

# THE ST. MARY’S COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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## **Chapter 10: PUBLIC FACILITIES ELEMENT**

### **10.1 OVERVIEW**

A major factor influencing the location and intensity of development is the presence of public and community facilities and services. Development will be fostered where facilities exist or are planned. St. Mary's County must not only provide services and facilities where currently required, but anticipate their need in the future. It must also be mindful that the provision of facilities will guide growth where it should occur, and the lack of facilities and services will discourage growth in areas to be preserved. Planning for the provision of community facilities and public services is necessary to effectively and efficiently manage growth.

### **10.2 THE PLAN FOR PUBLIC FACILITIES**

10.2.1 **Goal:** Support concentration of development through investment in and provision of public facilities.

10.2.2 **Goal:** Concentrate development in suitable areas.

- A. **Objective:** Provide the infrastructure to ensure adequate capacity to accommodate concentrated development in growth areas and address adequate facilities and services outside the growth areas.
- i. **Policy:** Implement a comprehensive water and sewerage system that supports the land use concept for the County and that is in accordance with the policies and actions described above in Chapter 7: Water Resources Element.
  - ii. **Policy:** Accommodate efficient and equitable distribution of energy and communication utility services to meet the needs of the population and support the land use, design, and environmental concepts of this plan.
  - iii. **Policy:** Provide a full range of utility services to all areas of the County and establish requirements to assure fair access to these services.
  - iv. **Policy:** Minimize negative environmental and aesthetic impacts of new and existing utility distribution systems:
    - a. Require the use of shared easements within road right-of-ways when feasible.
    - b. Minimize clearing associated with installation and maintenance of lines.
    - c. Require underground distribution systems for utilities and services for new development and whenever service lines are upgraded.
    - d. Cooperate with Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative (SMECO) to bury electric lines in designated corridors and town centers.
  - v. **Policy:** Meet increasing demand for solid waste management through use of traditional and innovative methods.
    - a. Encourage participation and expand programs in waste reduction, composting, re-use and recycling through public educational efforts and coordination with the school systems.
    - b. Minimize negative environmental impacts of new solid waste transfer, collection, processing and disposal facilities by considering permeability of soils, proximity to groundwater

aquifers and recharge areas, location of potential surface water impoundments, and environmental sensitivity.

- c. Implement goals and objectives of the Solid Waste Management and Recycling Plan.
  - i) 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.
- vi. **Policy:** Meet increasing health and public safety needs of the population per national standards.
  - a. Law Enforcement:
    - i) Achieve and maintain adequate staffing levels to provide a level of service of officers per the *International Association of Chiefs of Police Standards*.
    - ii) Achieve and maintain an average response time of 4 minutes.
    - iii) Provide adequate satellite office space in growth areas for the efficient operation of the department as necessary to accommodate the current and future public safety needs.
    - iv) Encourage and support neighborhood watch programs.
  - b. Health Care: ensure adequate facilities and services to meet the immediate and future needs of a growing population and encourage quality medical facilities to attract and retain physicians.
  - c. Rescue and Emergency Preparedness:
    - i) Maintain an adequate level of staffing and appropriate equipment to fully respond to emergency calls.
    - ii) Achieve and maintain an average response time of 6 minutes.
    - iii) Assure that remote areas of the County have adequate coverage.
    - iv) Assure availability of fire and rescue companies to report to multiple or high value alarms.
  - d. Fire Protection and Prevention:
    - i) Provide adequate and fairly financed fire protection.
      - a) Require adequate fire suppression for approval of major subdivisions and major site plans.
      - b) Require contributions from developers for firehouses, firefighting equipment, etc. when the development can be directly linked to the need for additional capital improvements.

- ii) Ensure adequacy of water supplies to provide fire protection.
        - a) Ensure that adequate water supplies are available to support fire protection.
        - b) Use central supply systems in growth areas.
        - c) In rural areas where water service is from small central systems or individual wells, provide stand pipes or other infrastructure to draw on existing water impoundment areas such as lakes and farm ponds.
    - e. Animal Control:
      - i) Support adequate facilities and services to collect, house, and care for stray, abandoned, abused and/or nuisance animals.
      - ii) Encourage programs for animal adoption, spaying and neutering to control population growth, and the humane disposal of injured and unwanted animals.
    - f. Hazard Mitigation:
      - i) The adopted Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan is hereby incorporated by reference.
- B. **Objective:** Meet the existing and future demands of the population for community and social services.
- i. **Policy:** Maintain and support organizations, services and facilities which provide outreach, education and support services designed to assist the citizens of the County in areas related to aging, agriculture, alcoholism and substance abuse treatment and prevention, arts, crafts, theater, history, civics, community planning, information and referral, legal, medical, and media services.
  - ii. **Policy:** Support and administer federal and state financial programs necessary to assist citizens of the County in areas related to income assistance, welfare programs, medical assistance, adult services, child support, child welfare, and daycare assistance.
  - iii. **Policy:** Support organizations, services and facilities which provide temporary or transitional housing for families in the event of an emergency or family crisis.
- C. **Objective:** Meet the existing and future demands for public education and information in concert with the overall quality of life and growth management purposes of this plan.
- i. **Policy:** Ensure adequate availability and adequacy of schools and educational resources.
    - a. Guide the annual preparation of a 6 year educational facilities master plan based on enrollment projections.
    - b. Foster a full spectrum educational system recognized statewide, as a positive attribute of St. Mary's County.

- i) Maintain a comprehensive educational program for students.
  - ii) Measure success of program effectiveness and student performance.
  - iii) Offer a variety of credit and noncredit courses, student services and specialized educational programs through the Community College system for all high school graduates and other qualifying adults.
  - iv) Support curricula and programs which further the economic development goals, including technical training and continuing education for adults.
    - a) Respond to the demand for graduate and upper level undergraduate programs and courses in technical and non-technical areas.
    - b) Support the Southern Maryland Higher Education Center. Foster the continued support from multiple universities and colleges to provide a wide variety of graduate and undergraduate degree programs.
  - v) Support investment in facilities and programs at St. Mary's College. Increase community/university interaction and seek opportunities to create partnerships which capitalize on educational and cultural resources.
  - vi) Develop a performing arts center with multiple uses.
  - vii) Require adequate capacity in public school seats to be demonstrated prior to approval of subdivisions or site plans that would create dwellings.
  - viii) Encourage the Board of Education to adopt standards that limit the number of students per classroom.
- ii. **Policy:** Follow the recommendations in the 2007 report, *St. Mary's County Library Comprehensive and Integrated System Analysis & Recommendations*:
- a. Build a new facility for the Leonardtown Library and the system's administrative offices.
  - b. Enlarge the 10,000 square foot Charlotte Hall Library to 24,000 square feet.
  - c. Build a 30,000 square foot facility in the California - Hollywood area.
- iii. **Policy:** Provide information centers and signage.
- a. Encourage tourism by promoting the tri-county region's historical and natural assets.
  - b. Ensure continued operation of the welcome center in Charlotte Hall. Explore opportunities for an additional welcome center the St. Mary's County side of the Thomas Johnson Bridge.

- c. Promote overall economic development by coordinating and maintaining a standard of excellence in design for all public and private signage.
- D. **Objective:** Recreation and Parks – Create new and enhanced parks and recreation facilities that link existing parks and communities to provide expanded recreational opportunities while preserving environmental, aesthetic, and cultural quality. The St. Mary's County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan, The Master Plan for the County-owned Charlotte Hall property, The Myrtle Point Park Master Plan, The Elms Property Master Plan, and the Carver Heights Community Park Concept Plan are hereby incorporated by reference.
- i. **Policy:** Guide the periodic preparation of a land preservation, parks and recreation plan.
    - a. Establish a county-wide system of recreational community facilities (including boat landings, waterfront parks, regional parks, neighborhood parks, and, in high-density areas, children's play lots), which meet year-round recreation desires. Provide additional public open space and recreation lands, particularly active parks, in and near development districts.
    - b. Provide additional baseball/softball diamonds, multipurpose fields for team sports (football, soccer, lacrosse, field hockey), indoor facilities for "court sports", and pedestrian/bicycle trails.
    - c. Accommodate and promote fishing, boating, sailing and other water- oriented recreational activities. Provide adequate public access to the waterfront, rivers and bays through the purchase and maintenance of public landings as well as developed and natural waterfront parks. Of particular need is additional public access to the Patuxent River. Ensure the availability of appropriately zoned waterfront land for private marinas and landings.
    - d. Provide additional water access facilities/boat ramps and fishing areas.
    - e. Consider using Myrtle Point Park for public access to the Patuxent River.
    - f. Acquire additional land to accommodate future facilities. Of particular note is the need for additional parkland in the Leonardtown area.
  - ii. **Policy:** Meet the existing and future demands for recreation and parks through state, local, and privately managed facilities that are consistent with the purposes of this plan.
    - a. Focus new recreational facilities in population centers.
    - b. Promote quality public events for community enjoyment and tourism.

10.2.3 **Goal:** Direct financial burden to those most benefited by new public and community facilities.

- A. **Objective:** Maintain priority for community facility investments in the growth areas: development districts, town centers, and village centers.

- i. **Policy:** Maintain priority for future public and community facilities investments in the designated growth areas.
  - ii. **Policy:** Restrict major investment in facility improvements outside these growth areas to statewide needs or health and safety considerations.
- B. **Objective:** Developer Responsibility – Require developer responsibility for extending central water, sewer service, roads, and parks to serve proposed development.
- i. **Policy:** Assure these services meet standards for acceptance into the County operated/maintained systems.
  - ii. **Policy:** Require developers to fund or provide the added public facilities necessary to support their developments.
  - iii. **Policy:** Assure that the provision of adequate public facilities, including schools and park/recreation areas, is made part of any approved development proposal.
  - iv. **Policy:** Ensure that all trunk lines or transmission mains and roads networks installed by developers are adequately sized to meet the projected needs of the district in which the projects are located, with the County funding that portion of the cost associated with increasing such facilities over the size required by those projects individually.
  - v. **Policy:** Taxing Districts – In targeted areas, consider special taxing districts to fund needed facilities and services. Work with developers and land owners to develop a phased capital improvement program that meets the facility needs of projected development.
- C. **Objective:** Outside of Growth Areas – when public funding is inadequate to provide or maintain designated levels of service, funding of improvements shall be the responsibility of those benefiting from the improvements.
- i. **Policy:** For purposes of determining benefit, all property owners, regardless of when they decide to develop their land, shall be deemed to share in the benefit of any improvements.
- D. **Objective:** Maintain and improve levels of efficiency to meet population needs.
- i. **Policy:** Carefully monitor population increase in relation to user levels of all facilities.
    - a. Stage construction of new facilities in growth areas to keep pace with increasing needs.
    - b. Expand service areas only when populations are projected to be large enough to support the costs of the expansion.
    - c. Use the Annual Growth Policy and caps to direct residential development to growth areas.
    - d. Use zoning capacity analysis to determine infrastructure and facility needs.
- E. **Objective:** Maximize the effectiveness of the impact fee program to address the costs associated with new development.
- i. **Policy:** The impact fee will continue to be an important source of revenue



to fund infrastructure and facilities.

- a. Reevaluate the amount of the fee to bring it in line with the true cost of new development.

10.2.4 **Goal:** Promote conservation of resources, including a reduction in the consumption of resources.

A. **Objective:** Establish and maintain public policies to encourage resource and energy conservation and to meet the public health, safety, and welfare needs of residents in an efficient and cost effective manner.

- i. **Policy:** Promote conservation of land resources through education and land use and growth management objectives and policies.
- ii. **Policy:** Promote conservation of energy and resources.
  - a. Provide efficient and well maintained delivery and collection systems for utilities and services. Ensure efficient location and sufficient quantities of service providers.
  - b. Encourage educational programs for the public which promote energy conservation and use reduction.
  - c. Promote the efficient utilization and reduced consumption of energy resources by requiring energy efficient construction and equipment in all county facilities and supporting the use of same in private development.
  - d. Develop resource and energy utilization reduction goals for residential, commercial, institutional, and municipal uses.
  - e. The County will take the forefront in demonstrating/testing alternative sources and energy use reduction strategies.
  - f. Require minimum LEED certification and offer developer incentives for alternative energy use and/or for achieving a LEED - Silver or higher equivalent rating.
  - g. Prioritize capital expenditures based on their resultant reduction in energy consumption.
  - h. Foster the work from home concept by accommodating home based business uses.
  - i. Prioritize mass/alternative transportation spending over the expansion/improvement of existing transportation routes.
  - j. Offer developer incentives for mixed residential/office (within the same building) construction.
- iii. **Policy:** Encourage a telecommuting component in all development proposals and assure that infrastructure to support telecommuting is provided and enhanced.

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