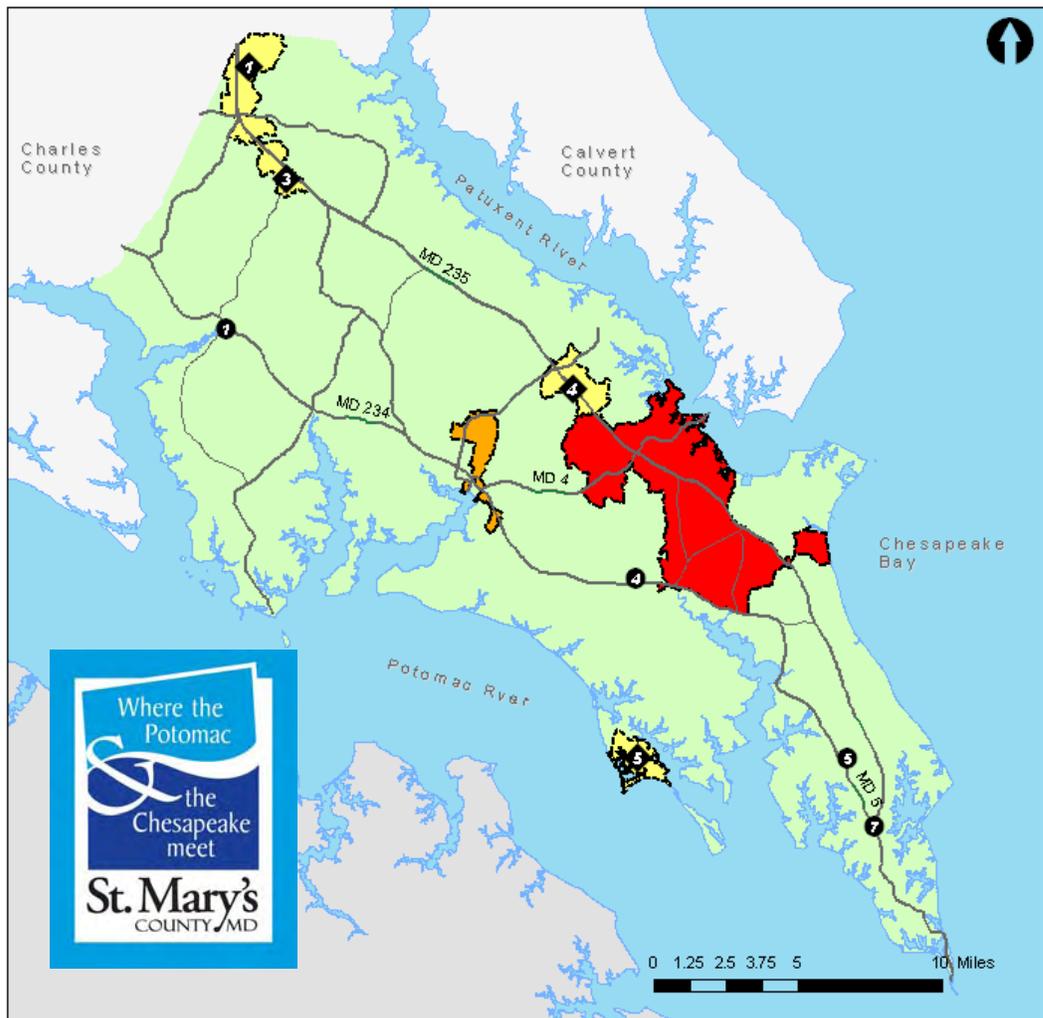


# ST. MARY'S COUNTY, MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Adopted: March 23, 2010

Effective: April 6, 2010

## QUALITY OF LIFE IN ST. MARY'S COUNTY — A STRATEGY FOR THE 21ST CENTURY —

Prepared and adopted  
in accordance with  
Article 66B of the  
Annotated Code of Maryland

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2010-01  
Ordinance No. 10

Subject: Comprehensive Plan

Adoption by Board of County Commissioners

St. Mary's County  
Land Use & Growth Management

Page 1 of 2

ORDINANCE

**WHEREAS**, the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 66B, Section 3.05(b)(2), requires that at least once every 6 years, each planning commission shall review and, if necessary, revise or amend the local plan; and

**WHEREAS**, said Article 66B, Section 3.05(a)(4)(vi) requires a planning commission to make and approve a plan that the commission shall recommend to the local legislative body for adoption and that said plan shall contain a Water Resources Element; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to said Article 66B, Section 3.05(a)(8), and with the Agriculture Article, Section 2-518, a Priority Preservation Areas element must be included to further advance the purposes of the plan; and

**WHEREAS**, in April 2008 the Board of County Commissioners directed the St. Mary's County Planning Commission (hereinafter the Planning Commission) and the Department of Land Use and Growth Management (hereinafter DLUGM) to proceed with the review and revision of the 2002 St. Mary's County Comprehensive Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, interagency and community meetings were conducted in June and July of 2008 for the purpose of gathering input from citizens for the review of the Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, a Public Hearing Draft Comprehensive Plan was assembled and dated April 13, 2009 (hereinafter called the Draft Plan) by DLUGM with direction from the Planning Commission, and included, among other components, a Water Resources Element and a Priority Preservation Areas Element; and

**WHEREAS**, at least 60 days prior to a public hearing, the Planning Commission did provide copies of the Draft Plan to all adjoining planning jurisdictions and to all State and local jurisdictions that have responsibility for financing or constructing public improvements necessary to implement the plan, as required by Section 3.07(c) of said Article 66B; and

**WHEREAS**, in May 2009 letters were sent to the owners of properties potentially affected by proposals within the Draft Plan to reduce the size and status of growth areas defined by the 2002 Comprehensive Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, public hearings on the Draft Plan were duly advertised and conducted by the Planning Commission on June 22, 2009, July 13, 2009 and July 27, 2009; and

**WHEREAS**, the public record was closed on August 3, 2009; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission conducted work sessions in August and September 2009 during meetings that were duly announced and open to the public for the purpose of evaluating the public record; and

**WHEREAS**, instructions were given to DLUGM staff to prepare a revised plan for review and acceptance by the Planning Commission at its regular meeting of September 28, 2009; and

**WHEREAS**, at said meeting of September 28 the Planning Commission gave final instruction to DLUGM staff to transmit a recommended plan to the Board of County Commissioners; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission authorized the Chair to sign PC Resolution No. 09-05 to formally convey to the Board of County Commissioners for St. Mary's County (hereinafter the "Board") its recommended draft of a Comprehensive Plan for St. Mary's County dated September 28, 2009 (hereinafter the "Recommended Plan"); and

RECORDING FEE 0.00

**WHEREAS**, at its October 6, 2009 meeting, the Board received the Recommended Plan and instructed DLUGM to schedule public hearings thereon; and

TOTAL 0.00

**WHEREAS**, following due notice published in the October 9, 2009 and October 14, 2009 editions of *The Enterprise*, a newspaper of general circulation in St. Mary's County, public hearings on the Recommended Plan were conducted by the Board on October 29, 2009, on November 5, 2009 and on November 17, 2009; and

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**WHEREAS**, between December 2009 and March 2010 the Board conducted work sessions during meetings that were duly announced and open to the public for the purpose of evaluating the Recommended Plan and public record; and

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**WHEREAS**, following the work sessions and having diligently considered the public record, the Board gave specific instruction to DLUGM to make certain revisions in the Recommended Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 23, 2010 the Board accepted and approved the Recommended Plan as modified pursuant to the Board's deliberations and specific instructions.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED** by the Board of County Commissioners for St. Mary's County that the St. Mary's County Comprehensive Plan be repealed and readopted as recommended by the St. Mary's County Planning Commission and as revised and presented to the Board this 23<sup>rd</sup> Day of March, 2010.

**BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED** by the Board of County Commissioners for St. Mary's County that, in the event any portion of the St. Mary's County Comprehensive Plan, is found to be unconstitutional, illegal, null or void, it is the intent of the Board of County Commissioners to sever only the invalid portion or provision, and that the remainder of the Plan shall be enforceable and valid.

**BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED** by the Board of County Commissioners for St. Mary's County that the foregoing recitals are adopted as if fully rewritten herein.

**BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED** by the Board of County Commissioners for St. Mary's County that this enactment shall be effective on the date written below.

Those voting Aye: 4

Those voting Nay: 1 (Jarboe)

DATE OF ADOPTION: 3/23/10

EFFECTIVE DATE: 4/6/10

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
ST. MARY'S COUNTY, MARYLAND**

*Francis J. Russell*  
Francis J. Russell, Commissioner President

*Kenneth R. Dement*  
Kenneth R. Dement, Commissioner

*Lawrence D. Jarboe*  
Lawrence D. Jarboe, Commissioner

*Thomas A. Mattingly, Sr.*  
Thomas A. Mattingly, Sr., Commissioner

*Daniel H. Raley*  
Daniel H. Raley, Commissioner

ATTEST  
*John Savich*  
John Savich  
County Administrator

APPROVE AS TO FORM AND LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:  
*Christy Holt-Chesser*  
Christy Holt-Chesser  
County Attorney

# THE ST. MARY’S COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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## **Chapter 1: TRENDS**

### **1.1 A PROFILE OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY**

The County may be described as a Chesapeake Bay peninsula, an early American settlement, a farming community, the site of the Patuxent River Naval Air Station, the outer edge of the Washington, D.C. commutershed, and a regional recreational resource. How do these characteristics influence development?

#### *1.1.1 A Chesapeake Bay Peninsula*

St. Mary's County is bordered on the west by the Wicomico River, on the south by the Potomac River, on the east by the Chesapeake Bay, and on the northeast by the Patuxent River. With over 400 miles of shoreline, 18.3% (43,700 acres) of the County's land area is within 1,000 feet of tidal waters, or within the "critical area" defined under Maryland's Chesapeake Bay Critical Area laws. St. Mary's County ranks fourth among Maryland counties in critical area acreage. Water based recreation and marine economics play a significant part in attracting new residents and visitors to the County.

As the southernmost point in Maryland on the Chesapeake Bay's western shore, the County had been relatively isolated from the pressures of growth in the Baltimore and Washington metropolitan areas. Its links with these metropolitan areas are limited to the Thomas Johnson Bridge to Calvert County, and state highway routes 5, 6 and 234 to Charles County. Expansion of the Patuxent River Naval Air Station has reduced this isolation and the County is now a major employment destination. Metropolitan residents have discovered the rural farms and forests of the St. Mary's countryside, and the relatively low cost waterfront land, summer resort communities, and the recreational access along the rivers, creeks and coves of this peninsula County.

#### *1.1.2 An Early American Settlement*

St. Mary's County, Mother County of Maryland, was settled by English colonists, who landed at St. Clement's Island in the spring of 1634. Leonard Calvert carried with him a charter granted by King Charles I, transferring to the Calvert family all the lands surrounding the Chesapeake Bay. St. Mary's City served as the first capital of Maryland until 1695 when the capital was moved to Annapolis. Leonardtown, the County seat and only incorporated municipality, was settled in 1660. Until the Civil War, the town served as an important tobacco trading post.

The County abounds in sites and structures of historic interest; 31 are listed on the National Register of Historic Places and 779 on the Maryland Inventory of Historic Sites. While many of these resources have been preserved because of the County's relative isolation, they are threatened by the projected growth and development activity. The County's Historic Preservation Commission has been active since 1993 in documenting sites before they are lost, increasing the inventory to 890. In addition, three historic districts have been created.

Historic Preservation Guidelines were completed in 2002 and the County was awarded Certified Local Government status by the Maryland Historic Trust. Through cooperative efforts with planners throughout the Tri-County Southern Maryland, a number of tobacco barns were listed on the National Historic Trust's Eleven Most Endangered Historic Places in 2004, resulting in a \$200,000 grant from Save America's Treasures Fund for restoring tobacco barns. In 2007 the County received a grant from the State Highway Administration to draft a corridor management plan for the Religious Freedom Scenic Byway. While many historic resources have been preserved, the reduction in the County's relative isolation and continued development continue to endanger many of these resources.

### 1.1.3 *A Farming Community*

The 2007 Census of Agriculture reported 68,648 acres of land in farms within St. Mary's County. This accounted for approximately 29.7% of the County's total land area and represented an increase from 68,153 acres or 29.5% of the total land area reported in the 2002 census. The major farm crops are corn, soybeans, wheat, hay and barley. Some of the farms in the northwest portion of the County are operated by the Amish and Mennonite communities, whose farmers market is well known in the region. Farming represents a valued way of life. It is these farms and the extensive areas of forest, which provide the rural character so valued by old and new residents of the County.

Farmland, which is typically flat and well drained, generally proves easy to convert to residential development. The proximity of much of the County's farmland to Three Notch Road increases its susceptibility to development pressures. If farming is to be retained as an important County industry and way of life over the coming decades, it will be necessary to enhance and enforce controls to protect existing farms and areas with highly productive soils from suburban sprawl. It will also be necessary to provide and promote incentives for continued use of these lands for farming purposes. Also important will be to maintain levels of farming activities that will support the kinds of farm supply centers necessary for day-to-day agricultural operations.

Agricultural preservation efforts in the County have consisted of participation in the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Program. As of January 2008, 17,815 acres have been enrolled under the Tax Credit Program for properties placed in a five-year Agricultural Land Preservation District (ALPD). The total agricultural land permanently preserved is 13,778.2 acres as follows:

	Acres
Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) (78 Properties)	8,473.0
Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust utilizing the Rural Legacy (11 Properties)	2,860.0
Maryland Historic Trust (Bachelors Hope)	303.0
Maryland Environmental Trust (11 Properties)	2,142.2
Total as of January 2008	13,778.2

### 1.1.4 *The Home of a Premier Aircraft Testing and Evaluation Facility*

The Navy is a significant presence in St. Mary's County. The 6,384 acre Patuxent River Naval Air Station (NAS), commissioned in April 1943, and its annex at Webster Field, test and evaluate aircraft and related systems. The station is unique in that it has access to 50,000 square miles of airspace for test flights, heavy duty runways of 12,000 feet, as well as of 9,700 feet and 6,400 feet, 18 hangar bays, three seaplane basins, operating lanes in the Patuxent River and Chesapeake Bay, and easy access to the Nation's Capital. The NAS is home to the Naval Air Systems Command Headquarters (NavAir), the Air Test Wing Atlantic Command, and the Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division Command and other defense related activities.

The NAS experienced tremendous growth from the Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) decisions in the 1990s. The facility employs approximately 22,000 military, civilians, and defense contractors. Not only is this facility the County's largest employer, but many of these jobs are high technology, highly-skilled positions with average annual salaries in excess of \$75,000 per year. The new income associated with the base expansion has dramatically increased the purchasing power of the Southern Maryland region and spurred successive rounds of economic development in real estate, retail trade, health care and business services. With over 230 high-tech defense contractors, the County has emerged as a world-class center for maritime aviation research, development, testing and evaluation.

### 1.1.5 *The Outer Edge of the Washington, D.C. Commutershed*

From relative isolation prior to the 1990s, St. Mary County has come to be among the fastest growing counties in Maryland. Population growth, as estimated by the Maryland Department of Planning (table below), reflects a 17.8% increase from 86,211 in the 2000 Census to 101,578 as of July 1, 2008. Population increases averaged 1,920 annually from Census 2000, passing the 100,000 mark as of July 1, 2007.

St. Mary's County	2000 Census	estimated 7/1/00	estimated 7/1/01	estimated 7/1/02	estimated 7/1/03	estimated 7/1/04	estimated 7/1/05	estimated 7/1/06	estimated 7/1/07	estimated 7/1/08
Population	86,211	86,532	87,455	89,907	92,555	94,898	96,868	98,854	100,378	101,578

St. Mary's County continues to remain an "outer edge" of Washington, D.C. In April 2008 its total civilian labor force was reported at 51,500, with 49,595 employed and 1,905 unemployed. The unemployment rate, 3.7% in 2008, continues to be well below the national average. Approximately 75% of the County's labor force is employed at the Naval Air Station or base related companies. Within the Washington-Baltimore metropolitan area, this is the highest percentage of employees working within the County in which they reside. Continuing employment opportunities within the County are keeping the number of employees commuting to Washington, D.C. consistently below the 5% required to qualify as a commuter shed.

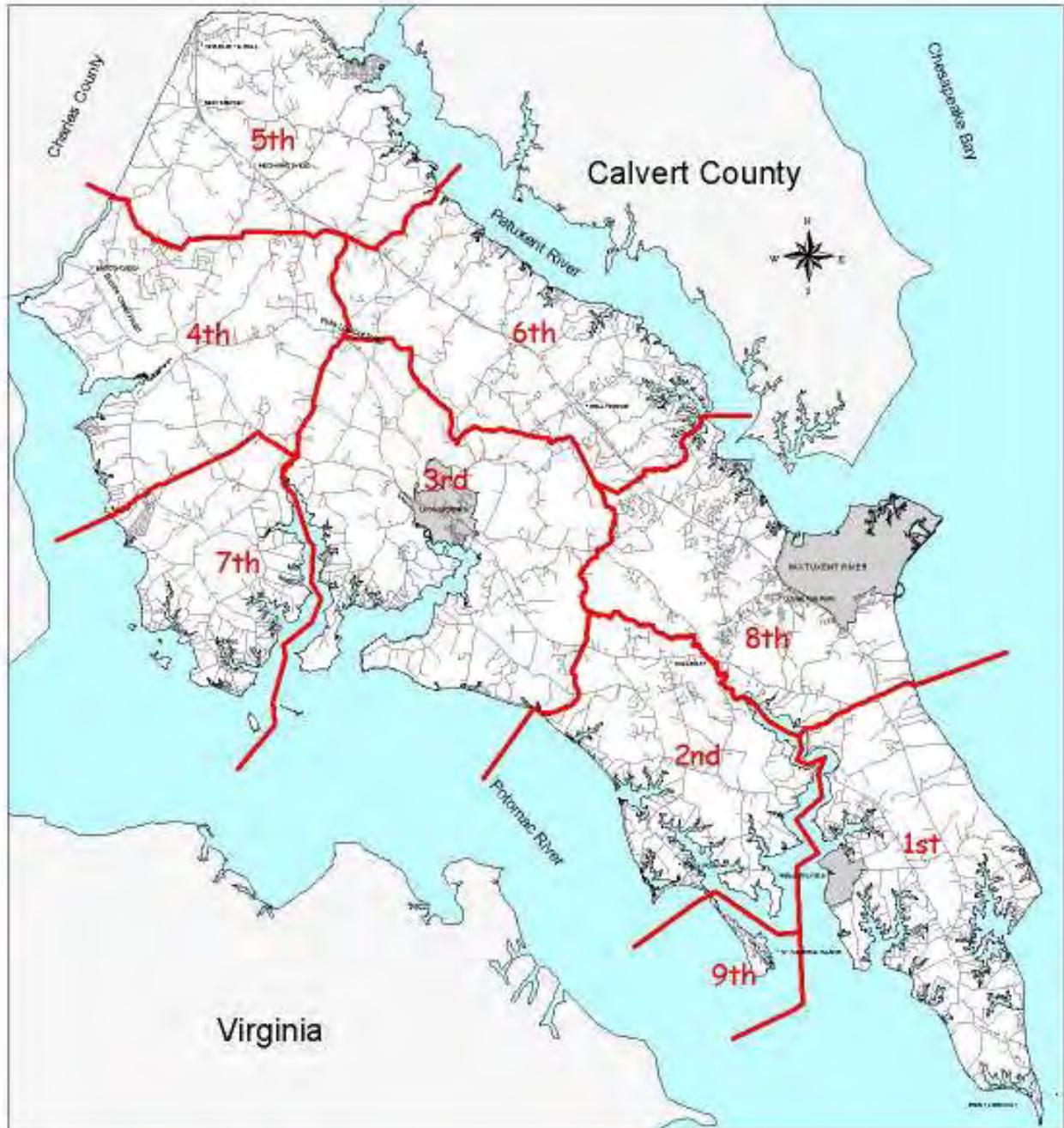
### 1.1.6 *A Regional Historical and Recreational Resource*

St. Mary's County is rich in natural scenic beauty and abounds in sites of historic interest. Its diverse cultural activities augment the appeal of the County to the visiting public. By far the most important fixed visitor destinations in the County are Point Lookout State Park, historic St. Mary's City and Sotterley Manor. Events such as the air exposition at the Naval Air Station in the spring, the Blessing of the Fleet, the Crab Festival and the Oyster Festival in the fall also attract large numbers of people. The Amish Market in Charlotte Hall operates twice weekly and is a significant cultural and focal point. Less formal destinations for residents and visitors include commercial and private marinas, and fishing charter operations located along the creeks and rivers that feed into the Patuxent and Potomac Rivers and the Chesapeake Bay.

Both Point Lookout and St. Mary's City are located at or toward the southeastern tip of the County. This means that visitors to these destinations are drawn through the entire length of the peninsula in order to reach them. While this provides opportunity for purveyors of commercial services to tap the visitor stream, it also means that the County must make certain that roads leading there are kept in good order, from both traffic handling and attractiveness standpoints. The Village of Ridge represents a prime opportunity to capitalize on the needs of the visiting public such as dining locations, fishing equipment, camping supplies, and lodging. Recognizing and accommodating its potential as a developing village center would greatly enhance the economy of this end of the County.

Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's Counties are linked by a circuit of visitor destinations and attractions. They coordinated their efforts to become a designated Heritage Area and adopted the Southern Maryland Heritage Area Plan. This made the three counties eligible for grants, loans, and other benefits. The Plan addresses riverside towns and rolling farmlands with 2,000 sites listed in the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties and almost 100 structures listed in the National Register of Historic Places. From the pre-historic culture of the Chesapeake Bay region and the early settlement of the British colonists aboard The Ark and The Dove, the Plan includes the earliest footholds of religious freedom, the colonists' co-existence with the native Indians, the booming prosperity of the tobacco plantations in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the unique culture of watermen and boat builders. The Plan serves to protect and preserve these valuable resources unique to the character and history of the Southern Maryland counties. It identifies 63 sites and

activities in St. Mary's County including historic, cultural, natural, and recreational centers.



# Election Districts

**Election District Legend**

-  Election District Boundary
-  Roads

St. Mary's County is a nationally, and perhaps internationally, recognized center of excellence in sailing, as the St. Mary's College team has won 12 national championships and produced more than 100 collegiate All-American sailors since 1991. The annual Governor's Cup Regatta, that ends in St. Mary's City, is an important highlight of the national sailing season.

## 1.2 THE DYNAMICS OF CHANGE.

### 1.2.1 *Population*

Census 2000 revealed that the County's population had grown by 13.5% since 1990 to some 86,211 residents. The Maryland Department of Planning estimated that the population increased by 1,920 annually through 2008, reaching the 100,000 mark by July 2007. Projections for year 2030 (see table below) anticipate a population of 151,500, roughly double the 1990 population. The greatest concentration of population remains in the 8th election district, that includes Lexington Park, California, and Great Mills. Significant concentrations of population are also found in Election Districts 3 (which includes Leonardtown and Loveville), 4 (which includes Country Lakes and Wicomico Shores), 5 (which includes Charlotte Hall and Mechanicsville), and 6 (which includes Hollywood). As the County's population continues to grow, only these areas are expected to remain as major population centers. Lesser concentrations will continue to be found in Election District 1 (which includes Ridge), and in Election District 2 (which includes Piney Point). The population will remain more widely dispersed throughout the remainder of the County.

#### **Population Projection**

Year	Total Households	Population	Percent change from 1990
1990	25,500	75,974	
2000	30,642	86,211	13.5%
2005	35,050	96,450	27.0%
2010	38,875	105,400	38.7%
2015	44,450	118,200	55.6%
2020	49,350	130,100	71.2%
2025	53,950	141,150	85.8%
2030	58,175	151,500	99.4%

Source: Maryland Department of Planning, February 2009

The projected age distribution of the population shows an aging population. In 2010, the segment of the population age 65+ is projected to increase by 3,785 persons since the 2000 census level of 7,825, an increase of 48.4%. This age group will then represent over 11% of the population. By 2030 those aged 65+ are expected to number 30,230 and represent 20% of the total population. Conversely, the percentage of children is expected to drop. The 2000 census showed the age-19-and-under population to be 26,620 or 30.9 % of the total. By 2030 this age group is expected to number 40,570, comprising 26.8 % of the total population. .

### 1.2.2 *Land Use*

St. Mary's County contains approximately 231,280 acres of land area. As of 2002, 51% of the land was forested, and 26% was in agriculture. The acreage of land in agriculture decreased from 71,920 acres in 1997 to 68,153 acres in 2002, a decrease of 5.5 %. The number of farms also decreased from 658 in 1997 to 577 in 2002. The average farm size increased from 109 acres in 1997 to 118 acres in 2002. The Maryland Department of Planning reported a 5.7% loss in forestland from 125,706 acres in 1997 to 118,502 acres in 2002. Although developed land represents only 21% of the total land area, from a trend perspective, the amount of developed land has dramatically increased by 30.4% from 1997 to 2002.

<b>Distribution by Land Use</b>		
Land Use	Acres	Percent Of County
Low Density Residential	31,773	13.8 %
Medium/High Density Residential	5,814	2.5 %
Commercial/Industrial	3,597	1.6 %
Institutional/Extractive/Open	7,057	3.1 %
Developed Land Subtotal	48,241	20.9 %
Agriculture	60,307	26.1 %
Forest	118,502	51.3 %
Barren	862	.4 %
Wetland	2,887	1.3 %
Resource Land Subtotal	182,558	79.1 %
<b>TOTAL LAND AREA</b>	<b>230,799</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Source: Maryland Department of Planning Generalized Land Use/Land Cover Inventory, 2002

In particular, low-density residential development (less than 2 units per acre) is the most rapidly increasing category, growing by 40% from 1997 to 2002. This type of residential development is very land consumptive and threatens to impact this valuable natural resource acreage. In fact, the 9,074 acre increase in low density residential development from 1997 to 2002 constitutes 78.2% of the 11,600 acres of forest and agricultural land lost during the same time period.

Sprawl is a state-wide and even a national phenomenon. When it spreads across the landscape, it can destroy wildlife habitat, overrun farm lands, displace valuable streamside forests, threaten wetlands, contribute to air pollution, and increase the runoff of sediment, nutrients, and toxins into local waterways and the Bay. Sprawl results from poor or inadequate planning for new growth. The population within the Chesapeake Bay watershed is expected to increase by 3 million by 2030. Maryland will receive 1.1 million of this new population in 411,000 new households. At current rates of residential usage, this will result in a significant loss of resource lands to development and threaten to increase runoff contamination of the Bay.

The Maryland Department of Planning has analyzed current growth trends throughout the state and estimates that 95 acres of agricultural/forest land are lost for each 100 new households created. Under the "Smart Growth" scenario, only 8 acres of resource lands are consumed to create the same 100 households. By concentrating growth in development districts, more rural acreage will be retained, and there will be the opportunity to preserve a significant amount of this area for future generations.

### 1.2.3 *Employment*

Between 2001 and 2006 the County labor force grew 17.3% to a total of 59,487. This is significantly higher than the state wide increase of 9.1% and slightly higher than neighboring Charles County's 17.0% increase. Calvert County's labor force increased by 23.0% during this same time period. It is projected that the labor force will grow to over 77,600 by the year 2030. This will be approximately the same size as that of Charles County and approximately 30,000 more than Calvert County.

The expansion of the NAS and related contractors resulted in significant economic growth and employment opportunities. In 2007 the base's workforce was approximately 22,200. The average salary was \$75,000 with a total annual payroll of \$500 million. Two-thirds of the workforce resided in St. Mary's County. In addition to the 22,200 employees, the base hosted just over 300,000 visitors. The estimated economic impact on Maryland was \$2.3 billion. The

NAS expansion has contributed to a downward trend in the average unemployment rate to a low of 3.1% in 2007. The unemployment rate has been consistently below the state and national averages since 2002.

While still not considered within the District of Columbia commutershed, the relative isolation that St. Mary's County enjoys, and that fosters the rural environment so highly valued by its residents, is beginning to diminish with changes in commuting patterns resulting from increased employment opportunities from NAS-related activities. The Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) reported that St. Mary's County had the eighth fastest rate of job growth at 17.3% over the 2001 to 2006 period with a net gain of 8,759 jobs. Per capita personal income increased from \$29,152 in 2001 to \$35,120 in 2006. Despite this increase, St. Mary's County ranked 15th of the Maryland counties with both Calvert and Charles Counties having higher per capita personal incomes.

Approximately 95% of the County's working population is in the civilian labor force (CLF), that does not include military personnel. The Maryland Department of Planning has reported that 74.3% of the County's CLF was employed in St. Mary's County in 2000. In comparison, Calvert and Charles Counties had 39.4% and 40.2% respectively working in their counties. Of the remaining 25.7% of the St. Mary's County CLF, 18.3% work in other Maryland counties, and 7.4% work outside of Maryland. In 2000, the County CLF was reported to have increased by 5495 workers since 1990, a 15.3% increase. The statewide increase was 6.3% for the same period. Total jobs are expected to increase by 29.9% between 2000 and 2010 compared to 15.2% for the entire state during the same period.

#### 1.2.4 *Housing*

The 1990 census showed 27,830 housing units in St. Mary's County. By 2000 this number had increased by 22.5% to 34,801 units. Future housing needs are determined by population growth, vacancy rates and size of household trends. The County vacancy rate in 1990 was 8.5%, and in 2000 it was 10.1%. The average number of persons per household changed from 2.87 in 1990 to 2.72 in 2000. A reduction in the number of persons per household results in the need for more dwelling units to accommodate the same population. The number of households increased to 30,624 in 2000, and is projected to increase to approximately 39,825 by 2010.

In 2002 The Board of County Commissioners contracted with the Danter Company to complete a report on housing adequacy. The Danter study, released in 2003 stated that development trends in the County were not affordable for a significant portion of the population. More than 3/4 of the jobs in St. Mary's County did not pay enough for people to afford to rent or buy a home. The study also found that the rental housing stock was inadequate, both in quantity and quality. Over 60% of the rental units were built before 1990. In comparison with other parts of the country, the quality of housing in St. Mary's County was not only lower, but also priced above the rental level typical of higher-quality housing. The Danter study concluded that there was an urgent need for modern rental housing and affordable ownership housing including single family homes, manufactured housing and condominium development.

In 2007, a community based workforce housing task force found that in 2003 the average price of a home was approximately \$200,000, and that in 2007 the average price was \$337,500.

#### 1.2.5 *Community Facilities*

A general purpose of this plan is to ensure that public facilities and services are adequate for current and future populations. Among other objectives, County Government must identify and secure sufficient lands to accommodate new or expanded facilities. It must preserve transportation corridors through formal mapping as allowed by state statute. An overview of

facilities follows.

#### A. Parks

Parks and recreation planning and acquisition goals are established in the County's Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (LPPRP). As of the 2005 edition of the LPPRP, there are 4 state parks, 20 regional and community parks, and 4 indoor recreation centers. In addition, public schools provide 22 facilities used by the public for recreation. Other major facilities include the Great Mills swimming pool, the Wicomico Shores golf course and clubhouse, the Three Notch Trail hiker/biker route, and 22 State and County-owned water access points. There is a total of 9,100 acres of recreational land in St. Mary's County (2,100 County and 7,000 State). In preparing the LPPRP in 2005, the County conducted a needs analysis, comparing recreation facility supply to demand. Sizable deficits existed for a number of facilities. These deficits will increase through 2020 and beyond as the population increases unless facilities are programmed and developed to keep pace. The most significant deficits were for baseball/softball diamonds, multipurpose fields for team sports, indoor facilities for basketball, volley ball, etc., pedestrian and bike trails, and fishing areas. An analysis was also made of population and demand for recreation land by sub-areas of the County. Projecting the acreage needs out to 2020, the greatest needs will be in Election Districts 8 and 5, followed by Districts 3, 6, and 1. St. Mary's County's goal for land acquisition is the default State recommended goal of 30 acres per 1,000 population. As of 2005, the County is short of this goal by a little over 1,000 acres. If no more land is acquired and the population increases as projected, the deficit will increase to over 1,600 acres by 2020. Considerable recreation land exists in the County, which, under the State's guidelines, may not be counted towards meeting the goal. In 2008 and 2009 the State and County acquired three large properties known as the Hayden (Leonardtown), Beaven (California) and Maryland Province Society of Jesus (Jesuit) properties (St. Inigoes and Newtowne Neck). These acquisitions will contribute to fully meeting recreational goals.

#### B. Schools

Total public school enrollment increased by 802 students or 5.2% between 2002 and 2007. The greatest increase occurred at the high school level (grades 9-12), increasing by 544 students or 11.5%. The middle school (grades 6-8) enrollment increased by 31 students or 0.8% and the elementary school (grades K-5) enrollment increased by 227 students or 3.3% for this same time period. The school system continues to show a constant positive growth trend.

Based on spring 2008 enrollment projections, system-wide the elementary schools are in a period of increasing enrollments. A steady increase is expected through 2018 that will exceed the available capacity. Even with the completion of Evergreen Elementary School in 2009, two additional new elementary schools are planned to meet student capacity needs.

Middle school enrollments are currently static and have not exceeded the overall capacity of the four schools. Beginning in 2011, an increase in enrollment is projected as the currently expanding elementary school population "bubble" passes through the middle school grades. Projections indicate that the enrollment will begin to level off again beginning in 2017. A significant shortfall of middle school seats is expected by 2013. Based on this, a new middle school is slated for planning approval in 2015.

At the high school level, enrollments are expected to be steady through 2012. This could be followed by four years of declining enrollments, followed by increases beginning in 2016. Enrollment projections will be monitored to determine the need for a new high school in the future.

Non-public school enrollment was 3,006 in September 2007, representing 15.1% of the County's total school enrollment. There are 33 private schools in the County.

The Southern Maryland Higher Education Center (SMHEC), located on a 24 acre site in the Wildewood Professional and Technology Park, was established by the State of Maryland in 1994 to provide a regional facility with state of the art technology to serve the university and professional training needs of the Southern Maryland region. In 2009, the Center hosted almost 70 graduate university degree programs and almost 20 bachelor completion degree programs, presented in their entirety at SMHEC by eleven university partners in the professional fields of engineering; education; management; clinical and community counseling, and school counseling; criminal justice and law enforcement; information technology; business administration; engineering technology; technical management; communications; and human resources, financial, health care, marketing and project management. During a typical school year, about 250 seminars are held at the Center, with about 3,000 class enrollments.

The College of Southern Maryland (CSM) is a two-year, fully accredited, public, regional community college. Total continuing education students in 2007 totaled 12,000, about 3,600 of whom were from St. Mary's County. The Leonardtown campus includes labs for advanced technology, electronics, chemistry, physics, biology, microbiology / anatomy, and physiology.

St. Mary's College of Maryland, established in 1840, is a four-year, fully accredited, public, secular liberal arts college located in St. Mary's City, Maryland. It occupies 47 buildings on a 319-acre campus on the St. Mary's River. It is a member of the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges and designated as a Public Honors College (the only one in the state of Maryland and one of few around the U.S.). Average enrollment is about 2,000 students. The institution offers baccalaureate degrees in 22 disciplines, of which psychology, biology, and economics are among the most popular. The institution also offers one postgraduate degree, a Masters of Arts in Teaching. Much of its campus is shared with Historic St. Mary's City, the fifth site of colonization in British North America and one of the premier archaeological sites on the East Coast.

### C. Water Resources and Wastewater Treatment Facilities

Potable water is provided by four aquifers: the Piney Point-Nanjemoy, Aquia, Magothy, and Patapsco. Historically the County has withdrawn a majority of its groundwater from the Aquia and Piney Point-Nanjemoy aquifers. A report by the Maryland Geological Survey (MGS) in 2001 indicates that computer simulations of projected draw-downs of the Aquia aquifer, particularly in the Country Lakes area, could approach its limit by 2020. In 2005, MGS reported that the Patapsco aquifer is of excellent quality and should provide adequate supply through 2030 based on current County population projections. The St. Mary's County Metropolitan Commission has enacted a policy that requires new public wells to utilize the Patapsco aquifer to relieve stress on the Aquia.

Groundwater resources have been and are expected to be adequate to meet the needs of a growing population through 2030. Reservoirs are not a viable option for supplying drinking water in St. Mary's County. There are four wastewater treatment plants in the County: Leonardtown and Marlay-Taylor, which serve the Leonardtown and Lexington Park development districts respectively, and St. Clements Shores and Wicomico Shores that serve these neighborhood conservation districts. The St. Clements Shores and Wicomico Shores wastewater treatment facilities are currently at capacity with no plans for expansion. The Leonardtown and Marlay-Taylor facilities are planning expansions that will accommodate projected demand through 2030. The Marlay Taylor Water Reclamation Facility is to be upgraded for enhanced nutrient removal (ENR), and facility expansion will be planned or designed approximately 2013, with expansion construction anticipated by approximately 2015 or 2016.

#### D. Solid Waste

The County maintains State permits for both a Solid Waste Transfer Station and Processing Facility and a Landfill Expansion located at the St. Andrews Landfill property. These primary contingency plans may be utilized once long-hauling waste and out-of-county is no longer feasible or is otherwise discontinued. Currently, the landfill property is not used for landfill operations, but is utilized as a homeowner drop-off site for residential bulk waste and recyclables. Items are sorted and placed in dedicated areas and the materials are then transported to various solid waste and recycling acceptance facilities. To serve the solid waste disposal needs of a growing population, this plan calls for a County permitted transfer station. Such a facility will utilize the productive capacity of private enterprise for the collection, disposal, and disposition of solid waste and will assure the public is served by an efficient, effective, economical, and well managed solid waste disposal program.

Both the County and private firms provide collection services in the County. St. Mary's County owns and operates six convenience centers where residents may drop off waste, recyclables, used motor oil, and antifreeze. Businesses may also use them for dropping off recyclables only. Residents not wanting to use the convenience centers can contract with one of the permitted private haulers in the County.

The system of six convenience centers and the St. Andrews Landfill bulk waste drop-off site provides adequate service for disposal and collection of residential waste and recyclables for residents who prefer not to contract with a private hauler or who live in rural areas where commercial haulers do not offer service. As usage increases, convenience centers will be modified and/or expanded. The County does not presently plan to establish additional convenience centers.

#### E. Transportation

The dominant mode of personal transportation in St. Mary's County is the private automobile and the vast majority of travel occurs on public roads and highways. In addition, most of the goods produced or consumed in the County are hauled by truck or horse-drawn buggy over these same roadways. However, recent rising fuel prices and traffic congestion are forcing a new look at other alternative modes of mobility. Although the railroad that once served this area is long gone and is not likely to return, its right-of-way is being maintained for a possible future light rail extension from Waldorf to Lexington Park. Daily commuter transit service to the D.C. area is well utilized and ridership has increased over the years. Local transit service is provided through the St. Mary's Transit System that has also experienced an increase in ridership. While the automobile has long been the preferred mode of transportation in St. Mary's County, this plan encourages efforts to lessen dependence on the automobile. As noted, mass transit service, bicycling, and horse-drawn buggy traffic have increased and should be further supported.

Population increase and economic growth are typically accompanied by an increase in traffic volumes and highway - related commercial activities competing for visibility and access. The result has been significant peak use problems of congestion, delays and slower speeds, especially within the Three Notch Road (MD 235) corridor. Major efforts have been made to lessen traffic congestion on Three Notch Road (MD 235) and other roads serving the Lexington Park Development District where development is concentrated to encourage people to "live where they work" and to facilitate walking or biking to their place of employment. This helps lessen the number of cars on the roadways.

In order to meet present and future transportation needs of the County in a coordinated and efficient way, not only for today but into the future, an integrated transportation plan was

adopted in 2006. A five (5) year Transportation Development Plan (TDP) was approved in October 2007 by the Maryland Transit Administration to enhance and improve public transit services operated by the County. Failure to adequately plan for the future will result in higher future transportation operational and improvement costs, reduced traffic safety, increased air pollution, reduced economic viability, and a lower quality of life for all County residents.

### **1.3 QUALITY OF LIFE**

What makes St. Mary's County a desirable place in which to live, work and play? What are the challenges we face to maintain/improve the quality of life? To answer these questions, the County retained the services of Milton Herd, President of Herd Planning and Design, Ltd to facilitate local planning and public consensus building sessions. His mission was to obtain input for revisions to the 2002 Comprehensive Plan. On June 11, 2008, an interagency charrette was held at the St. Mary's County Airport to gain input from government department representatives and community leaders. This was followed in July by a series of five community meetings to solicit citizen opinion.

Concerns were expressed about development trends, funding priorities, environmental impacts, and economic issues. Most stated their interest in maintaining the quality of life they have long enjoyed. Comments indicated a continued consensus that there are many features and characteristics of the County that make it a good place to live and warrant preservation. The widest recognition was given to the value of the County's rural character, natural resources, and historic features. Also very highly valued were employment opportunities and access to nearby metropolitan areas. Considerable importance was attributed to the clean environment, ease of internal movement, outdoor recreation, educational opportunities and the relaxed lifestyle. Participants mentioned sense of community, which is enriched by ethnic and cultural diversity. Valued as positive features were proximity and access to the waterfront, tourism opportunities, and the Naval Air Station.

Recommended changes and improvements derived from these inputs included limitation of sprawl development, improvement of the transportation system, and the revitalization of Lexington Park. The need to provide growth area infrastructure, especially public sewer, was emphasized to support development where intended. The consensus of opinions strongly favored guiding future growth away from rural areas. Recommendations included containment of development within existing growth areas and enhancement of agricultural land and sensitive areas preservation programs. In some cases, adjustments to growth area boundaries were suggested to better facilitate growth while lessening the impact to sensitive areas.

A consistent subject in need of improvement was transportation. Many participants supported specific road improvements that are currently planned or underway, including the Pegg Road extension and completion of FDR Boulevard; there was also support for evaluating the potential environmental impacts of these projects. There was broad support for improved bicycle and pedestrian lanes and trails. There were also multiple mentions of the need for additional park and ride lots and improved mass transportation. Several participants suggested ambitious ideas such as ferry service and new bridges crossing the rivers. Others advocated the need for improved access management for major thoroughfares and the need for traffic calming devices such as roundabouts. The Patuxent Beach Road corridor (MD 4 to the Thomas Johnson Bridge) and Leonardtown bypass were also identified as major traffic system improvement needs.

The need for new services and facilities was also expressed at the meetings, particularly for new or expanded library facilities. Several participants cited the need for new or expanded recreational facilities, including parks, water access (including expanded parking), swimming beaches, and an arts center. By far, the most frequently listed need was for expanded sewer service to serve growth areas, particularly in the northern part of the County.

There was not a lot of fundamental disagreement among participants about the County's major growth management policies. What conflict did emerge centered mainly on the level of priority for growth that should be assigned to the Charlotte Hall and Piney Point Town Centers. There was also some minor disagreement about the benefit of the Pegg Road extension. At least one participant expressed fear that it could undermine existing businesses in Lexington Park by providing a de facto "by-pass". Finally, there were some relatively minor disagreements about the specific edges of the Lexington Park and Leonardtown development districts pertaining to whether, where, and how much they should be expanded or contracted. This area of conflict, however, was relatively small in the context of the whole County, and involves fairly precise details, rather than a fundamental policy approach.

Overall, those who participated in the meetings were civil, enthusiastic, and well-informed about growth, development, and preservation in the County. The discussions were constructive and positive, with little debate. Despite various disagreements about particular issues, participants were moderate and balanced in their views, and generally supportive of the thrust of the County's current long-range planning efforts. In the context of various recommendations for refinements, infrastructure improvements, and stronger implementation efforts, participants essentially affirmed the basic elements and direction of the County's 2002 Comprehensive Plan.