

2024-2029 | STRATEGIC PLAN

ST. MARY'S COUNTY RECREATION & PARKS

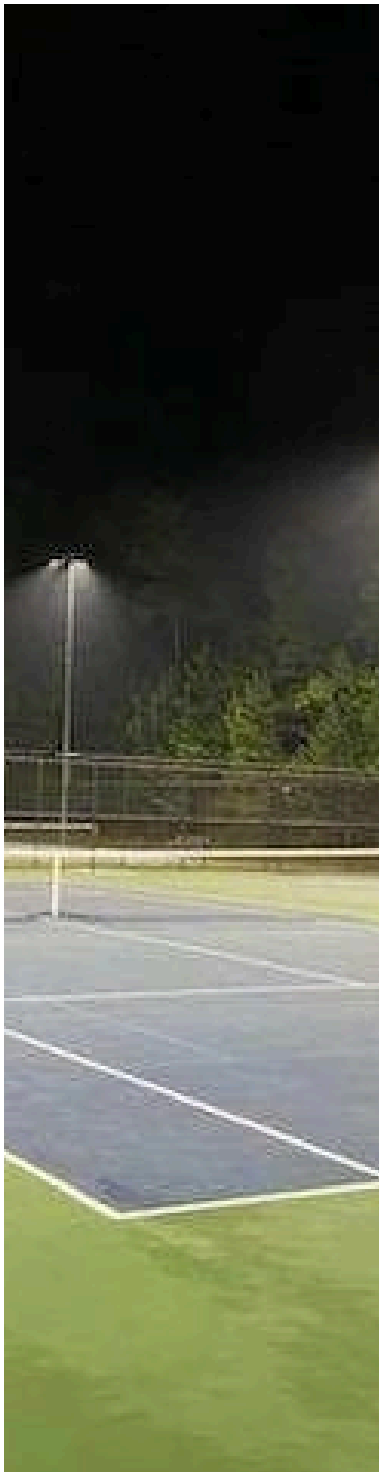


Wieck Playground



ORGANIZATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Leadership Team

Arthur Shepherd, Director
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Recreation & Parks Staff

A special thank you to all department employees for their contributions providing valuable input during the strategic development process.

Recreation & Parks Advisory Board *Concurrence 6/06/24*

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Approved 6/25/24

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

Community Input - SWOT Analysis Summary

Video Link: www.youtube.com/watch?v=h9vIX60ORB4
 Plan Updates: stmaryscountymd.gov/Recreate/StrategicPlan

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ST. MARY'S COUNTY OVERVIEW

A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE, WORK & PLAY

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, D.C., Baltimore, MD and Richmond, VA. The 2025 projected population for St. Mary's County is 116,000.

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 desirable quality of life make the county an attractive area to live, work and play.

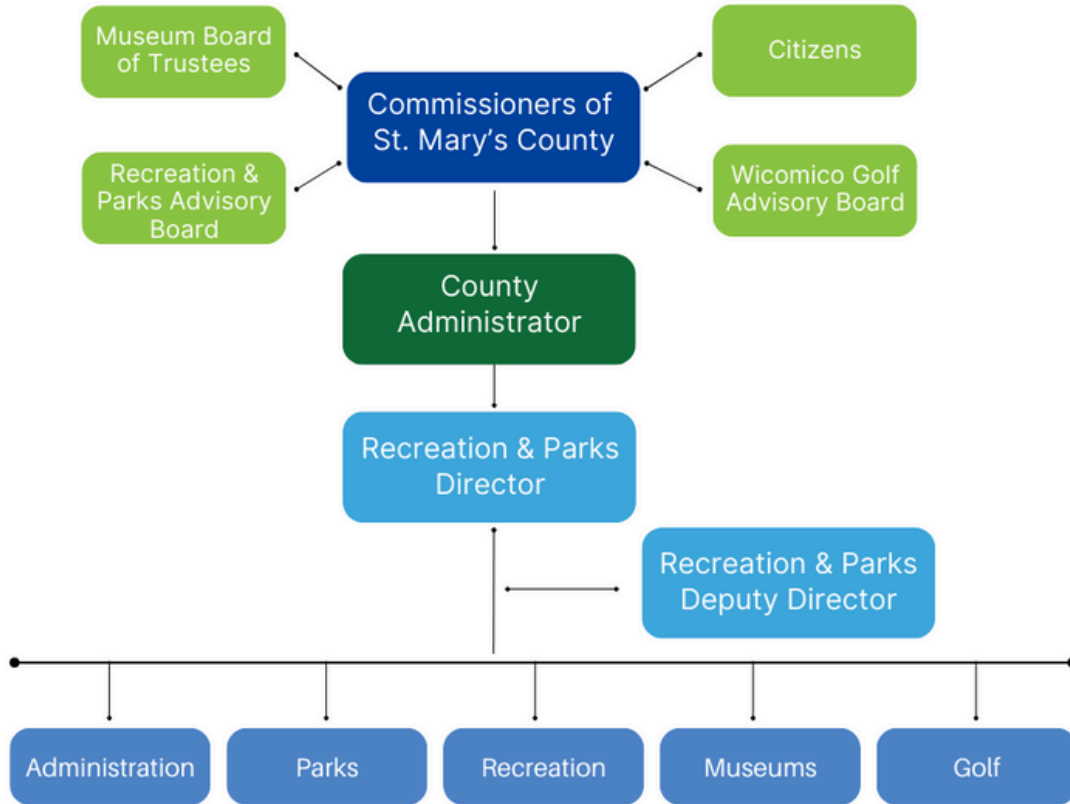


Snow Hill Waterfront Park

THE COMMISSIONERS OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY WILL:

- Be responsible and Accountable to the County's Citizens
- Provide Effective and Efficient Services
- Foster Opportunities for Future Generations
- Preserve the County's Environment, Heritage and Rural Character

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



DEPARTMENT VALUES

A leader in cultivating exceptional leisure experiences in our community.

Setting the **PACE** in public recreation through:

PROFESSIONALISM

ACCOUNTABILITY

CUSTOMER SERVICE

EXCELLENCE

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 drive.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Staff within the St. Mary's County Department of Recreation and Parks fully understand the major role we have in the community as an entity which provides a variety of natural, historical, cultural and leisure & sports opportunities for its citizens. A new Strategic Plan is integral to our future success. The plan provides goals and objectives that serve as a guidepost for short and long term decisions.

Our work is supported by an effective strategic plan, master planning, sound fiscal practices and citizen input. A robust five-year Capital Improvement Project (CIP) plan, approved by the Commissioners of St. Mary's County, also guides what we do within the community.

Every five-years, a community survey is conducted so that we hear from the citizens concerning our strengths and weaknesses. We appreciate the input and utilize the responses to effectively manage change where needed. This type of community input supports our standing as a nationally accredited agency.

We are proud to **Set the Pace** in public recreation in so many areas of park and leisure programming and services:

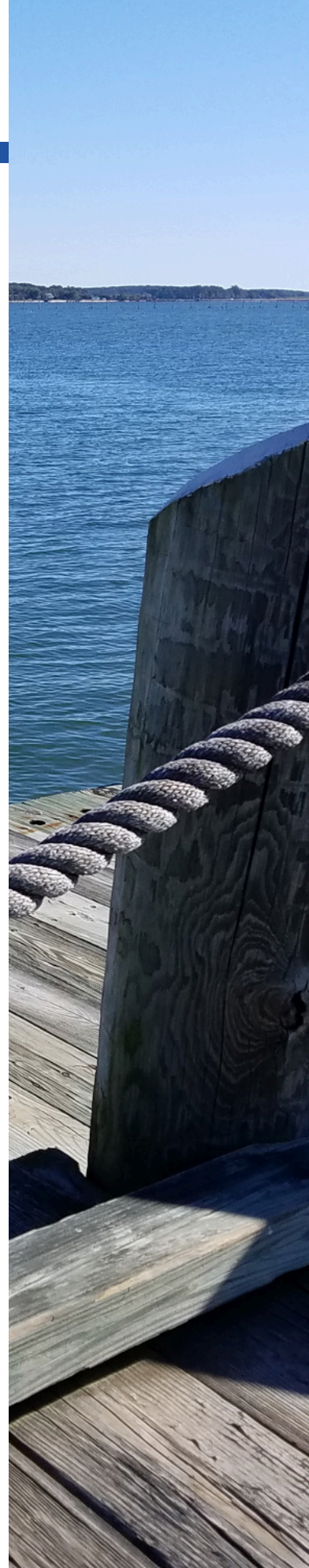
Professionalism **A**ccountability **C**ustomer Service **E**xcellence

We are also grateful for the support of the many volunteers, partners, stakeholders, advisory board members, county government colleagues and county commissioners.

Please take time to review the 2024 Strategic Plan. Reach out to us if you have any questions and/or want to provide comments or suggestions.

Thank you for partnering with St. Mary's County Recreation and Parks as we move forward in continuing to make our community a great place to live, work, and play.

*My best to you,
Arthur Shepherd*





DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

ADMINISTRATION

PROJECTS

- Capital Project Management
- Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan
- Financial Management
- National Accreditation Management



Community Gardens at Lexington Manor Passive Park

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 – Recreation and Parks Board, Wicomico Shores Golf Advisory Board, and 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 division responsibilities include:

- Develops the county comprehensive recreation planning document/parks and recreation master plan every five years - the **Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan**
- Develops and administers department budgets - operating, **capital improvement projects** (CIP), and two (2) enterprise funds
- Manages **personnel**
- Oversight of department **programs and services**
- Determines operating procedures
- Leads and **promotes public outreach** and creative marketing
- Develops accountability metrics for **policies and procedures** compliance
- Identifying needs and implementing **ADA Transition Plan** management

DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

RECREATION

SERVICES & FACILITIES

- Leisure Services
- Recreation Facility Management
- Adaptive & Inclusion Services
- Positive Youth Development
- A to Z Classes for All Ages



St. Mary's Gymnastics Academy

The Recreation Division is responsible for planning, implementing, supervising and evaluating a broad range of recreational programs and services for all citizens.

The division is led by the Recreation Division Manager with oversight of nine (9) full-time staff to carry out the mission. Programs include:

- **Instructional classes** for youth and adults in art, aquatics, drama, music, dance, crafts, health and wellness, therapeutic recreation, sports and hobbies
- **Special events** that includes family themed, social engagement and the theatrical arts
- Youth and adult **sports leagues**
- 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**; 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
- Provide financial assistance through department's **Scholarship Fund**

DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

PARKS

HIGHLIGHTS

- Maintain & Preserve Open Spaces
- Focus on Accessibility
- Provide Tools to Increase Public Awareness
- Athletic Field Improvements



Lancaster Park Turf Field

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-three **county parks**: 3 regional (typically 100+ acres), 14 community (15 to 100 acres); and 6 neighborhood (less than 15 acres)
- Fifteen county waterfront **boat ramps and landing** locations and three waterfront **beaches**.
- 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
- Maintain four **dog parks** throughout the county that feature agility and play equipment, benches, and accessible pavilions
- Maintains four **recreation centers** (Margaret Brent, Leonard Hall, Hollywood, and Carver Recreation Center) and maintenance for the Gymnastics Academy and the Great Mills Pool
- Approximately 11.5 miles of the popular **Three Notch Trail**, available for pedestrians and bikers



DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

MUSEUMS

LOCATIONS

- St. Clement's Island Museum
- Piney Point Lighthouse & Historic Park
- Old Jail Museum & Leonardtown Visitor Center
- Drayden African American Schoolhouse



Piney Point Museum Lighthouse

The Museum Division collects, preserves, researches and interprets the historic sites and artifacts that illustrate the natural, cultural and social histories of St. Mary's County history unique to these sites.

The division serves as a resource, liaison and community advocate for all St. Mary's County public and private cultural assets. Activities include:

- Design and develop **interpretive exhibits**
- Collect artifacts representative of the **history and cultures** of the Southern Maryland and Chesapeake Bay regions
- Present **educational events** and activities
- Administer and maintain **historic structures**
- Maintain a resource library for public use
- Operate overall in a manner that meets the national accreditation standards of the **American Alliance of Museums**
- Help 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.

Accreditation means that the division has met the highest standards of the museum field.

DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

GOLF COURSE

AMENITIES

- 18-Hole Golf Course
- Pro-Shop
- Clubhouse and Riverview Restaurant
- Golf Instruction & Leagues
- Event Venue



Wicomico Shores Golf Course 18th Hole

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. Features an 18-hole golf course, practice facility, golf shop, and Riverview Restaurant and banquet room.

The Golf operation and course complex is managed by a **Golf Course Manager**:

- 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:

- 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

STRATEGIC PLAN PROCESS

Community Identified Needs SWOT Analysis Summary

The department executed a community-wide SWOT analysis gathering input from citizens, department staff, stakeholders, and program participants to engage the process of needs identification and planning for the future. Input was solicited based on the perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the county parks and recreation services.

In-person **SWOT work sessions** were conducted with all department full-time employees and an online survey form was provided for hourly staff. The meetings provided an opportunity for staff from all divisions to gather together in a team environment to collaborate and assist with the creation of updated goals and objectives.

Citizen input was gathered through an online **SWOT analysis survey** that was available for 4-weeks with a total of 1,037 responses received. The survey featured 12 questions specific to demographics, frequency of use and 29 specific

offerings by the department. In total the responses represent 954 households with children under the age of 18 of which 566 household represent 846 dogs - an important statistic when evaluating a need for additional dog parks.

Of the total responses to the SWOT analysis, 69% of citizens visit parks at least monthly. This represents the greatest rate of exposure to Recreation & Parks. Closely following, citizens rate of exposure is through sport fields use and attending events or programs.

The top 3 in each category include:

Strengths: Playgrounds, Historic Preservation & Parks

Weaknesses: Indoor Facilities, Park Amenities & Communications

Opportunities: Increasing Indoor Facilities, Trails & Park Amenities

Threats: Funding, Budget (Costs), Access to Underserved Groups



STRATEGIC PLAN FRAMEWORK

Pillars of Success

Developing Goals & Objectives

The department determined four pillars of success to serve as guiding principals for the development of goals and objectives.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

COMMITMENT TO INTERACTIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS FOCUSED ON CUSTOMER KNOWLEDGE, SERVICE QUALITY, BRANDING AND PARTNERSHIPS.

FISCAL STEWARDSHIP

DEMONSTRATE SOUND PLANNING ENSURING REVENUE GROWTH, AND PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH EFFICIENT FINANCAL MANAGEMENT.

ORGANIZATION INNOVATION

OPTIMIZING WHAT WE DO WELL.

HUMAN CAPITAL

SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH DEVELOPING LEADERS.

The final step to complete the Strategic Plan requires the development of goals and objectives. Input was gathered through community input surveys, employee work sessions and leadership team review and recommendations.

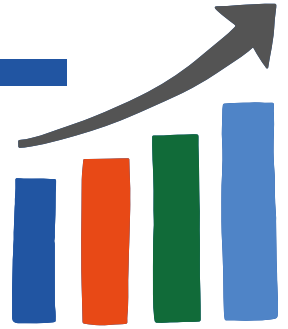
Each objective is assigned specific action items along with a target date to be met by 2029 with varying implementation timelines. Objectives will be met under the following guidelines:

SHORT-TERM: Initiated during 2024 and completed by December 2025.

MID-TERM: Initiated no later than 2026 and completed by December 2027.

LONG-TERM: Initiated no later than January 2027 and completed by February 2029.

The plan is then reviewed by the Recreation & Parks Advisory Board for their concurrence followed by final approval and adoption from the Commissioners of St. Mary's County.



PURPOSE DRIVEN GOALS

The quality of experiences for community enjoyment is paramount to meet the mission and vision of the department. The strategic goals are centered around the 4 pillars of success crafted to guide the creation of innovative strategies that provide quality programs and services for all citizens to enjoy.

01

Customer Service

Provide a variety of **quality** recreation, leisure, and educational experiences while increasing value through new and existing amenities as needed to address community need.

02

Fiscal Stewardship

Demonstrate fiscal stewardship by **enhancing** programs, services, and facilities to generate growth and functionality.

03

Organization Innovation

Promote agency, stakeholder, and community engagement through **innovative** means while fostering the **preservation** of natural, historical, and culture resources in a prudent manner.

04

Human Capital

Create a **sustainable** leader organization supporting an innovative workforce creating organizational knowledge in a positive and creative environment to deliver programs and services.

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.



ORGANIZATION

OBJECTIVES & ACTIONS

GOAL #1: CUSTOMER SERVICE

Provide a variety of quality recreation, leisure, and educational experiences while increasing value through new and existing amenities as needed to address community need.

1.1 Enhance customer interactions and understanding of department offerings by highlighting the benefits of parks and recreation opportunities.

a. Develop educational resources through mission-based media platforms, signage, and at community outreach events. **Short-Term**

b. Engage stakeholders and special interest groups through a variety of education sessions and open house events at least two times a year. **Mid-Term**

c. Implement a comprehensive management plan for engaging and developing long-term strategic partnerships. **Mid-Term**

1.2 Review county demographic data to identify changing trends.

a. Develop metrics report for program management to determine continuation or phasing out of a particular program or service. **Mid-Term**

b. Modify and adjust service delivery for under represented groups. **Mid-Term**

c. Enhance current stakeholder input surveys, offer public meetings, and create input group sessions. **Short-Term**

d. Develop a comprehensive department annual report to include trends analysis data every 5 years. **Long-Term**

1.3 Implement innovative marketing strategies which represent all potential customers, partners and stakeholders.

a. Update marketing plan to encompass strategic actions that identify key promotional initiatives. **Short-Term**

b. Host an annual community awareness event to foster involvement with programs, awareness of facilities, and appreciation of environmental stewardship. **Mid-Term**

1.4 Engage in the ongoing commitment to eliminate barriers to participation by promoting the benefits of parks and recreation opportunities.

a. Enhance marketing materials to be accessible for all individuals. **Short-Term**

b. Engage community partners and have a presence at community events annually to reach different demographics. **Short-Term**

ORGANIZATION

OBJECTIVES & ACTIONS

GOAL #2: FISCAL STEWARDSHIP

Demonstrate fiscal stewardship by enhancing programs, services, and facilities to generate growth and functionality.

2.1 Identify effective means for collecting and reporting attendance, participation and visitation data.

a. Enhance and update participation reports on an annual basis for all programs, events, and services.

Short-Term

b. Develop reporting requirements for all programs and facilities and create appropriate incremental tracking reports.

Short-Term

2.2 Develop master plan that will invest in future projects and current resources.

a. Utilize the approved Land, Preservation, Recreation & Park Plan (LPPRP) as a guide. Long-Term

b. Research opportunities for multi-use, indoor facilities in the central and northern areas of the county.

Long-Term

c. Analyze opportunities for improving current amenities. Mid-Term

2.3 Create budget efficiencies throughout the department.

a. Analyze current trends to provide accurate annual budget recommendations. Mid-Term

b. Utilize a three-year budget for expenditures and cost controls.

Mid-Term

c. Conduct a market analysis for fees and charges to align with three-year budget plan. Mid-Term

ORGANIZATION

OBJECTIVES & ACTIONS

GOAL #3: ORGANIZATION INNOVATION

Promote agency, stakeholder, and community engagement through innovative means while fostering the preservation of natural, historical, and culture resources in a prudent manner.

3.1 Seek to acquire land suitable for public water access, community and regional parks, and indoor facilities.

a. Develop a five-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that addresses land acquisition. **Long-Term**

3.2 Develop comprehensive plan for maintenance and improvement of existing parks, facilities and amenities.

a. Seek community input and utilize the LPPRP to guide decisions for improving amenities. **Mid-Term**

b. Incorporate green infrastructure and environmentally focused initiatives. **Mid-Term**

c. Develop a management plan for the maintenance, preservation, and renovation of historic buildings. **Short-Term**

d. Recommend a comprehensive plan to improve golf course amenities that enhance player experience and increase participation. **Mid-Term**

3.3 Implement use of innovative technology to effectively manage parks, facilities and amenities.

a. Promote department inventory through the use of drone imaging, QR code signage, and website enhancements in collaboration with amenities location map. **Short-Term**

b. Research options for utilizing a GIS platform for asset life-cycle management. **Short-Term**

c. Install security cameras at all parks and facilities. **Mid-Term**

3.4 Explore options to improve current online access and registration processes.

a. Provide recommendations for the purchase of an improved web-based registration system. **Short-Term**

b. Increase WiFi access for public and department use to streamline services and improve security. **Short-Term**

c. Consistently update the R&P website and social media platforms to remain effective and engaging. **Long-Term**

ORGANIZATION

OBJECTIVES & ACTIONS

GOAL #4: HUMAN CAPITAL

Model a sustainable organization which supports innovation and develops leaders in a positive and creative environment.

4.1 Develop a comprehensive professional development strategy.

a. Establish a work force development program to address employee needs and identify recruitment strategies.

Short-Term

b. Develop succession plans to preserve intellectual and human capital.

Mid-Term

c. Foster commitment to staff engagement and professional certifications. Long-Term

4.2 Address needs to enhance and increase staff competencies that reflect Department's values.

a. Analyze current and future demands for programs and services and recommend appropriate staffing.

Mid-Term

b. Identify gaps in staff training and create professional development opportunities to facilitate improved operations. Mid-Term

4.3 Foster employee involvement with an emphasis on stakeholder initiatives, continuing education, and department growth.

a. Identify and provide opportunities for employees to participate in a variety of events, meetings, and partner collaborations. Short-Term

b. Provide opportunities to attend professional conferences, meetings and workshops. Short-Term

c. Provide opportunities to engage with state, regional, and national professional groups. Short-Term



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

IMPLEMENTATION & ACCOUNTABILITY



Snow Hill Waterfront Park

The Strategic Plan provides department direction for the 2024-2029 planning time period. These goals and objectives represent the commitment St. Mary's County Recreation & Parks has to its mission and St. Mary's County citizens.

A commitment to implement the plan includes four pillars of success:

Customer Service, Fiscal Stewardship, Organization Innovation, and Human Capital

- Provide the plan in a clear and concise way educating the public along with a summary of the plan located on the department's website.
- Employee review and progress tracking 2 times a year.
- Focus on fiscal stewardship ensuring budget planning represents the needs of the community.
- Gather input from citizens on a regular and consistent basis to identify gaps in service.
- Provide innovative programs and services.
- Update citizens throughout the year on the plan's progress.

SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION

- Align with department mission, vision and values.
- Implement guidelines in alignment with national accreditation.
- Provide resources available to the public on the R&P department's website.
- Review on a regular basis to measure success.

DEFINITIONS

The following terms are defined as they relate to this Strategic Plan. These terms are used to describe how St. Mary's County Recreation & Parks department will implement assigned responsibilities with intention and transparency.

Strategic Plan: A process in which an organization defines the vision for their future and identity as an organization.

Mission: A broad statement about the goals and how the department intends to meet those goals.

Vision: A declaration about what the department wants to ultimately become.

Values: The guiding principles that provide the department with purpose and direction.

Goals: Strategic objectives established to outline expected outcomes and guide efforts.

Objectives: Short, medium, and long-term goals to accomplish an overall strategic goal.

Action Items: A specific task or activity to achieve a goal.

Stewardship: The conducting, supervising, or managing of something. The careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care.

Innovation: To introduce something new like an idea, product, service, process or strategy.

Human Capital: The skill, knowledge, and experience possessed by an individual or team viewed in terms of their value to the organization or community.

CIP: Capital Improvement Project is part of a plan utilizing the general fund budget to permanently alter or add to a property that increases its value or useability.

LPPRP: The Land Preservation, Parks & Recreation Plan which is a comprehensive document used by counties as an opportunity to collect and evaluate parks, recreation, and land preservation data.



WELCOME
St. Mary's
County

Recreation & Parks



LOCATION
MAP!

Identify the locations by finding the corresponding color with number or letter.

- 1 Parks
- A Recreation Facilities
- V Golf Course & Museums
- 2 Public Landings
- Bicycle icon Three Notch Bike Trail
- Arrow icon Beach Access

St. Mary's County Recreation & Parks

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Contact:

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Art Posts at Lexington
Manor Passive Park
Community Gardens

St. Mary's College
Community Arts Class