grants from the Maryland Heritage Areas Program, as well as MHT's Historic Preservation Capital and Non-Capital Grant Programs, African American Heritage Preservation Fund, and CLG Program, in Policy 5.1. "Maintain, Promote, and Expand Historic Sites, Historic Districts, Museums, and Other Cultural Resources" on page 80.

Text from page 81 of Public Hearing Draft:

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

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 Inventory of Historic Properties, Southern Maryland National Heritage Area, Maryland Arts and Entertainment Districts, Maryland's Scenic Byways (Religious Freedom and Star-Spangled Banner), and Maryland Historic Trust Certified Local Government Status.

Proposed Edit(s):

Revise the text within Action 5.1.6 to correct the various programs and should read as follows:

This includes pursuing official State and Federal recognition of the County's historic sites, arts and entertainment districts, and eligible roads and their vicinities. Programs may include (but are not limited to), 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).

Rationale:

The Maryland Historic Trust (MHT) recommended changing the 2nd sentence of Action 5.1.6. "Promote the Designation of and Investment in Historical Sites, Historic Districts, and Heritage Resources" to state "This includes pursuing official State and Federal recognition of the County's historic sites, 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)."

Chapter 5: Environmental and Natural Resources Element

Text from page 96 of Public Hearing Draft:

Action 1.4.6: Protect Submerged Aquatic Habitats

Identify and protect areas of SAV and anadromous fish spawning waters, and support restoration efforts in historically vegetated areas.

Proposed Edit(s):

Revise the text beneath Action 1.4.6. to read as follows:

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

Rationale:

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) recommended restoration activities don't return spawning or nursery fish habitat to the original condition and use of this approach is recommended solely for highly degraded watersheds. In contrast, land preservation in low development watersheds should be prioritized to maintain anadromous fish spawning and nursery habitat.

Chapter 6: Transportation Element

Text from page 107 of Public Hearing Draft:

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-SMMP), 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 multifamily housing, medical facilities, educational institutions, major employers, and shopping areas in route planning. However, transit dependency is expanding beyond current service routes,

Proposed Edit(s):

Insert current STS service and ridership information for inclusion into the plan. Future service planning, including identification of candidate destinations and corridors for expansion will be addressed through the two upcoming route studies (Transit Development Plan or TDP Update and the Metropolitan Planning Organization or MPO Study) and is not available at this time.

Rationale:

The Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) recommended adding this data; the Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T) concurred to the extent that the data currently exists.

Text from page 115 of Public Hearing Draft:

**GOAL 3: ACHIEVE FULL TRANSPORTATION
SYSTEM CONNECTIVITY**

Proposed Edit(s):

Revise the title of Goal 3 to read as follows:

Improve Transportation System Connectivity

Rationale:

Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) recommended this change and the Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T) concurred; replacing the word “achieve” with “improve” supports a cyclical planning process.

Text from page 116 of Public Hearing Draft:

Policy 4.1: Formally Protect the Old Railroad Right-of-Way for Future Light Rail Use

Formally protect the old railroad right-of-way for a minimum of 50 years to support potential future light rail or rapid transit development.

Action 4.1.1: Encourage Use of Existing Crossings of the Old Railroad Right-of-Way

Encourage the use of existing right-of-way crossings on the old railroad for new development, limiting new crossings where feasible.

Proposed Edit(s):

Revise the text beneath Policy 4.1 to read as follows:

Formally protect the former Washington, Brandywine and Point Lookout Railroad right-of-way, the 'Three Notch' corridor extending from the Charles County line near Hughesville south through Mechanicsville toward Lexington Park, for a minimum of fifty (50) years to support potential future light rail or rapid transit development and associated park-and-ride facilities. This preservation is consistent with the Maryland Department of Transportation's report to the General Assembly entitled 'Hughesville to Lexington Park Right-of-Way Preservation Study.' The County will preserve corridor continuity through the development review process, through coordination with MDOT and the Maryland Transit Administration, and through acquisition or dedication as opportunities arise. In the interim, the corridor is maintained as the Three Notch Trail, a shared-use facility compatible with eventual transit conversion.

Revise the text beneath Action 4.1.1 to read as follows:

Through the subdivision and site plan review process, direct new development to use existing crossings of the old railroad right-of-way and limit new crossings where feasible, in order to maintain the contiguity and transit viability of the corridor. The County will maintain an inventory of existing crossings and will

evaluate crossing consolidation in connection with major development adjacent to the corridor.

Rationale:

The Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) recommended providing more clarity on Policy 4.1. The Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T) provided the above language and the Department of Recreation and Parks (R&P) concurred.

Text from page 120 of Public Hearing Draft:

Policy 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.

Proposed Edit(s):

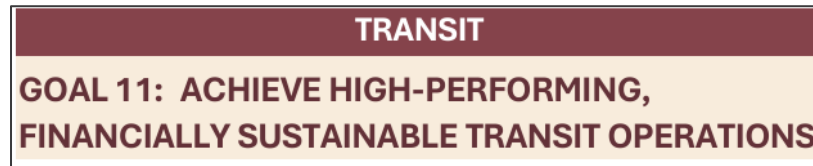
Insert the following text to appear as an “Action” item under Policy 7.1 as shown above:

Action 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.” Also add Action 7.1.1 to the Implementation Matrix.

Rationale:

The Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) recommended the prioritization of maintenance and repair of current transportation systems in Goal 7, page 120.

Text from page 124 of Public Hearing Draft:



Proposed Edit(s):

Revise the title of Goal 3 to read as follows:

Improve High-Performing, Financially Sustainable Transit Operations

Rationale:

Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) recommended this change and the Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T) concurred; replacing the word “achieve” with “improve” supports a cyclical planning process.

Text from page 125 of Public Hearing Draft:



Proposed Edit(s):

Insert the following into the text below Action 12.3.1 so that it reads as follows:

Promote and advocate for public transit systems and connections through collaboration with local and regional partners including continued collaboration with the Maryland Transit Authority (MTA) Office of Statewide Planning on regional transit and locally operated transit services.

Rationale:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) recommended that this language be added; the Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T) concurred. It is important to note that DPW&T actively coordinates with the MTA Office of Statewide Planning. Most recently, in September 2025, DPW&T participated in a Southern Maryland consolidated transportation discussion involving multiple transit providers, facilitated by the KFH Group on behalf of the MTA Office of Statewide Planning.

GOAL 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.

Proposed Edit(s):

Insert the following text to appear as Policy 12.4 and read as follows:

Policy 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.

Rationale:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) recommended that this language be added; the Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T) concurred.

Text from page 126 of Public Hearing Draft:

Action 13.3.2: Identify the Evolving Needs of Public Ridership

Identify the evolving needs of public ridership, especially among targeted groups, through dedicated outreach and education programs to expand ridership.

Proposed Edit(s):

Revise the text beneath Action 13.3.2 to read as follows:

Identify the evolving needs of public ridership, including rural transit gaps, especially among targeted groups, through dedicated outreach and education programs to expand ridership.

Rationale:

The Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) recommended evaluating microtransit potential to address transit needs and gaps and the Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T) concurred; rural transit gaps will be a topic covered in two of the upcoming route studies (Transit Development Plan or TDP Update and the Metropolitan Planning Organization or MPO Study).

Text from page 127 of Public Hearing Draft:

GOAL 15: INCREASE RIDERSHIP THROUGH STRATEGIC OUTREACH AND 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 15.1: Improve the Overall Quality and Availability of Public Transportation Programs	and adapting services based on performance and rider feedback.
Improve the overall quality and availability of public transportation programs and service to all citizens.	Policy 15.3: Encourage Widespread Use of Transit as a Primary Mode of Travel
Policy 15.2: Meet Growing and Evolving Transit Demand by	Encourage widespread use of transit as a primary means of travel to achieve community-wide goals.

Proposed Edit(s):

Insert the following into the text below Policy 15.1 so that it reads as follows:

Improve the quality and availability of public transportation programs and service to all residents by identifying and improving bus stop deficiencies (on an on-going basis).

Rationale:

The Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) recommended that this language be added; the Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T) concurred, according to

DPW&T, all current STS stops and shelters are believed to be Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant. DPW&T recently completed a Bus Stop Improvement Program in which shelter and bench placements were determined based on the recommendations in the 2019 Transit Development Plan (TDP). Ultimately, more amenities were installed than recommended in the TDP.

Chapter 9: Natural Hazards, Vulnerability, and Resiliency Element

Text from page 169 of Public Hearing Draft:

Policy 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 2.3.1: Expand Public Outreach
Expand public outreach on flood risk, insurance programs, and available incentives for retrofits.
Action 2.3.2: Partner on Retrofits
Partner with local organizations to provide technical assistance for resilient retrofits and hazard mitigation.
Action 2.3.3: Encourage Household Preparedness
Encourage household-level preparedness through stormwater management, rain gardens, and emergency planning.
Action 2.3.4: Producer Education
Partner with 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.

Proposed Edit(s):

Insert the following text to appear as an “Action” item under Policy 2.3 as shown above:

Action 2.3.5 “Support Adaptation of Historic and Archeological Resources at Risk”

Support adaptation of historic architecture and archaeological sites that may be threatened by natural hazards and other vulnerabilities. The National Park Service and

Maryland Historic Trust (MHT) have guidelines that can provide technical support and guidance.

Add Action 2.3.5 to the Implementation Matrix.

Rationale:

The Maryland Historic Trust (MHT) recommends acknowledging that historic and archaeological resources are at risk within the Natural Hazards, Vulnerability, and Resiliency element.

Proposed Edits Generally Applicable to Public Hearing Draft

1. Per MDOT's request, describe all state roads using the following format (e.g., MD 235, MD 234, etc.).
2. Per MHT's request, use Maryland Historical Trust and the Southern Maryland National Heritage Area as consistent terms throughout the document.