



NEWS RELEASE *for Immediate Release*

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**Torti Gallas + Partners Selected to Collaborate with County and Stakeholders
to Design Vision for Innovation Center**

Leonardtown, MD - Torti Gallas + Partners (TG+P) has been selected to create the Innovation District Master Plan for the St. Mary's County Regional Airport and surrounding properties. Torti Gallas is a Maryland-based business that is an internationally-recognized leader in creating vibrant, mixed-use places that foster innovation.

"Real estate market trends are changing the way we do business. As a result, technology centers are re-positioning themselves for the next 50-years to be competitive, attract the best and brightest, and facilitate collaboration and a cross pollination of ideas leading to increased innovation. We are excited to work with the St. Mary's partners to help create an Innovation District Master Plan that helps unlock the full potential of existing key assets and to increase its competitiveness for talent," said Erik Aulestia, Partner at Torti Gallas + Partners.

The area within and around the St. Mary's County Regional Airport has undergone a transformation in recent years due to increased investment and interest by the private sector, the State of Maryland, the Federal Aviation Administration, the US Navy, and St. Mary's County Government.

"St. Mary's County Regional Airport is not only the State's fastest growing general aviation airport, it's also become the place where aviation and technology companies have clustered. Businesses and higher education want to be there," said Ken Reed of S. Hunt Aero, a real estate development company that has invested heavily in the airport.

Along with analysis, research, and planning, TG+P will hold multiple stakeholder meetings and community meetings to gather data and input from property owners, business owners, developers, residents, and academic institutions. The final deliverable will be a Master Plan and a shared vision that will help the County and its partners connect the innovation district components, develop gathering places, and plan for future economic growth.

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The Innovation District designation will align stakeholder visions for the area, ensuring multimodal transportation options that are important for businesses and quality of life, as well as suggestions for gathering places and future manufacturing and office buildings. The designation will also help St. Mary's County and Southern Maryland showcase itself as a center of innovation, especially in the unmanned and autonomy industries, and compete with more urban areas for businesses and talent.

“The momentum at the airport has been the result of a public-private partnership. We envision this next step to create a vision amongst property owners, residents, our higher education institutions and others. At the end of the day, we want different types of people and their ideas to converge because that's how you build even more innovation,” said Chris Kaselemis, Director of the Department of Economic Development.

The St. Mary's Department of Economic Development, collaborating with the County's Land Use and Growth Management Department and Department of Public Work and Transportation, worked with the Calvert-St. Mary's Metropolitan Planning Organization to issue a request for proposal to create a vision and master plan for the innovation district.

Background:

An Innovation District is a geographic area where anchor institutions and companies cluster and connect with small firms, start-ups, business incubators, accelerators. They are well defined, and offer mixed use office, retail, and housing. The vision is to create an Innovation District that encompasses targeted businesses, lab-to-marketplace evolution opportunities, and easy multi-mode transportation connections to businesses, housing, retail, and meeting and gathering places. The innovation district area also requires attention to transportation by car, bike and foot.

The team at TG+P specializes in urban planning, neighborhood & urban design, and building design. The firm was involved with the creation of the LifeSci in Montgomery County, Maryland, the Crystal City Master Plan in Arlington County, Virginia, Loudon Center in Loudoun County, Virginia, and The Parks at Walter Reed in Washington, D.C. As part of the TG+P team, Toole Design Group will focus on transportation concepts.

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