



FY2020 – FY2024 Strategic Plan

July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022 – 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 and the 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. Although many objectives have been achieved progress has been noted to show the ongoing work in each area.

The following table represents a review of the progress on the recommendations and actions outlined in the Plan for this FY2022 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. Division(s): Recreation, Museums, Golf	Update the process for evaluating programs and events. ST Utilize customer feedback to offer new programs that match current trends and popular requests throughout the year. O	The Department continues to utilize printed and online evaluation surveys, and comments received via social media, to gather feedback from participants. Example The department is deploying the use of QR codes more frequently to gather data during events, following programs and when visiting facilities. Permanent signage with QR codes is planned for placement in all recreation facilities. Division Managers have been trained on evaluation expectations based on accreditation standards. Evaluations were provided to participants and vendors for the annual Easter Egg Festival in April 2022. Several suggestions are being planned for next

	Engage staff to attend ongoing trends analysis webinars and forums to assist with generating ideas. M	<p>year's event to improve the egg hunt process and develop new guidelines for vendor arrival day of event.</p> <p>The opening of a new wellness center provided opportunities for members to voice their needs and interest in an online survey. Several suggestions have led to new programs focusing on nutrition and aquatic aerobics.</p> <p>Feedback from the golf men's leagues lead to adjustments in the scheduling of play.</p> <p>Staff regularly attend continuing education opportunities to learn best practices and trends to generate ideas for new programs and programs and service delivery improvements.</p>
Recruit and retain effective and self-motivated staff members. All Divisions	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. ST	St. Mary's County enhanced the hourly employee pay scale in January 2021; and January 2022.
Maintain and enhance staff training opportunities. All Divisions	<p>Develop schedule of annual training opportunities for all hourly and full-time staff. ST</p> <p>Budget for ongoing educational opportunities and encourage professional certifications and continuing education. ST</p>	<p>Over \$15,000 was budgeted in FY22 and proposed for FY23 in the Operational budget for staff to maintain certifications, attend conferences and conventions and to attend other staff development opportunities.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <p>Staff maintain continuing education through a variety of webinars and training workshops as well as attendance at relevant conferences.</p> <p>National Recreation and Parks Association Conference – 5 staff attended virtually (4 rec division, 1 museums)</p> <p>Maryland Recreation and Parks Association conference – 5 staff attended virtually (rec division)</p> <p>Museum senior staff attending data collection and analysis training and 2 staff attended Maryland Tourism Coalition (MTC) Maryland Travel & Tourism Summit (MTTS) and one attended the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) Summer Conference.</p> <p>Two Park staff earned Playground inspector certifications and several received training on artificial field turf maintenance.</p>
Continually seek to enhance existing partnerships, while developing new community partnerships, and sponsorships to	Identify appropriate methods for advertising and research innovative ways for garnering sponsorship support. ST	Staff is working to develop new methods to obtain additional sponsorship and community support through various advertising mediums.

<p>broaden program and event offerings.</p> <p>Division(s): Recreation, Museums, Golf, Parks</p>	<p>Identify key stakeholders and nurture partners through a systematic approach to solicitation of support through established timelines. M</p> <p>Enhance efforts to engage and recruit volunteers, with focus on inclusion and intergenerational attraction. M</p>	<p>Example: Sierra Club and Arts Council identified as partners for enhancements at Lexington Manor Passive Park.</p> <p>Examples: Numerous organizations including nonprofits and youth sports leagues as well as individual citizens attended 6 focus groups and two public meetings to give input on the strengths, weakness and needs of the Department in the update of the Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan.</p> <p>The community gardens project works with over a dozen community stakeholders in the planning for the design and construction of gardens at Lexington Manor Passive Park.</p> <p>After a year of use the Volunteer Manual is under review and update to aid staff in the successful use of the policies and procedures for volunteer management.</p> <p>A new volunteer organization was founded to provide demonstrations and classes at the Nicolet Skate park.</p>
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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>Division: Administration</p>	<p>Develop ad hoc groups to discuss and prioritize recreational space needs. ST</p> <p>Utilize Program Open Space funds and seek other funding sources for purchase and/or development of available park</p>	<p>The Department continues to work with several groups related to space needs.</p> <p>Example: Gymnastics users were surveyed for input on the Gymnastics Center lease continuation versus the relocation of the center.</p> <p>Youth sports League Leaders meetings continue a biannual basis to discuss needs and concerns.</p> <p>Staff SWOT analysis and community focus groups held to determine needs of the Department in the development of the Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan.</p> <p>In addition to the budgeted POS funding for projects that include the replacement of Nicolet Park Playground and lights at the Cecil Park Tennis courts an additional</p>

	<p>property that meet the level of service goals. ST</p> <p>Develop an aggressive Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that addresses level of service goals for property acquisition. O</p>	<p>1.5 million dollars was received in Infrastructure funds. This additional financing is funding (5) new projects including a restroom at Chaptico Park, ADA Park Improvements Ballfield improvements, a pavilion and wellness stations at Lexington Manor Passive Park and athletic field lights at Dorsey Park.</p> <p>See approved FY23 CIP Plan adopted May 24, 2022.</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>Division: Administration</p>	<p>Partner with the Maryland Stadium Authority to develop an economic & market conditions study. ST</p> <p>Engage with youth sports leaders to determine 5-10-year participation plan. O</p>	<p>The Market & 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>Biannual meetings with youth sports leaders continues to determine the needs and desires of the organizations. Field improvements and staffing enhancements are in the FY23-FY27 budget.</p>
<p>Develop master plans for new parks and facilities</p> <p>Division: Administration</p>	<p>Utilize the approved LPPRP as a guide for master planning recommendations for new parks and facilities; LPPRP. O</p> <p>Develop master plans consistent with approved CIP, including feasibility study for large, multiple use recreation/community center. ST</p>	<p>Consistent with the LPPRP, the firm of A. Morton Thomas & Associates is conducting master planning services for the Shannon Farm (RP1905) and completed the Snow Hill Park plan (RP1901). The Snow Hill Park Master Plan was adopted by the Commissioner for St. Mary's County on June 7, 2022.</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>Division: Admin/Parks</p>	<p>Work with MDOT for consistency with state's long-range Transportation Plan. O</p> <p>Work with citizens and other transportation stakeholders to identify trail needs. M</p>	<p>Project Manager continues to work with MDOT with the work on Phase VII of the Three Notch Trail.</p> <p>The Department continues to participate in the Tri-County Council's Bicycle & 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>Division: Parks</p>	<p>Revise the current Park Operations and Maintenance Plan to include park maintenance schedule; waterfront sites maintenance schedule; and equipment maintenance and replacement schedule. ST</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 Course, Great Mills Swimming Pool and Nicolet Spray Park.</p>

		Staff are developing the operations plan for the Wellness and Aquatics Center to be included into the Maintenance and Operations Manual.
Explore new ways to measure attendance, participation and visitation for parks, facilities and events. Division(s): Museums, Parks	Install counters, push buttons, motion detectors, or other means where feasible to assist in measuring attendance and visitation at parks and facilities. ST	Hand clickers are currently used at parks that have staff such as, Waterfront Parks and special events. Research is underway for the use of vehicle detection counters at most heavily used parks as such CRRP, Cecil, Lancaster, Chaptico and 5 th district parks.
Make recommendations to the Commissioners of St. Mary's County for park and facility upgrades. Division(s): Administration, Parks	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. ST	Director continues to meet user groups on a regular basis and incorporates all gathered information in presentation to the Commissioners in the annual budget request. The Recreation and Parks Advisory Board hosts groups several times a year to hear concerns and requests. All Divisions conduct user surveys to gather data on needed improvements and enhancements. Youth sports League Leaders meetings continue a biannual basis to discuss needs and concerns. Staff SWOT analysis and community focus groups held to determine needs of the Department in the development of the Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan. Input from the Wicomico Shores Golf Advisory Board and various leagues is regularly sought for input on recommended course improvements.
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. All Divisions	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. ST Implement coordinated offerings that create connectivity between parks, trails and museums. M	The Department's website and social media accounts are continually updated with information on closures, programs and services and community input opportunities. Wicomico Shores Golf Club is now attending community special events to provide activities and market the course. Connectivity was made between Lancaster Park and Lexington Manor Passive Park, allowing foot and bicycle traffic to avoid Great Mills Road to access South Rt235. Connectivity was made between the New Northern County Farmers Market and the Three Notch Trail. Connectivity between Museum events created by offering shuttle service between the Retrofest Event Piney Point

	Capitalize on tourism and recreational opportunities afforded by historic trails and byways in which the museums and parks are included. O	and Southern Maryland Boat regatta at Piney Point Landing..
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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. Division: Museums	Complete the renovations and enhancements at county-managed museum sites as detailed in the approved Capital Improvements Program (CIP). ST	Example: Ongoing- design work continues for the new St. Clements Island Museum.
Develop and promote programs that will improve visitor experiences and encourage preservation of the county's heritage culture and rural character. Division: Museums	Promote local heritage awareness through programs, collections and awareness activities (such as an "In Your Own Backyard" program; stories; and work with the local Tourism agency, Visit St. Mary's, on focused marketing campaigns). ST Collaborate with the St. Mary's County Public Library, Historical Society, and other area museum staff to work on joint membership, marketing, and programming. ST	The Museum Division continues to expand on several awareness programs. Examples: In partnership with MD tourism a new historic site scavenger hunt was created and is in use. Example: The Division met regularly with museum partners to collaborate on programs such as a library talk given in March 2022; on-site reading program at Piney Point Lighthouse Museum in April 2022.
Assess the county museum site collections and holdings. Division: Museums	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. ST Conduct regular collections assessments as specified in the Museum's Collections Management Plan. O Hold community days at facilities whereby citizens can have objects and artifacts evaluated. O	In person events have just resumed. The Museums hosted Chamber of Commerce event and planning community meetings to share concept drawings for museum and upcoming events and activities. A review of the collection is done annually, based the exhibit schedule. Reviews are also done as items are offered to the Division, to assess need and appropriateness, during annual Community Day events. Appraiser Fair Community Days hosted
Promote environmentally sensitive areas as well as opportunities for passive recreation and nature interpretation.	Create and maintain trails on county property. ST	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. The design of trails on the property will

<p>Division(s): Museums, Parks</p>	<p>Promote increase use of water taxi, public piers, and kayak launches via improved marketing and special offers. ST</p> <p>Focus on environmental awareness at parks and facilities as part of annual staff training. M</p> <p>Develop opportunities to promote stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed. M</p> <p>Provide additional opportunities for children to learn and play outside with focus on understanding of watershed resources, forests, farms and fields. M</p> <p>Add new and enhanced special events and programs (and self-guided programs, such as geocaching, Find Your Chesapeake, etc.). M</p>	<p>occur after the construction of the new facility. Ongoing marketing including social media posts and new rack cards. Video promotions planned for facilities in the future.</p> <p>Example: Project Manager has attended several trainings on climate change, resiliency, and conservation.</p> <p>New Policies created on Environmental Sustainability and Area and Facilities Development and are published for public view.</p> <p>Examples: Conversations and a Cruise morning program and Outdoor Adventures at Piney Point for families continued.</p> <p>Wicomico Shores Golf Course has increased the area of no mow by nearly 18 acres.</p> <p>Example: Conversations and a Cruise morning program and Outdoor Adventures at Piney Point for families continued and a new scavenger hunt program was added.</p> <p>Example: Ongoing Special Nights at the Museums added and the Jazz festival expanded.</p>
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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>Division: Administration</p>	<p>Increase efforts for awareness of public meetings, especially where citizen input is sought, on the R&P and County website, other applicable agency websites, and on social media. ST</p>	<p>Example: Numerous organizations including nonprofits and youth sports leagues as well as individual citizens attended 6 focus groups and two public meetings to give input on the strengths, weakness and needs of the Department in the update of the Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (LPPRP). The Department as sought public input through the website and social media for the LPPRP.</p>

	<p>Expand opportunities for broadcasting presentations (live Cable Channel 95, YouTube videos, etc.). M</p>	<p>Examples: The Department continues to build its library of videos on YouTube and is researching a partnership with PIO to create commercials for the Museums and Golf Divisions.</p> <p>Wicomico Shores Golf Course is now an approved public meeting location for County Government and are working on improvements to include the ability to broadcast meetings live.</p>
<p>Work to eliminate barriers to participation by promoting the many benefits of parks and recreation.</p> <p>Division: Recreation</p>	<p>Explore opportunities for onsite program registration at applicable recreational facilities. M</p> <p>Ensure information is accessible for individuals of all abilities. ST</p> <p>Create new marketing and incentive programs to increase awareness and participation at parks, facilities, events and programs. M</p> <p>Achieve Commission for the Accreditation of Park & Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) accreditation M; then maintain Accreditation O.</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 the WAC and 6 days per week at Gymnastics Center.</p> <p>The ADA Transition Plan was updated and published on the website.</p> <p>A new Solo Rider, accessible golf cart was ordered to replace the outdated model on fleet. A new Accommodations Guidelines and Golf Cart Flag and Accessibility Cart policy was created.</p> <p>Example: Working with MD Tourism Coalition to develop new state-wide initiatives and incentive programs that include package promotions and deals.</p> <p>On March 14, 2022- Self Assessment completed and submitted. A Virtual Visit was conducted May 23-27, 2022 and recommendation for Accreditation was received. The Department will attend a hearing September to receive formal accreditation.</p>
<p>Make use of new and emerging technology for promotion and to improve the registration and payment processes.</p> <p>Division(s): Recreation, Golf, Museums</p>	<p>Continually update the R&P website to remain efficient and engaging. O</p> <p>Update program registration software package as needed to stay up-to-date with current needs. M</p>	<p>Example: Field/rental calendars & Certified Coaches lists updated daily.</p> <p>Changes and additions made based on customer requests.</p> <p>Program and facility information updated as needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks websites updated with interior trail maps. • Seasonal program offering updated quarterly. • Special events page updated when new events offered. <p>Parks Division began researching Park Asset and Operations Software options for purchase in FY24</p>

	Enhance Internet connectivity at various R&P sites. M	RecTrac/Webtrac/Golfrac registration systems undergo frequent updates to improve registration and other reporting functions. Wi-Fi installed at Hollywood Recreation Center; plans for installation at Carver & Margaret Brent Centers outlined. Wi-Fi installed at Chaptico, Lancaster, Chancellor's Run and Baggett parks.
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