





## STRATEGIC PLAN

Updates: July 1, 2021 & June 30, 2022

**January 16, 2020 – June 30, 2024**

[www.stmarysmd.com/recreate](http://www.stmarysmd.com/recreate)

  
James R. Guy, President  
Commissioners of St. Mary's County

  
Approval Date

# **Strategic Plan Approval / Authorization**

## **Recreation and Parks Board**

**January 16, 2020**

Fred Parker, moved, seconded by Chanda Norton, to concur with the Department of Recreation and Parks draft strategic plan.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Patrick Murphy, Greg Weaver, Joseph Longobardi, Fred J. Parker, Christine M. Kaila, Joshua Shaffer, Kathryn Weatherly, Chanda Norton

## **Commissioners of St. Mary's County**

**April 21, 2020**

I move to approve the Department of Recreation and Parks FY2020-FY2024 Strategic Plan as modified and authorize the submission of the initial accreditation application provided there are sufficient funds in the FY2022 budget.

Motion by Commissioner Eric Colvin, second by Commissioner Todd B. Morgan.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Commissioner President James R. Guy, Commissioner Eric Colvin, Commissioner Michael L. Hewitt, Commissioner Todd B. Morgan, Commissioner John E. O'Connor

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## ST. MARY'S COUNTY OVERVIEW


### A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE, WORK & PLAY - Updated

Located on a peninsula in Southern Maryland, St. Mary's County enjoys over 500 miles of beautiful shoreline on the Potomac River, Patuxent River and Chesapeake Bay. The county's location allows for easy access to major metropolitan cities such as Washington, DC (about 60 miles), Baltimore, MD (about 80 miles) and Richmond, VA (about 95 miles). The 2020 projected population for St. Mary's County is 120,150.

St. Mary's County's economic engine – the Patuxent River Naval Air Station - continues to be the area's largest employer. The facility is the Navy's busiest flight test center with over 25,000 civilian, contractor and military personnel. Over 70% of these employees live in St. Mary's County. The county's associated growth in housing, shopping, restaurants, hotels, recreation, and arts and entertainment attracts new residents and supports its many historical and cultural sites. Convenient location and high quality of life make the county a very attractive area to live, work and play.

MISSION STATEMENT

# COMMISSIONERS OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY



The seal of St. Mary's County, Maryland, is circular with a gold border. Inside the border, the words "ST. MARY'S COUNTY MARYLAND" are written in blue. The center of the seal features a shield with a red and white checkered pattern, topped with a crown and flanked by two golden lions. Below the shield is a banner with the Latin motto "PATRI PAROLE FEMINAE". The year "1637" is inscribed at the bottom of the seal.

The Commissioners of St. Mary's County will be:

- Responsible and Accountable to the County's Citizens**
  - Low Taxes
  - Balanced Budget
  - High Ethical Standards
  - Citizen Engagement
  - Quality Customer Service
  - Transparent Operations
  - Support Programs for Youth, Families, and Seniors
- Provide Effective and Efficient Services**
  - Robust Capital Improvement
  - Infrastructure Investments
  - Eliminate Unnecessary Obstacles
  - Enhance Partnerships
  - Use Data Driven Priorities
  - Identify Technological Opportunities
  - Inspire Competent Human Resource Capabilities
- Foster Opportunities for Future Generations**
  - Prioritize Economic Development
  - Achieve Excellence in Public Education
  - Commit to Higher Education Opportunities
  - Provide Quality Public Safety
  - Foster Entrepreneurial Initiatives
  - Leverage Community Priorities
  - Maximize Citizen Contributions
- Preserve the County's Environment, Heritage, and Rural Character**
  - Follow Comprehensive Land Use Plan
  - Support Land Preservation Parks & Recreation Plan
  - Conserve Agricultural Lifestyle
  - Preserve Historical County Assets
  - Lead Conservation Assets
  - Lead Conservation Efforts
  - Promote our Heritage

**MISSION STATEMENT**

**COMMISSIONERS OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY**

**RESPONSIBLE TO CITIZENS**

**EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE**

**FOSTER OPPORTUNITIES**

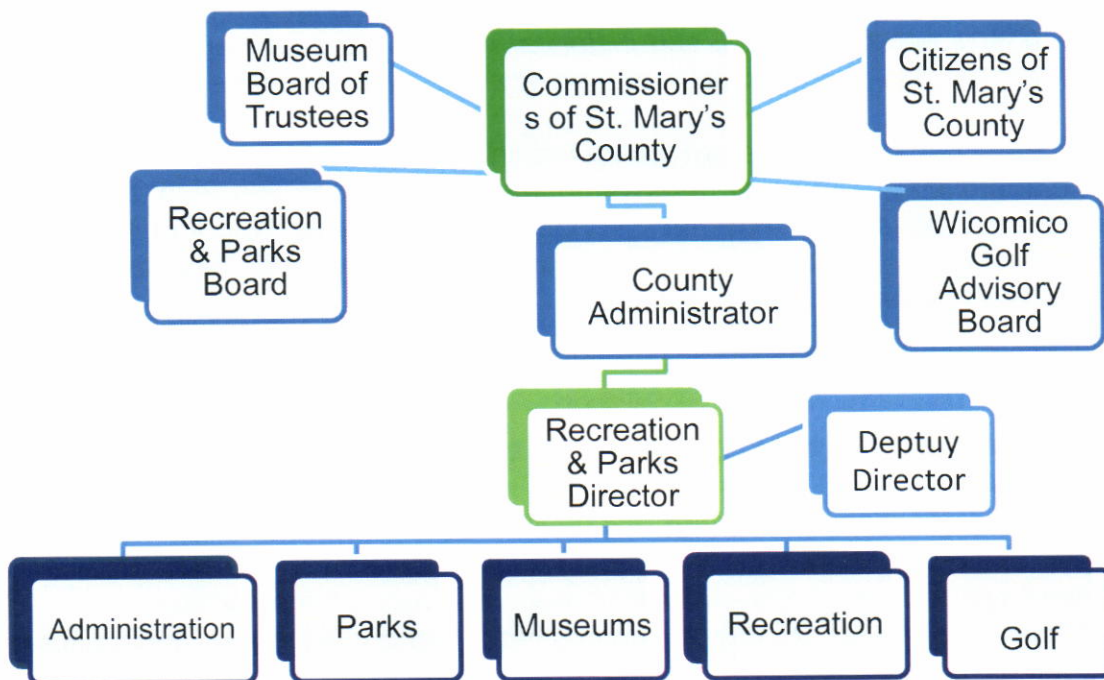
**PRESERVE ENVIRONMENT, HERITAGE, AND RURAL CHARACTER**

## ST. MARY'S COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION & PARKS

The county's system of parks, recreation facilities, open spaces, museums and a golf course, includes a variety of assets and programs that provide a wide range of opportunities for public participation. Recreational, natural, cultural, leisure, and therapeutic activities are available on a year-round basis. A network of public parks, trails, sports fields, courts, public waterfront landings and other recreational facilities are managed by the Department of Recreation and Parks (R&P) and are strategically located and accessible to patrons within a reasonably short automobile drive.

### Value Statement

*Setting the PACE – Professionalism, Accountability, Customer Service & Excellence*



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### *From the Director*

St. Mary's County has an established, rich history in providing a variety of natural, historical, cultural and leisure opportunities through the Department of Recreation and Parks. This also includes an effectively managed parks system, an eighteen-hole championship golf course and a nationally accredited Museum Division.



In the summer of 2019, staff embarked on the process to develop the department's first Strategic Plan. The plan outlines a clear path for the future and provides a "road map" for staff and stakeholders to follow for projects and activities.

As part of the process, staff developed the department's first vision statement and updated the 20+ year-old mission statement.

*Vision - "A leader in cultivating exceptional leisure experiences in our community."*

*Mission - "To provide an enriched quality of life for the community through the preservation of natural, cultural and historical resources, enhancement of parks and outdoor spaces, and promotion of a variety of leisure experiences."*

The Strategic Plan Working Group reviewed the information and recommendations provided in the approved 2017 Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (LPPRP), and conducted an internal and external Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis to obtain stakeholder information needed to develop the goals, recommendations and action items that follow.

### Departmental Goals

- Provide a variety of quality recreation, leisure and educational experiences for the public to enjoy.
- Create new recreational amenities as needed to address growing community needs.
- Enhance existing parks, trails, waterfront areas and recreational facilities.
- Foster the preservation of our museums and natural, historical and cultural resources.
- Promote community, governmental agency, staff and other stakeholder engagement and participation through partnerships and other innovative means.

Annual evaluation of the plan will document progress on goals, recommendations and action items and will demonstrate to customers and staff just how the department is progressing. The plan will be formally updated and presented to the Commissioners of

St. Mary's County every five years for approval. These evaluations and updates will greatly assist in answering the question "are we meeting our current goals?"

Several resources and partnerships continue to assist R&P as we move into the new decade and strive to meet the expectations of a growing and diverse population.

- Citizen Advisory Boards
- Stakeholder groups and volunteers
- Community input and surveys
- Approved Land Preservation Parks and Recreation Plan
- An aggressive Capital Improvement Plan
- Continued staff development

Recreation and Parks is excited to be a strong part of the mission of the Commissioners of St. Mary's County in continuing to make St. Mary's County *a great place to live, work and play!* We understand our important role and are proud of this Strategic Plan which builds on past experiences and outlines plans for our future successes and accomplishments.



Lexington Manor Passive Park; former "Flat Tops" site

## DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

### *Five Divisions - Administration, Recreation, Parks, Golf, Museums*

#### **Administration**

Through the Department's Director, the Administration Division provides direction, management and supervision of the Recreation and Parks Department.

The Director or his designee serves as the staff liaison to three (3) advisory boards – the Recreation and Parks Board, the Wicomico Shores Golf Advisory Board, and the Board of Trustees for the Museum Division. The Director recommends policy to the Boards, and in turn, to the Commissioners of St. Mary's County, who have ultimate policy authority.

The Director is also responsible for managing the activities of the department's five (5) Divisions. Overall responsibilities include:

- Establishing Departmental goals and objectives
- Developing the county's comprehensive recreation planning document/parks and recreation master plan every five years - the Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan
- Developing and administering departmental budgets (operating, capital improvement projects (CIP), and two (2) enterprise funds)
- Managing personnel
- Overseeing recreational programs and facilities
- Determining operating procedures
- Leading and promoting public relations

The division includes a Deputy Director and two staff members that provide project management and fiscal support to the Director and other Divisions in the areas of project administration, personnel and payroll, and budget management and purchasing.



Canoe/kayak informal launch area at Snow Hill Park



## Recreation Division

The Recreation Division of the Department of Recreation and Parks is responsible for planning, implementing, supervising and evaluating a broad range of recreational programs, services, activities, events and facilities for county residents of all ages and abilities.



Activities in the Recreation Division are planned and implemented by the Division Manager and five Program Coordinators. Activities include:

- Instructional classes for youth and adults in art, aquatics, drama, music, dance, crafts, exercise, therapeutic recreation, sports and hobbies
- Youth and adult sports leagues (such as basketball, roller hockey, etc.)
- Summer day camps and before and after school care centers
- Numerous special events, bus trips and family themed activities
- Therapeutic programs for youth and adults and inclusion services
- Management of the St. Mary's Gymnastics Academy; the Leonard Hall, Margaret Brent, Hollywood, and Carver Recreation Centers; and the Great Mills Swimming Pool, and the Wellness and Aquatics Center.
- Recreation staff also assist civic groups, schools, and other organizations in providing community recreational services through partnerships and volunteer efforts.

All programs offered through this Division are generally self-supporting and are funded through the Recreation Enterprise Fund.



R&P School Age Center (SAC) participants enjoy the playground at Evergreen Elementary School

## Parks Division

The Parks Division provides the grounds, turf and facility maintenance using established standards at 95 parks, public landings and county buildings. The Division is also responsible for maintaining and overseeing approximately 2,700 acres of county government property. This includes nearly 1,400 acres of parkland and 630 acres of grass cutting by a contractor at county parks, public landings and areas surrounding county buildings.



The Division also maintains and manages:

- Twenty-two county parks: 3 regional (typically 100+ acres), 13 community (15 to 100 acres); and 6 neighborhood (less than 15 acres)
- Fifteen county waterfront boat ramps and landing locations
- Nicolet Park skate park, Splash Pad, United States Colored Troops Memorial and Interpretive Center, and other recreational areas
- 118 athletic fields, multi-use areas, and practice areas
- Maintains three Recreation Centers (Margaret Brent, Leonard Hall and the Carver Heights Recreation Center) and maintenance for the Gymnastics Center and Great Mills Pool
- Approximately 11.5 miles of the popular Three Notch Trail, available for pedestrians and bikers



Wieck Playground at Robert Miedzinski Park

## Wicomico Shores Golf Course Division

The Wicomico Shores Golf Course is a 145-acre recreational facility providing golf, food service and banquet facilities. The operation is primarily self-supporting and is also administered through an Enterprise Fund. Wicomico Shores includes an 18-hole golf course, practice facility, golf shop, and Riverview Restaurant and banquet room.



The Golf operation and overall golf course complex is managed by a Golf Course Manager with activities including:

- Affordable individual and/or group golf lessons and clinics
- A junior golf program
- League play, golf outings, and tournaments
- Oversight of golf cart fleet, full-service golf shop and short game range

The Golf Course Superintendent is responsible for:

- Golf course maintenance, including turf management and chemical applications
- Equipment maintenance and facility repair
- Irrigation system operation and general course improvements

The Clubhouse Coordinator oversees the restaurant and banquet operations, which includes:

- Purchasing products and supplies
- Overseeing food preparation
- Training of food and beverage staff and setting rules and procedures
- Handling daily receipts
- Promoting, booking, and managing functions in the banquet hall
- Assistance to the General Manager with golf operations.

WSGC  
Eighteenth Hole





## Museum Division

The Museum Division collects, preserves, researches and interprets the historic sites and artifacts that illustrate the natural, cultural and social histories of:

- St. Clement's Island and the Potomac River
- Piney Point Lighthouse, Chesapeake Bay and U-1105 Underwater Shipwreck Preserve
- Drayden African American and Charlotte Hall schoolhouses
- The Old Jail Museum in Leonardtown
- And elements of St. Mary's County history that are not interpreted by other heritage attractions

The Museum Division serves as a resource, liaison and community advocate for all St. Mary's County public and private cultural assets.

Museum Division activities include:

- Design and development of interpretive exhibits
- Collection of artifacts representative of the history and cultures of the Southern Maryland and Chesapeake Bay regions
- Presenting educational events and activities
- Administration and maintenance of historic structures
- Maintaining a resource library in a manner consistent with the Division's national accreditation by the American Alliance of Museums
- Helping to promote St. Mary's County as a premier tourism destination

The Museum Division was re-accredited by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) in 2018. According to Division staff, Trustees and the Friends, "being accredited means that we have met the highest standards of the museum field as prescribed by the AAM. This increases our value in the eyes of our peers, shows that we are using best practices, and makes it possible for the sites to borrow items from other museums for inclusion in our exhibits."



St. Clement's Island Museum, Drayden African American Schoolhouse, Piney Point Lighthouse & Keepers Quarters, and the Old Jail

## BUDGET AND FINANCE – Updated

As stated in the St. Mary's County Department of Finance FY2021 approved budget document, "The combination of the general fund, enterprise funds, special funds, and the non-county operating funds of the independent boards comprise the entire Operating Budget for St. Mary's County. The Commissioners adopt a separate Capital Budget for the financing of long-term capital improvements." *The overall FY2023 SMC General Fund Budget totals is \$324,829,819. The R&P Operating Budget is \$12,022,994; and the Capital Budget is \$13,413,262.*

### Department of Recreation & Parks Operating Budget

Spending Unit	FY2019 Approved Budget	FY2020 Approved Budget	FY2021 Approved Budget	FY2022 Approved Budget	FY2023 Approved Budget
<b>County Funded</b>					
Administration	\$1,202,087	\$1,236,103	1,282,973	1,303,764	1,401,293
Parks Maintenance	2,156,478	2,405,232	2,196,879	2,748,589	2,724,739
Museum Division	561,720	606,725	674,306	763,715	827,985
Grants	25,000	25,000	25,000	35,000	30,101
Non-Profit Agencies	115,842	135,200	135,600	138,200	166,700
<b>County Funded Subtotal</b>	<b>\$4,061,127</b>	<b>\$4,408,260</b>	<b>4,383,812</b>	<b>5,058,922</b>	<b>5,220,471</b>
<b>Enterprise Funds</b>					
Recreation Activity Fund	4,006,391	4,008,046	4,042,587	4,239,311	5,185,790
Wicomico Golf Fund	1,423,807	1,528,269	1,493,979	1,459,638	1,616,733
<b>Enterprise Funds Subtotal</b>	<b>\$5,430,198</b>	<b>\$5,536,315</b>	<b>5,536,566</b>	<b>5,698,949</b>	<b>6,802,523</b>
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	<b>\$9,491,325</b>	<b>\$9,944,575</b>	<b>9,920,378</b>	<b>10,757,871</b>	<b>12,022,994</b>

### Capital Budget

Parks & Facilities	FY2023 Approved
St. Clements's Island Museum Renovations	1,891,387
Park Land and Facility Acquisition	930,000
Elms Beach Park Improvements	1,156,275
Recreation Facilities and Park Improve/Renovations	2,381,600
Central County Park	350,000
Snow Hill Park	1,500,000
Shannon Farm Property	4,243,000
Park Planning Grant	25,000
YMCA Great Mills	581,000
<b>Park and Facilities Subtotal</b>	<b>\$13,413,262</b>
<b>Public Landings</b>	
St. Inigoes Boating Facility	355,000
<b>Public Landings Subtotal</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL R&amp;P CAPITAL</b>	<b>\$13,768,262</b>

\*Please refer to the Approved FY2023 Capital Budget for detailed descriptions of projects and funding sources.

## **STRATEGIC PLAN PROCESS**

### **Vision**

*“A leader in cultivating exceptional leisure experiences in our community”*

### **Mission**

*“To provide an enriched quality of life for the community through the preservation of natural, cultural and historical resources, enhancement of parks and outdoor spaces, and promotion of a variety of leisure experiences.”*

### **Community Identified Needs**

The primary needs and findings identified in the approved 2017 approved Land Preservation, Parks & Recreation Plan (LPPRP) from stakeholder meetings (five meetings held August & September 2016), online survey (September 2016), and staff engagement were:

- Meeting existing needs and expectations.
- Improving access to athletic fields with consistent, good quality surface playing conditions.
- Improving and expanding comfort and safety infrastructure at parks at recreation sites.
- Enhancing and expanding water access and waterfront recreation facilities remains a priority.
- Completing the Three Notch Trail and establishing a connected network of trails.
- Rehabilitation and/or renovation of existing recreation program facilities.
- Development of a new large-scale recreation athletic field complex in a central location within the County.
- Development of a large, multiple use recreation/community center at Nicolet Park or other feasible location within the county.
- Forging strong, collaborative relationships between all county agencies actively involved in tourism planning and marketing.

## **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats (SWOT) Analysis**

The department embarked on an internal and external data collection process to supplement stakeholder information provided in the approved 2017 LPPRP. A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis was done to obtain valuable feedback and information from staff, participants and other stakeholders and to engage them in the process of needs identification and planning for the future.

The first part of the process included gathering staff feedback. A SWOT work session for departmental staff was conducted on October 22, 2019. A larger departmental meeting was held on November 26, 2019 to update staff on the Strategic Plan progress to date and to gather feedback for the SWOT analysis. These meetings brought employees together across Divisions and served as an open and collaborative information gathering and team building session.

The second part of the process included an online community survey. The survey was advertised on the department's website and on social media (Facebook, Instagram & Twitter) and sent to our email list via Constant Contact®. Two county press releases were posted on the county webpage; there was also radio ad, and an article on Southern Maryland News Net. The SurveyMonkey® survey was conducted from November 19, 2019 through January 3, 2020. A total of 752 people responded to the community survey.

A combined summary of the findings from staff work sessions and the community survey is listed below (no particular order). Full survey results are available upon request.

### **Strengths of SMC Recreation and Parks**

- Customer service
- Experience
- Reputation
- Employee talents
- Intra-Division collaboration
- Approved CIP projects
- Recreation programs and activities
- Parks
- Accessible/access/affordable
- Facilities

### **Weaknesses or items that may need attention**

- Aging facilities
- Project funding
- Staff retention at entry level and seasonal positions
- Skilled employee retirements/loss of institutional knowledge
- Parks
- Fields
- Recreation programs and activities
- Accessible/access/affordable

### **Opportunities or enhancements**

- New technology

- Partnerships
- Emerging needs
- Volunteers
- Partnerships with tourism/Visit St. Mary's
- Facilities
- More activities/things to do
- Parks
- Fields

**Threats/challenges to current and future success**

- Perceptions/attitudes
- Environmental issues
- Competitors
- Economic challenges
- Customer choice
- Funding
- Facilities

It is interesting that facilities and parks were noted in all areas of the online SWOT survey. For example – 134 respondents stated that facilities are a strength, but 287 commented on the lack of modern facilities that are accessible to all areas of the county is a weakness. 253 people said parks are a strength and 197 said parks are a weakness. This is due to the need expressed for turf fields and quality of fields for play. The number one strength from the online survey was recreation programs & activities; the number one weakness was facilities; the number one opportunity was facilities; and the number one threat/challenge was funding.

Utilizing the results from the staff and the community SWOT analysis, and the approved LPPRP recommendations, the following goals were developed that target options and opportunities for improvement, growth and success.

**DEPARTMENTAL GOALS, RECOMMENDATIONS & ACTIONS**

**Goals**

1. Provide a variety of quality recreation, leisure and educational experiences for the public to enjoy.
2. Create new recreational amenities as needed to address growing community needs.
3. Enhance existing parks, trails, waterfront areas and recreational facilities.
4. Foster the preservation of our museums and natural, historical and cultural resources.
5. Promote community, governmental agency, staff and other stakeholder engagement and participation through partnerships and other innovative means.



## Recommendations (Objectives) and Actions - Updated

**Timeline for Action Items** = Short - 1 to 2 years; Medium – 3 to 4 years; Long – 5 years or more; and Ongoing. *Note: as actions are accomplished, many will become ongoing efforts.*

**Goal 1:** Provide a variety of quality recreation, leisure and educational experiences for the public to enjoy.

Recommendations	Action Items (1 – 5 Years)
Enhance existing programs and develop new programs, activities and events that are supported by appropriate fees, grants and other revenue sources.	<p>Update the process for evaluating programs and events. <b>Ongoing</b></p> <p>Engage staff to attend ongoing trends analysis webinars and forums to assist with generating ideas. <b>Medium-Complete FY21</b></p> <p>Utilize customer feedback to offer new programs that match current trends and popular requests throughout the year. <b>Ongoing</b></p>
Recruit and retain effective and self-motivated staff members.	Work with the Department of Human Resources to explore monetary and other retention strategies and develop plans for recruiting and retaining a competent work force. <b>Short- Complete FY20/21</b>
Maintain and enhance staff training opportunities.	<p>Develop schedule of annual training opportunities for all hourly and full-time staff. <b>Short- Complete FY20/21</b></p> <p>Budget for ongoing educational opportunities and encourage professional certifications and continuing education. <b>Short Complete FY20/21</b></p>
Continually seek to enhance existing partnerships, while developing new community partnerships, and sponsorships to broaden program and event offerings.	<p>Identify appropriate methods for advertising and research innovative ways for garnering sponsorship support. <b>Short- Complete FY21</b></p> <p>Identify key stakeholders and nurture partners through a systematic approach to solicitation of support through established timelines. <b>Medium- Complete FY21</b></p> <p>Enhance efforts to engage and recruit volunteers, with focus on inclusion and intergenerational attraction. <b>Medium- Complete FY21</b></p>

**Goal 2:** Create new recreational amenities as needed to address growing community needs.

Recommendations	Action Items (1 – 5 Years)
Seek to acquire land suitable for the development of public water access facilities and parkland.	<p>Develop ad hoc groups to discuss and prioritize recreational space needs. <b>Short- Complete FY20/21</b></p> <p>Utilize Program Open Space funds and seek other funding sources for purchase and/or development of</p>

	available park property that meet the level of service goals. <del>Short</del> – <b>Complete FY20/21</b>
Develop a large, outdoor sports complex in a central location within the county. Such a facility should include multiple athletic fields and associated infrastructure capable of supporting league/tournament play for field-based sports.	Develop an aggressive Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that addresses level of service goals for property acquisition; insert link to <a href="#">CIP Budget p. 158</a> . <b>Ongoing</b> <del>Partner with the Maryland Stadium Authority to develop an economic &amp; market conditions study.</del> <del>Short</del> – <b>Complete FY21</b>
Develop master plans for new parks and facilities	Engage with youth sports leaders to determine 5-10-year participation plan. <b>Ongoing</b> <del>Develop master plans consistent with approved CIP, including feasibility study for large, multiple use recreation/community center; insert <a href="#">CIP Budget p. 158</a></del> <del>Short</del> – <b>Complete FY20/21</b>
Consider the development of a countywide bicycling and pedestrian master plan, and associated steering committee, to guide the development of a connected and sustainable trails network.	Utilize the approved LPPRP as a guide for master planning recommendations for new parks and facilities; <a href="#">LPPRP</a> . <b>Ongoing</b> Work with citizens and other transportation stakeholders to identify trail needs. <b>Ongoing</b> Work with MDOT for consistency with state's long-range Transportation Plan. <b>Ongoing</b>

**Goal 3:** Enhance existing parks, trails, golf course, historic sites, waterfront areas and recreational facilities.

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Action Items (1 to 5 Years)</b>
Ensure facilities and equipment are maintained to all appropriate safety standards and regulations.	<del>Revise the current Park Operations and Maintenance Plan to include park maintenance schedule; waterfront sites maintenance schedule; and equipment maintenance and replacement schedule.</del> <del>Short</del> – <b>Complete FY21</b>
Explore new ways to measure attendance, participation and visitation for parks, facilities and events.	Install counters, push buttons, motion detectors, or other means where feasible to assist in measuring attendance and visitation at parks and facilities. <del>Short</del> – <b>Complete FY20</b>
Make recommendations to the Commissioners of St. Mary's County for park and facility upgrades.	Assess current facilities and meet with user groups to determine necessary improvements and enhancements to lighting, playgrounds, fields, parking and gymnasiums, as well as ADA upgrades. <del>Short</del> – <b>Complete FY20/21</b>
Collaborate with state and county partners in efforts to better inform the public of the total inventory of parks, waterfront public landings and other facilities throughout the county.	Develop new or update existing marketing and promotional materials for existing parks, public landings and facilities to include print, signage, web and other media sources. <del>Short</del> – <b>Complete FY20/21</b>  Implement coordinated offerings that create connectivity between parks, trails and museums. <b>Ongoing</b>

Capitalize on tourism and recreational opportunities afforded by historic trails and byways in which the museums and parks are included. **Ongoing**

**Goal 4:** Foster the preservation of our museums and natural, historical and cultural resources.

**Recommendations**

**Action Items (1 – 5 Years)**

Continue to protect, enhance, improve and update the county-managed museum sites and other appropriate county-owned sites.

~~Complete the renovations and enhancements at county-managed museum sites as detailed in the approved Capital Improvements Program (CIP); CIP Budget p. 158. **Short – Complete one site FY21**~~

Develop and promote programs that will improve visitor experiences and encourage preservation of the county's heritage culture and rural character.

~~Promote local heritage awareness through programs, collections and awareness activities (such as an "In Your Own Backyard" program; stories; and work with the local Tourism agency, Visit St. Mary's, on focused marketing campaigns).~~

~~**Short – Complete FY20/21**~~

~~Collaborate with the St. Mary's County Public Library, Historical Society, and other area museum staff to work on joint membership, marketing, and programming. **Short – Complete FY20/21**~~

Assess the county museum site collections and holdings.

~~Promote preservation efforts by sharing the Museum's Preservation Plan for all large assets with the public; hold community meetings; and offer programs that highlight what the Museum Division does behind the scenes. **Short**~~

~~Conduct regular collections assessments as specified in the Museum's Collections Management Plan.~~

~~**Ongoing**~~

~~Hold community days at facilities whereby citizens can have objects and artifacts evaluated. **Ongoing**~~

Promote environmentally sensitive areas as well as opportunities for passive recreation and nature interpretation.

~~Create and maintain trails on county property (**Short**) – **Complete FY20/21** and adjacent to the St. Clement's Island Museum. **Medium**~~

~~Promote increase use of water taxi, public piers, and kayak launches via improved marketing and special offers. **Short – Complete FY20/21**~~

~~Focus on environmental awareness at parks and facilities as part of annual staff training. **Medium – Complete FY20/21**~~

~~Develop opportunities to promote stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed. **Medium – Complete FY21**~~

~~Provide additional opportunities for children to learn and play outside with focus on understanding of~~

watershed resources, forests, farms and fields.  
**Medium – Complete FY21**

Add new and enhanced special events and programs (and self-guided programs, such as geocaching, Find Your Chesapeake, etc.). **Medium – Complete FY21**

**Goal 5:** Promote community, stakeholder, governmental agency and staff engagement and participation through partnerships and other innovative means.

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Action Items (1 – 5 Years)</b>
Continue to involve citizens, agencies and staff in the planning process for development of new park and facility master plans and other visionary documents.	Increase efforts for awareness of public meetings, especially where citizen input is sought, on the R&P and County website, other applicable agency websites, and on social media. <b>Short – Complete FY20/21</b>
Work to eliminate barriers to participation by promoting the many benefits of parks and recreation.	Expand opportunities for broadcasting presentations (live Cable Channel 95, YouTube videos, etc.). <b>Medium – Complete FY21</b>
	Explore opportunities for onsite program registration at applicable recreational facilities. <b>Medium – Complete FY21</b>
	Ensure information is accessible for individuals of all abilities. <b>Short – Complete FY20/21</b> Create new marketing and incentive programs to increase awareness and participation at parks, facilities, events and programs. <b>Medium – Complete FY21</b>
Make use of new and emerging technology for promotion and to improve the registration and payment processes.	Achieve <b>(Medium)</b> and then maintain Commission for the Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) accreditation as a means of accountability, professionalism and responsiveness to the community. CAPRA is the only national accreditation of park and recreation agencies and is a valuable quality assurance tool. <b>COMPLETED FY23</b>
	Continually update the R&P website in order to remain efficient and engaging. <b>Ongoing</b>
	Update program registration software package as needed to stay up to date with current needs. <b>Ongoing</b>
	Enhance Internet connectivity at various R&P sites. <b>Medium – Completed FY20/21</b>

**Note:** Goals, recommendations & actions were developed from the approved 2017 Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan; departmental and online SWOT analysis; and feedback from staff, citizens and the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board. All Actions are contingent upon sufficient appropriations and approvals provided by the appropriate authority.

## STRATEGIC PLAN WORKGROUP



### Administration

- Arthur Shepherd, Director
- Kathy Bailey, CAPRA Project Manager
- *Christina Bishop*, Project Manager

### Parks Manager

- *Roy Copsey*, Parks Division Manager
- Tyrone Harris, Facilities Coordinator
- William Sparshott, Parks Supervisor
- Stacey McCarson, Administrative Coordinator
- Michelle Cogar, Administrative Coordinator

### Recreation Division

- Jessica Hale, Recreation Division Manager
- *Vacant*, Therapeutic Recreation Specialist
- Ken Guyer, *Aquatics & Facilities Coordinator*

### Wicomico Golf Course Division

- *Patrick Dugan*, Golf Course Manager
- Suzanne Watts, Food & Beverage Specialist

### Museum Division

- Karen Stone, Museum Division Manager
- Andrew Ponti, Marketing Coordinator

## **RELATED PLANNING DOCUMENTS**

### **Land Preservation, Parks & Recreation Plan (LPPRP) - UPDATED**

The current Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (LPPRP) was adopted by the Commissioners of St. Mary's County on June 7, 2022. *This plan serves as the Department's comprehensive park and recreation planning document or five-year Park and Recreation System Master Plan.* It provides valuable information and data to formulate goals, recommendations, and actions for the future. The plan includes phased capital and operating budget priority recommendations for programming, parkland acquisition, facility development and other projects. The plan is updated and officially approved by the Commissioners of St. Mary's County every five years. The LPPRP, when approved, is incorporated within the County's Comprehensive Land Use Plan by reference. The plan is also a prerequisite to utilizing the State of Maryland Program Open Space Funds (for acquisition and development).

### **Comprehensive Land Use Plan**

The Comprehensive Plan identifies the protection of forest resources, natural lands, and the stewardship of watersheds and waterfront areas as significant to the county. It includes goals, objectives and policies that promote creation of new and enhanced parks and recreation facilities that provide additional opportunities while preserving and protecting natural resources. The 2010 St. Mary's County Comprehensive Plan's vision statement excerpt: "Preserve and enhance the quality of life by recognizing and protecting the unique character of St. Mary's County as a rural Chesapeake Bay peninsula." *The process to update the Plan is underway and adoption is anticipated in fall 2022. Recreation and open spaces will be key components of the plan.*

### **Evaluation of the Strategic Plan Document**

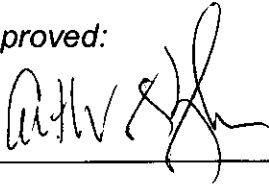
The Strategic Plan will be evaluated annually and updated every five years (or sooner as needed). The Department Director, along with Division Managers and Strategic Plan Workgroup members, will meet to discuss the annual update at least sixty days before such update is due to occur. The plan review and update approval date is July 1 of each year. The plan will be monitored and evaluated to determine if goals and objectives are being managed toward implementation. The Department *has developed* an annual evaluation system document to track the progress and results of the plan. Annual review should lead to continued program and facility improvements. Any contingency plans developed should be noted at this time.

The five-year update may include participant surveys, staff observations, interviews, data analysis, etc. Consideration will also be given to updating the plan in conjunction with the update of the five-year LPPRP as some of the same information is needed and beneficial for both update processes.

**St. Mary's County Department of Recreation and Parks  
Strategic Plan Annual Review**

*As outlined on page 19 of this document, the Strategic Plan is updated annually, and a new plan is developed every five years. The Department Director, along with Division Managers and workgroup members, traditionally work on the annual update and progress review during the months of May and June, with the goal of completion by July 1. The group reviews goals, recommendations, and actions and records progress, challenges, changes, or contingencies as the plan moves toward full implementation. The annual review should lead to continued program and facility improvements and supports our vision to be "a leader in cultivating exceptional leisure experiences in our community."*

Approved:



Arthur Shepherd, Director

SMC Dept. of Recreation and Parks

7/3/23

Date