



# FY2020 – FY2024 Strategic Plan

July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021 – Annual Progress Review

**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.”

## Overview

The Recreation and Parks Strategic Plan was endorsed by the Recreation and Parks Board on January 16, 2020 and was approved by the Commissioners of St. Mary’s County on April 21, 2020. The first plan review, which covered the period from January 1, 2020 to June 30, 2020, was prepared in July 2020. This second review covers the period from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021.

The Plan has five goals outlined beginning on page 15. The Department is pleased that significant progress has been made on all five goals. Plan recommendations with associated action items are classified as: short term (**ST**) - 1 to 2 years; medium (**M**) – 3 to 4 years; long term (**LT**) – 5 years or more; and ongoing (**O**). Eighteen of the 21 short term actions are complete, 11 of the 15 medium actions are complete, 9 of the 10 ongoing actions are under development, implemented and/or continuing. Currently, there are no long term actions listed. During the next fiscal year, staff will work to complete remaining short term and medium actions and continue to work on ongoing items. Time frames for actions will also be reviewed as some are now ongoing items.

The following table represents a review of the progress on the recommendations and actions outlined in the Plan for this FY2021 reporting period.

Goal 1: Provide a variety of quality recreation, leisure and educational experiences for the public to enjoy		
Recommendation	Action(s)	Progress
Enhance existing programs and develop new programs, activities and events that are supported by appropriate fees, grants and other revenue sources.  <b>Division(s): Recreation, Museums, Golf</b>	Update the process for evaluating programs and events. <b>ST</b>  Utilize customer feedback to offer new programs that match current trends and popular requests throughout the year. <b>O</b>  Engage staff to attend ongoing trends analysis webinars and forums to assist with generating ideas. <b>M</b>	The Department continues to utilize printed and online evaluation surveys, and comments received via social media, to gather feedback from participants.  <b>Example:</b> New feedback resulted in additional dinner cruise events at St. Clement’s Island Museum (SCIM) and a new program - Outdoor Adventures at Piney Point Lighthouse Museum (PPLM).  Four staff members attended the Maryland Recreation and Parks 2020 Winter Conference and attended sessions dealing with program development, trends analysis and leadership.  Museum staff attended American Assoc of State & Local History, Small Museum Assoc & American Alliance of Museums conferences.

<p>Recruit and retain effective and self-motivated staff members.</p> <p><b>All Divisions</b></p>	<p>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>ST</b></p>	<p>St. Mary's County enhanced the hourly employee pay scale in January 2021; another upgrade is scheduled for January 2022.</p>
<p>Maintain and enhance staff training opportunities.</p> <p><b>All Divisions</b></p>	<p>Develop schedule of annual training opportunities for all hourly and full-time staff. <b>ST</b></p> <p>Budget for ongoing educational opportunities and encourage professional certifications and continuing education. <b>ST</b></p>	<p>The annual funding request for the FY21 staff training approved.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> In FY21 five staff members received Certified Park &amp; Recreation Professional (CPRP) certification; one received Certified Pool Operator (CPO) and Aquatics Facility Operator (AFO) certifications; one completed EDUs to maintain ADA certification; and one is working on Masters in Recreation, Parks &amp; Sports Management. Certifications are valid for 2 years and renewed with continuing education through approved conferences, webinars, and other educational events.</p> <p>Three museum staff members received certification from MD Tourism as certified Hosts at Underground Railroad sites.</p>
<p>Continually seek to enhance existing partnerships, while developing new community partnerships, and sponsorships to broaden program and event offerings.</p> <p><b>Division(s): Recreation, Museums, Golf, Parks</b></p>	<p>Identify appropriate methods for advertising and research innovative ways for garnering sponsorship support. <b>ST</b></p> <p>Identify key stakeholders and nurture partners through a systematic approach to solicitation of support through established timelines. <b>M</b></p> <p>Enhance efforts to engage and recruit volunteers, with focus on inclusion and intergenerational attraction. <b>M</b></p>	<p>Staff is working to develop new methods to obtain additional sponsorship and community support through various advertising mediums.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> Purchase subscription to Canva marketing design software to elevate quality of social media posts and program guide design.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> Use of scroll ads on phones targeted at specific demographics that vary with the program being publicized; (like Appraiser's Fair).</p> <p><b>Example:</b> Sierra Club and Arts Council identified as partners for enhancements at Lexington Manor Passive Park.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> Supported Special Olympics of Maryland basketball league during COVID-19 pandemic. R&amp;P gym space allowed for a modified, non-contact basketball program that provided a healthy activity for vulnerable populations.</p> <p>Volunteer Management Plan approved on July 8, 2020 and sets forth policies and procedures related to volunteer management for the Department; plan was updated in June 2021 to include volunteer groups.</p>

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

Recommendation	Action(s)	Status
<p>Seek to acquire land suitable for the development of public water access facilities and parkland.</p> <p><b>Division: Administration</b></p>	<p>Develop ad hoc groups to discuss and prioritize recreational space needs. <b>ST</b></p> <p>Utilize Program Open Space funds and seek other funding sources for purchase and/or development of available park property that meet the level of service goals. <b>ST</b></p> <p>Develop an aggressive Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that addresses level of service goals for property acquisition. <b>O</b></p>	<p>The Department continues to work with several groups related to space needs. <b>Example:</b> Youth Sports League Leaders; Snow Hill and Shannon Farm Park master planning stake holder groups.</p> <p>FY22 POS funds are anticipated to be used to replace playgrounds at Lancaster and Nicolet Parks and for lighting at Cecil Park tennis courts.</p> <p>See approved <a href="#">FY22 CIP Plan</a> adopted May 25, 2021.</p>
<p>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.</p> <p><b>Division: Administration</b></p>	<p>Partner with the Maryland Stadium Authority to develop an economic &amp; market conditions study. <b>ST</b></p> <p>Engage with youth sports leaders to determine 5-10-year participation plan. <b>O</b></p>	<p>The Market &amp; Economic Study for the Sports Complex (RP1904) was completed and presented to the County Commissioners on October 27, 2020. A FY22 State Bond Bill was received for planning for the facility.</p> <p>Three additional multi-purpose fields were upgraded in FY21 (Chaptico, Chancellor's Run and Lancaster Parks) providing a total of six (6) synthetic turf fields in county parks to address youth sports needs.</p>
<p>Develop master plans for new parks and facilities</p> <p><b>Division: Administration</b></p>	<p>Utilize the approved LPPRP as a guide for master planning recommendations for new parks and facilities; <a href="#">LPPRP</a>. <b>O</b></p> <p>Develop master plans consistent with approved CIP, including feasibility study for large, multiple use recreation/community center. <b>ST</b></p>	<p>Consistent with the LPPRP, the firm of A. Mortan Thomas &amp; Associates is conducting master planning services for the Shannon Farm (RP1905) and Snow Hill Park (RP1901) waterfront parks. The plan for Shannon Farm is nearly complete.</p>
<p>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.</p> <p><b>Division: Admin/Parks</b></p>	<p>Work with MDOT for consistency with state's long-range Transportation Plan. <b>O</b></p> <p>Work with citizens and other transportation stakeholders to identify trail needs. <b>M</b></p>	<p>The Department continues to participate in the Tri-County Council's Bicycle &amp; Pedestrian Infrastructure Advisory Committee (BIAC) meetings to promote non-motorized transportation in region.</p>

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

Recommendation	Action(s)	Status
<p>Ensure facilities and equipment are maintained to all appropriate safety standards and regulations.</p> <p><b>Division: Parks</b></p>	<p>Revise the current Park Operations and Maintenance Plan to include park maintenance schedule; waterfront sites maintenance schedule; and equipment</p>	<p>A new Maintenance and Operational Management Manual was reviewed and approved on June 11, 2021. The manual includes schedules and operational procedures for all parks, the WS Golf</p>

	maintenance and replacement schedule. <b>ST</b>	Course, Great Mills Swimming Pool and Nicolet Spray Park.
Explore new ways to measure attendance, participation and visitation for parks, facilities and events.  <b>Division(s): Museums, Parks</b>	Install counters, push buttons, motion detectors, or other means where feasible to assist in measuring attendance and visitation at parks and facilities. <b>ST</b>	Park attendants measure attendance at waterfront parks; rapid flash beacons assist with trail counts; and pier counters at Museums provide statistics for SCIM & PPLM waterfront. Other measures are being considered for other locations.
Make recommendations to the Commissioners of St. Mary's County for park and facility upgrades.  <b>Division(s): Administration, Parks</b>	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. <b>ST</b>	All 12 FY21 Recreation Facility & Park Improvement projects (RP2103) have been completed except for Lancaster Park Playground replacement. Recommended projects for FY22 are approved; see project #RP2203.  ADA Access audits continue at parks and facilities in accordance with the ADA Transition Plan.
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.  <b>All Divisions</b>	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. <b>ST</b>  Implement coordinated offerings that create connectivity between parks, trails and museums. <b>M</b>  Capitalize on tourism and recreational opportunities afforded by historic trails and byways in which the museums and parks are included. <b>O</b>	The Department's website was redesigned in fall 2020 to include user-friendly enhancements to the Golf and Parks, Public Landings and Beaches pages. GIS data was updated for all parks to include amenities and field numbers.  New directional and field location signage was installed at county parks; field numbers linked to county GIS website for easier location. Developed brochure on Old Jail Museum  Working with VisitStMarysMD and other partners on joint ticketing opportunities with other Museums and sites.  The Museum Division continues to meet regularly with local and state partners to promote historic sites, byways and events. <b>Examples:</b> First Landing Wine Trail partnership.

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

Recommendation	Action(s)	Status
Continue to protect, enhance, improve and update the county-managed museum sites and other appropriate county-owned sites.  <b>Division: Museums</b>	Complete the renovations and enhancements at county-managed museum sites as detailed in the approved Capital Improvements Program (CIP). <b>ST</b>	<b>Examples:</b> Work on exhibit installation at PPLM was completed (RP1203); work continues on the SCIM renovations with contractor meetings beginning June 2021; demolition scheduled for February 2022; and completion by fall 2022 (RP1401). Work is underway on new exhibits for the Old Jail Museum in cooperation with the Sheriff's Department and Network to Freedom group.
Develop and promote programs that will improve visitor experiences and encourage preservation of the county's	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	The Museum Division continues to expand on several awareness programs during the COVID-19 pandemic. <b>Examples:</b> The Facebook Wayback Wednesday program features lesser

<p>heritage culture and rural character.</p> <p><b>Division: Museums</b></p>	<p>agency, Visit St. Mary's, on focused marketing campaigns). <b>ST</b></p> <p>Collaborate with the St. Mary's County Public Library, Historical Society, and other area museum staff to work on joint membership, marketing, and programming. <b>ST</b></p>	<p>known, but important events and people from St. Mary's County history. The Throwback Thursday program features items from collections not currently on display.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> The Division met regularly with museum partners to collaborate on projects and includes panel presentations, webinars and blogs.</p>
<p>Assess the county museum site collections and holdings.</p> <p><b>Division: Museums</b></p>	<p>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. <b>ST</b></p> <p>Conduct regular collections assessments as specified in the Museum's Collections Management Plan. <b>O</b></p> <p>Hold community days at facilities whereby citizens can have objects and artifacts evaluated. <b>O</b></p>	<p>These efforts temporarily on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic, will begin again and be part of the community involvement portion of the renovation project at SCIM.</p> <p>Collections continue to be assessed annually for condition, as well as for filling gaps in certain areas of interest. Conservation plans have been prepared and implemented.</p> <p>The Appraiser's Fair was enhanced and modifications made due to the pandemic; event continues to generate interest in collecting and donating to the museums.</p>
<p>Promote environmentally sensitive areas as well as opportunities for passive recreation and nature interpretation.</p> <p><b>Division(s): Museums, Parks</b></p>	<p>Create and maintain trails on county property. <b>ST</b></p> <p>Promote increase use of water taxi, public piers, and kayak launches via improved marketing and special offers. <b>ST</b></p> <p>Focus on environmental awareness at parks and facilities as part of annual staff training. <b>M</b></p> <p>Develop opportunities to promote stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed. <b>M</b></p> <p>Provide additional opportunities for children to learn and play outside with focus on understanding of watershed resources, forests, farms and fields. <b>M</b></p> <p>Add new and enhanced special events and programs (and self-guided programs, such as geocaching, Find Your Chesapeake, etc.). <b>M</b></p>	<p>Three Notch Trail Phase VII (RP1501) is currently at the 95% design stage. Discussions with partners are ongoing on trails at St. Clement's Island Museum.</p> <p>Expanded use of the water taxi by running it on demand 7 days per week; additional evening cruises were added; and new family-oriented morning cruises were added in 2021 as well.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> Museum staff attended webinars and on-line training from the Natural Park Service and Chesapeake Bay Gateways.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> Conversations and a Cruise morning programs for families were developed for 2021.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> The new four-day Outdoor Adventure program at PPLM promotes outdoor learning opportunity for children.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> New programs have been developed for 2021 including First Landing Wine &amp; Arts Festival.</p>

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

Recommendation	Action(s)	Status
<p>Continue to involve citizens, agencies and staff in the planning process for development of new park and facility master plans and other visionary documents.</p> <p><b>Division: Administration</b></p>	<p>Increase efforts for awareness of public meetings, especially where citizen input is sought, on the R&amp;P and County website, other applicable agency websites, and on social media. <b>ST</b></p> <p>Expand opportunities for broadcasting presentations (live Cable Channel 95, YouTube videos, etc.). <b>M</b></p>	<p><b>Example:</b> Shannon Farm master plan group continues to meet; Snow Hill Park master plan stake holders group solicited and to convene in summer 2021.</p> <p>More public meetings, trainings and programming have been offered via various video platforms as a result of the pandemic. <b>Examples:</b> Recreation and Museum programs; staff meetings, etc.</p>
<p>Work to eliminate barriers to participation by promoting the many benefits of parks and recreation.</p> <p><b>Division: Recreation</b></p>	<p>Explore opportunities for onsite program registration at applicable recreational facilities. <b>M</b></p> <p>Ensure information is accessible for individuals of all abilities. <b>ST</b></p> <p>Create new marketing and incentive programs to increase awareness and participation at parks, facilities, events and programs. <b>M</b></p> <p>Achieve Commission for the Accreditation of Park &amp; Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) accreditation <b>M</b>; then maintain Accreditation <b>O</b>.</p>	<p>Online registration was expanded for purchase of various waterfront park passes. Other similar offerings are continuing to be added so citizens can complete requests on a 24/7 basis. Expanded on-site registration to 7 days per week at Great Mills Pool and 6 days per week at Gymnastics Center.</p> <p>Continues to maintain the website for ease of viewing by individuals with visual disabilities; was simplified last FY for easier navigation on devices (cellphone, tablet, desktop).</p> <p><b>Example:</b> Working with MD Tourism Coalition to develop new state-wide initiatives and incentive programs that include package promotions and deals.</p> <p>Departmental team is working to address the CAPRA standards and related policies, plans and procedures. Visitation goal: spring 2022.</p>
<p>Make use of new and emerging technology for promotion and to improve the registration and payment processes.</p> <p><b>Division(s): Recreation, Golf, Museums</b></p>	<p>Continually update the R&amp;P website to remain efficient and engaging. <b>O</b></p> <p>Update program registration software package as needed to stay up-to-date with current needs. <b>M</b></p> <p>Enhance Internet connectivity at various R&amp;P sites. <b>M</b></p>	<p><b>Example:</b> Golf Course and Parks, Public Landings and Beaches webpages were redesigned to reflect current information, historical perspectives and directions for citizens to easily locate a park or facility.</p> <p>Updates to registration software are completed when new versions are available from the software company and support is provided by the county's IT department. Additional updates were not available in FY21.</p> <p>Golf Course Division working to IT Department to update the point-of-sale system at the facility.</p> <p>Wi-Fi installed at Hollywood Recreation Center; plans for installation at Carver &amp; Margaret Brent Centers outlined. Wi-Fi installed at Chaptico, Lancaster, Chancellor's Run and Baggett parks.</p>