ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Master Planning Executive Team
Chris Kaselemis, St. Mary’s County Department of Economic Development
Robin Finnacom, St. Mary’s County Department of Economic Development
Carolyn Laray, St. Mary’s County Division of Tourism
Andrew Ponti, St. Mary’s County Division of Tourism
Bill Scaraffia, St. Mary’s County Chamber of Commerce

Master Planning Committee Members
Kim Aus, Hampton Inn, Lexington Park
Christine Bergmark, Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission
Christy Bright, Department of Natural Resources
Beverly Brown, Chesapeake Travel Leaders
Nancy Easterling, Historic Sotterley, Inc.
Regina Faden, Historic St. Mary's City
Jim Grube, Woodlawn Farm and Slack Winery
Phil Langley, St. Mary’s County Economic Development Commission
Brian Loewe, St. Mary's County Department of Recreation & Parks
Pam Lowe, Country Inn & Suites, Lexington Park
Laschelle McKay, Town of Leonardtown
Debra Pence, St. Mary’s County Museum Division
Roz Racanello, Southern Maryland Heritage Area Consortium

Special Thanks
Phil Shire, St. Mary’s County Department of Land Use and Growth Management
Bill Hunt, St. Mary’s County Department of Land Use and Growth Management
Sue Veith, St. Mary’s County Department of Land Use and Growth Management
Calvin Strozier, St. Mary's County Department of Land Use and Growth Management
Grace Mary Brady, St. Mary’s County Department of Land Use and Growth Management
George Erichsen, St. Mary’s County Department of Public Works and Transportation
Daryl Calvano, St. Mary’s County Health Department
Mayor Dan Burris, Leonardtown
Marci Ross, Maryland Office of Tourism
Dave Elberti, METCOM
Wynne Briscoe, St. Mary’s County Economic Development Commission
Kathy Bailey, St. Mary’s County Department of Recreation & Parks

Consulting Team – Jones, Lang, LaSalle Hotels & Hospitality Group
Dan Fenton, Project Executive
Bethanie Parker, Associate Consultant

This project was made possible through a grant from the Commissioners of St. Mary’s County, the U. S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration, and the Maryland Department of Commerce with the support of the St. Mary’s County Chamber of Commerce and the St. Mary’s County Economic Development Commission.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Executive Summary** .......................................................................................................................... 1

Overarching Objective .......................................................................................................................... 1

Future Tourism Organizational Structure ......................................................................................... 2

Short-Term Victories and Long-Term Commitments ....................................................................... 3

Governance and Ongoing Engagement .............................................................................................. 3

Summary of Target Markets ................................................................................................................ 3

Measurement ........................................................................................................................................ 4

The Importance of Research ............................................................................................................... 4

Foundational Tourism Components ..................................................................................................... 4

Tourism and Hospitality Master Plan Programs ................................................................................... 5

Conclusion ........................................................................................................................................... 6

**Master Plan** ...................................................................................................................................... 8

State of the Tourism Economy ............................................................................................................ 8

Stakeholder Engagement ....................................................................................................................... 8

Benchmarking ....................................................................................................................................... 9

**Foundational Tourism Components** ............................................................................................... 10

Recommended Organizational Model .................................................................................................. 10

Governance and Ongoing Oversight ..................................................................................................... 15

Economic Development ........................................................................................................................ 17

Regulatory ............................................................................................................................................. 20

Workforce Training ............................................................................................................................... 25

**Tourism and Hospitality Master Plan Programs** ........................................................................... 27

Lodging ................................................................................................................................................ 27

Dining .................................................................................................................................................. 31

Water Access and Activities ................................................................................................................ 35
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The St. Mary’s County (County) Tourism & Hospitality Master Plan (THMP) and South County Action Plan is a compilation of an extensive and inclusive process that has been designed to take a comprehensive look at how to develop and grow the local tourism economy. Jones Lang LaSalle Hotels & Hospitality (JLL) is proud to have been engaged to lead and facilitate this process, however this plan represents the collaboration, expertise and input of the St. Mary’s County tourism community. Their level of input and engagement has been a key catalyst for the overall direction of the THMP. This effort is an outgrowth of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) which is focused on diversifying St. Mary’s County’s economy. Tourism has been identified as an important element of a robust and diverse economy.

In addition to this Report and Action Plan, a Situational Analysis and Areas of Focus and Best Opportunities report have been completed. These reports provide the background on the available activities in the County and other comparisons as well as an overview of those activities which warrant the highest level priority for driving future overnight visitors. These reports will be referred to throughout the THMP and should be key reference materials for the tourism organization and the St. Mary’s County Department of Economic Development (SMCDED) for implementation. The THMP has been developed to provide specific actions plans for each of the identified priorities. In other words, this is designed to be a working document that is used by a broad spectrum of stakeholders in the implementation of the agreed upon recommendations and priorities.

The positive outcome of the process, which has included hundreds of community and industry leaders as well as 15 regional and state organizations, is the identification of the breadth of current and potential opportunities that exist in St. Mary’s County to attract a diverse visitor base. From historic sites to outdoor activities to current and future amenities there is a vision that has emerged for developing St. Mary’s County into a thriving visitor destination. This vision celebrates the unique heritage, vast coastline, abundance of outdoor activities and current and future amenities that make (or will make) the County a special place to visit.

The reality of the current status of the tourism economy is that there are few experiences currently attracting overnight visitors to the County on a consistent basis. With the exception of business travel associated with the Naval Air Station Patuxent River (Base), the majority of the tourism opportunities need dedicated resources and investment to develop to a level where they will be of consistent interest to a potential overnight visitor. This sets the stage for the major focus of the plan, which is how to support and stimulate investment and focus on developing new assets and enhancing current experiences.

OVERARCHING OBJECTIVE

The overriding measurement of success used in the development of this plan is the number of “overnight visitors” that will come to St. Mary’s County as a result of the proposed tourism efforts. Currently there is limited measurement in place to identify the impact of tourism efforts. The process to track overnight visitors needs to expand in all areas cited in the THMP. This includes engaging the lodging industry as well as other attractions in a plan to track success.
This is in line with the Maryland Office of Tourism’s future goals statewide to shift focus from overall visitation specifically to overnight stays. The importance of the overnight visitor is paramount for the local tourism industry as well as the local economy. Overnight stays spur more money in direct spending as well as generate increased taxes. The average overnight visitor to Maryland spends $630 per trip compared to $87 from a day visitor according to a 2013 Visitor Impact Study from the Maryland Office of Tourism, generating over $10 billion additional direct spending dollars than day visitors. The importance of the overnight visitor is the primary focus of the recommendations in this report.

**Future Tourism Organizational Structure**

JLL is recommending a new approach to tourism in St. Mary’s County. The background for this is that the initial focus of many of the areas that are identified in the THMP is on product development. This is defined as the need to develop either new amenities (i.e. restaurants, lodging, attractions) or new experiences for St. Mary’s County. This focus will require collaboration from other areas of the County as well as regional and state organizations. The approach recommended is designed to provide direct support for product development. This level of engagement and leadership is critical to a successful implementation of the THMP. Active collaboration within the County is a key organizational foundation of the THMP. The impetus for this collaboration is the county wide recognition of the importance of a thriving tourism economy for long-term success. The departments that have been engaged in the THMP process are:

1. Land Use and Growth Management
2. Recreation and Parks
3. Agriculture and Seafood Commission
4. Health
5. Economic Development
6. Planning
7. Public Works and Transportation
8. Airport

This illustrates the breadth of county areas that will play a role in the successful implementation of the THMP. It is recommended that a regular communication and engagement plan is developed to ensure the ongoing involvement of these departments in the implementation and success of the THMP. It should be noted that the meetings and discussions that have taken place in the development of the plan have been successful in discovering opportunities to improve current approaches to supporting tourism efforts.

A more traditional role of a tourism organization is to focus almost exclusively on sales and marketing. The organizational approach that is recommended and discussed later in this report has some resources allocated to sales and marketing efforts for short-term emerging markets. The balance of the focus is supporting all aspects of product development with a goal to take advantage of and further develop the breadth of opportunities that have been identified in St. Mary’s County. In essence, it is recommended that a tourism organization be established that has the resources and expertise to lead a complex plan that requires broad based engagement and collaboration. Without enhanced resources and diversified expertise, the likelihood of successfully implementing the THMP is reduced.
SHORT-TERM VICTORIES AND LONG-TERM COMMITMENTS

The THMP contains opportunities for short-term victories as well as longer term outcomes that will require consistent support. The short-term victories are primarily focused on group sales opportunities in current venues and the long-term commitment is needed to develop the building blocks to enhance future visitor experiences. A successful effort in both areas will lead to a robust tourism economy in St. Mary’s County. The focus on short-term opportunities and longer term development also point up the need to align the tourism organization to support these efforts.

GOVERNANCE AND ONGOING ENGAGEMENT

As stated earlier, a critical component in the development of all aspects of the THMP was the engagement of the tourism community. The cornerstone of this was the development and engagement of the Master Planning Committee. This committee was made up of community and business leaders with a direct or indirect tie to the tourism industry. The Master Planning Committee has met consistently through the development of the Situational Analysis and provided valuable insight. There are also numerous local experts who have participated and given guidance in the areas identified in the THMP. This level of engagement has been vital in the development of the THMP. It is recommended that a governance model is implemented that will continue the momentum that has been started in this planning process. The ongoing engagement of these business and community leaders will provide an important foundation and wealth of expertise for the successful implementation of the THMP. There are more specifics in the report related to governance and ongoing engagement.

SUMMARY OF TARGET MARKETS

The focus of this plan on short, medium and long-term opportunities makes it important to focus on targeted visitor markets that have an established propensity to engage in experiences that are being developed. St. Mary’s County has the advantage in that there are a breadth of activities that, when further developed, will have the ability to reach a diverse audience.

The largest emerging visitor market which must be a focus is “Millennials.” The Millennial Generation was born between 1981 and 1997 and have now eclipsed the Baby Boomers, who were born between 1946 and 1964. This bodes well for St. Mary’s County because this generation of traveler is much more interested in participating in an activity as opposed to just observing. Many of the experiences that are discussed in the THMP are designed to be “hands on” experiences and therefore should appeal to Millennials.

The other market focus that will include Millennials and others are the particular “enthusiasts” for the activities that are outlined in the report. Examples of these enthusiasts include Cyclists, Paddle Boarders, Fishermen, Heritage Tourists and more. This provides specific targets to pursue and raise awareness of activities they have interest in. JLL has done extensive research on these audiences which can be found in the Situational Analysis.

Lastly, there are group markets that have been identified in the THMP. These include weddings, sports and small meetings. For sports and small meetings, the target audience is the event organizers and meeting planners that make the decision on where their event will meet. The proposed future tourism organization has a direct sales component designed to focus on these group markets.
MEASUREMENT

It is important to distinguish an overnight visitor from the day visitor, as mentioned in the prior sections. JLL’s experience and national research indicates that the type of activity that will cause a visitor to come and stay overnight can be different and more compelling than one choosing to visit for the day. In essence, the “bar is higher” to cause a visitor to stay the night, meaning the quality and quantity of experiences that make a visitor book an overnight stay. In turn, the County will need to shift its focus to raise this “bar” in developing experiences and new amenities that will attract out of town visitors. JLL recommends that processes are instituted that are designed to track the results of future tourism efforts that give a clear indication of the overnight stays that have been generated. The process to track overnight visitors needs to expand in all areas cited in the THMP. This includes engaging the lodging industry as well as other attractions in a plan to track success.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH

JLL has completed research related to larger national trends to gain an understanding of potential future visitor markets for St. Mary’s County. Many experts have been consulted to gain their perspective on potential target markets. The tourism organization needs to develop a research plan to conduct targeted research to validate the level of interest in the priorities outlined in the THMP. In addition, it is recommended that test marketing is conducted to determine levels of interest for particular experiences. Research does not have to be complicated or costly. JLL would recommend developing in-house approaches to surveying target audiences to gain insight.

FOUNDATIONAL TOURISM COMPONENTS

There are four foundational areas that have been identified which are key elements to support the overall success the THMP. The areas that have been identified are as follows:

1. Organizational Model
2. Economic Development
3. Regulations
4. Workforce Training

With the above items addressed and progressing, the County can begin to turn the corner in tourism, diversify the local economy and deliver high-quality experiences for overnight visitors. If these foundational components are not developed, the success of the implementation of the THMP will be greatly impacted.

Recommended Organizational Model

JLL has worked with the County’s Economic Development Department, Tourism Division and County Administration to recommend a strategy to support the THMP implementation through a rethought organizational model. It is recommended that the Tourism Division consider a transition to a private, non-profit 501(c)6 organization over the next several years. The Organizational Model section has detailed the staffing levels needed to move the Tourism Division forward with specific areas of focus. This will also prepare the organization for a potential transition to a private organization.
Economic Development

As stated above, the need to develop key aspects of the tourism experience includes attracting new investment to St. Mary’s County. This includes targeted efforts in key industries such as lodging, restaurants, wedding venues, wineries, breweries and more. The most effective approach will be collaborative with the proposed tourism organization, the regulatory agencies and Leonardtown. A collaborative approach has been recommended to accomplish this as part of the overall CEDS plan. In addition to the goal of attracting new business, there is an important focus on supporting the success of current tourism-related businesses.

Regulations

The regulatory challenges that exist in St. Mary’s County warrant a major focus of the THMP. The process has uncovered areas that either must be changed or planned for in a more proactive manner that is inviting for new investment and supportive of current business owners. This process has included all of the primary regulatory agencies which has led to a recommendation to include the THMP as an on-going “agenda item” in the Technical Evaluation Committee (TEC) meetings. The TEC meetings include all of the local and regional regulatory agencies and has historically been focused on reviewing current projects. This approach would give the agencies an opportunity to discuss the specific recommendations contained in the THMP as well as give advice on how to prepare identified properties for future development. This new approach to tackling the regulatory challenges is foundational to the success of the THMP.

Workforce Training

A trained and informed tourism workforce can make a significant difference in St. Mary’s County’s ability to attract and retain overnight visitors. Overnight visitors will return to a place where they have been treated well. The task of making an impact in this area is significant and needs to be consistent and sustainable.

A recommended approach to this is to work with a recognized firm on developing a certification program that is designed to train, educate and reward tourism employees. This would come from a very customized curriculum and an ongoing program that certifies employees who have completed the training and then encourages ongoing participation to maintain the certification. The program would also become an important marketing tool for the County by committing to the quality of service a visitor will receive in St. Mary’s County.

TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY MASTER PLAN PROGRAMS

The THMP includes specific action plans for nine programs and three emerging programs that were identified in the development of the areas of best use report. These have been identified as the key priorities that have the potential to deliver a significant return on investment as defined as increasing the number of overnight visitors. Each of the programs contain an overview and a work plan designed to give guidance on the steps that are needed to move the area forward. Each of the programs also identify the recommended advisory groups, key partners and resources that should be engaged to support the implementation and future success. This section of the report should be used in the subsequent meetings as a road map for future success.
Assets and activities that have been designated as priorities based on their potential to meet the plan’s key objective of driving overnight visitors to St. Mary’s County are:

- **Lodging** – Ensuring there is a variety of lodging choices in St. Mary’s County from full service hotels, to resort-type hotels to B&Bs, so as to meet the needs and expectations of various market segments.
- **Dining** – Recruiting and supporting restauranteurs committed to providing chef-driven, locally sourced culinary experiences, thus keying into culinary tourism trends.
- **Water Access and Activities** – Increasing and improving water access and developing water-based experiences to appeal to a broad range of visitors eager to get out on the water to paddle and play.
- **Leonardtown** – Supporting the Town in its evolution as a vibrant tourism hub that brings together shopping, dining and lodging and serves as a base for outward exploration.
- **South County** – Developing strategies that “reimagine” a new future for this once vibrant tourism mecca while meeting environmental regulatory challenges in cooperative and innovative ways.
- **Museums & Historic Sites** – Investing in visitor programs and capital projects to ensure both established and new ventures achieve the truly exceptional. Creating “connectivity” between sites to enrich and extend the visitor experience.
- **Events** – Supporting existing events capable of attracting overnight visitors and developing a “signature” multi-day event that has direct economic impact and serves to enhance the County’s “brand.”
- **Agri-tourism and Farm-to-Table** – Creating experiences around land and water heritage that connect the visitor with what is authentic and unique to St. Mary’s County, supporting farm and aquaculture-related industries, and developing implementable farm-to-table strategies.
- **Outdoor Activities** – Developing cycling opportunities and tapping into existing state and federal cycling initiatives to extend trails within the county and link trails across the region.

The THMP also identifies three emerging markets that have potential to develop in conjunction with a focused sales effort as outlined in the organizational model section. These include Weddings, Small Meetings and Sports. There are short term opportunities in the emerging markets that could produce near term results.

**CONCLUSION**

The THMP is a compilation of the research, engagement and on-going internal and external review that has taken place in a collaborative year-long process. It represents an in-depth look at the wide variety of opportunities that exist in St. Mary’s County. It includes some potential short-term victories as well as longer term planning that will produce a viable tourism economy and increase overnight visitors. The foundational areas that have been identified are vital components to a successful implementation of the THMP. If any of the foundational components do not evolve and embrace how to successfully support the THMP, the process will be negatively impacted. The programs that have been identified are complete with specific action steps to create a “road map” for successful implementation. These action steps should be reviewed in subsequent meeting with the advisors noted in the program section.

The inclusive process that has led to the development of the THMP creates a strong foundation for future success. This increases the odds for successful implementation and growth of the tourism industry and a more diversified
economy in St. Mary’s County. The momentum that has been part of the development of this plan must continue and will require ongoing engagement from the partners who have been identified as well as the newly enhanced tourism organization. JLL would again like to thank everyone who has participated in the THMP.
MASTER PLAN

JLL was engaged by the St. Mary’s County Tourism Division and St. Mary’s County Chamber of Commerce to create the Tourism and Hospitality Master Plan through in-depth research, stakeholder feedback and asset analysis. JLL crafted a detailed Situational Analysis as Phase I of the THMP process which analyzed all of the tourism assets and amenities in the County as well as identified emerging areas. This Situational Analysis will be referenced throughout the THMP and should serve as an ongoing, working document throughout the implementation process. The Situational Analysis and additional THMP documents are posted on the St. Mary’s County website and can be downloaded directly from http://www.stmarysmd.com/ded/THMP.asp.

JLL also submitted a report on the Areas of Focus and Best Opportunities to highlight those assets, activities and amenities from the Situational Analysis that could “move the needle” for overnight visitors in the County with investment. These two reports provide the foundation for the recommendations and direction of the Tourism and Hospitality Master Plan.

STATE OF THE TOURISM ECONOMY

Over the course of the past decade, the leisure travel market has grown and competition to attract visitors has become fierce across the globe, the nation, and within the State of Maryland. St. Mary’s County is to some degree, playing catch-up, as noted in the Situational Analysis. Until recently, the strong federal base-driven economy and high standard of living provided little incentive to give serious consideration to developing other sectors of the economy. The THMP provides the framework for developing a far stronger and vibrant tourism sector—a true “tourism economy.”

The current state of the tourism economy in the County underscores in need for the recommendations and implementation steps found within the pages and Work Plans of this THMP. The plan is designed to develop a consistent foundation of visitor offerings while taking advantageous of short-term opportunities. The current issues that bar the County from being a premier destination for visitors are the need for connectivity between existing assets, lack of infrastructure and amenities, i.e., restaurants, parking, lodging and other amenities, adjacent to existing assets and the need to enhance the experiential opportunities needed to attract overnight visitors.

As noted in the Situational Analysis, the current historic sites, museums and attractions are primarily passive and do not attract out of town visitors who are staying in St. Mary’s County. The current and future generations of visitors desire more experiential, hands-on activities. With those shifts in mind, the Work Plans for the sections within the THMP will provide the foundation to move the County’s tourism efforts forward over the next several years.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholder input has been central to this process. It has been essential to understanding the local situation and in determining priorities. Community engagement should continue to inform the implementation of the THMP. JLL hosted nine focus groups with over 100 participants, held individual meetings and phone calls with another 100 stakeholders, agency heads and others involved with tourism at the local, regional, state and federal level and facilitated monthly meetings of the Master Planning Committee.
JLL also distributed a stakeholder survey to over 900 community members and tourism stakeholders. One hundred and forty-three respondents shared their perceptions of many aspects of tourism in the County and provided early input for the SWOT analysis.

In essence this not “JLL’s plan” this is a plan that we are proud to have led, but includes a significant level of input and expertise and interest from the St. Mary’s County community. The level of engagement has already proven to move issues forward and open up positive dialogue in many areas of the plan. One example of this is the ongoing discussions and support of the County regulatory agencies. This collaboration has led to supported recommendations that are found on the regulatory section of the THMP as well as the South County plan. The success of the community participation points up the importance of maintaining a high level of engagement going forward.

**BENCHMARKING**

JLL also completed a benchmarking analysis during Phase I of the THMP process. The study reviewed data from other destinations with similar experiences and looked at models that might be emulated. Of the five Maryland destinations studied, St. Mary’s County is the second lowest Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) in terms of overall funding. St. Mary’s County is also the destination with the third highest number of hotel rooms. In order to make a true comparison between levels of funding, budgets were compared based on how many hotel rooms are in each respective destination. This analysis provides insight as to how the level of funding is allocated per hotel room. Meaning, how much a destination is able to spend in promoting overnight stays and generating “heads in beds.” In a perfect scenario, a destination will have a higher marketing budget relative to the number of hotel rooms. This comparison shows that St. Mary’s County has the second lowest marketing expenditure per hotel room at $384. The highest expenditure per room is $680 and the average among competitors is $452 per room. The differences in levels of funding reveals that the competing destinations have a higher level of funding and are able to largely outspend St. Mary’s on a per room basis for marketing.

Additionally, when comparing DMOs for their size and scale internally, the average staffing level of the counties studied is 2.5 full time employees. This indicates the St. Mary’s County is understaffed in comparison with only 2 FTEs. JLL has recommended an organizational approach that creates a longer term goal of having 5 FTEs within the tourism team. This is primarily due to the need to focus on product development and coordination and not strictly sales and marketing. This breadth of responsibility requires a new approach to staffing to direct involvement in leading and coordinating the broad spectrum of needs that are outlined in the THMP.

The process that has been started to develop this report entails a combination of research, competitive analysis, JLL’s experience, regional and state organizational input and a highly engaged community with a broad spectrum of expertise.

**Maryland County Destination’s Studied:**

1. Calvert County
2. Charles County
3. Dorchester County
4. Frederick County
5. Talbot County
FOUNDATIONAL TOURISM COMPONENTS

As mentioned in the Executive Summary, the THMP has four foundational tourism components that are key to moving the tourism industry forward in the County. Without these foundational components the THMP will be challenging to successfully implement and oversee. The following section details the necessary steps and actions to take to develop a platform for tourism growth.

RECOMMENDED ORGANIZATIONAL MODEL

Model Objective

In the process of developing the THMP surfaced specific needs in St. Mary’s County to develop a vibrant and sustainable tourism economy. As stated in the Executive Summary, many of the areas of focus are under development. This will require an organizational structure that can support that development. The organizational chart below outlines five functions which are key components for a successful tourism organization. This broader focus has a higher priority than strictly the sales and marketing of St. Mary’s County and raising awareness. The ultimate objective of the future tourism organizational model should be one team with the components detailed below “under one roof,” however it is not expected that this organization can be pulled together immediately. There is potential for a phased approach that could include certain aspects of this model being contracted and combining duties in certain positions until funding is available. Ultimately the optimal organization will have five positions that each will focus on the areas cited below. This will provide the needed support and proactive sales activity for a successful implementation of the THMP and long term success. The broader need for support dictates this staffing level. This is higher than some of the other counties that were studied however this encompasses a wider spectrum of responsibilities.

Mission and Vision

Developing a focused mission for the tourism organization is an important outcome of the THMP. The process uncovered the value of determining which experiences have the potential of attracting overnight visitors. Many discussions centered around the importance of “raising the bar” to create competitive experiences. The following is a concise mission statement recommended to reflect a focused organization.

The mission of the St. Mary’s County tourism organization is to attract overnight visitors for the economic benefit of the County.

The litmus test that will be applied going forward will be whether a particular activity or asset has the capability of attracting overnight stays. If so, the tourism organization will provide support and resources when available. Conversely, if a proposed opportunity does not have the potential to drive incremental overnight stays, then it will not be a tourism priority.

To describe this further, the tourism organization will promote the County’s tourism assets and activities including the rich history and heritage of St. Mary’s County and support initiatives and directives within the THMP to further develop the desirable visitor opportunities. The organization will be focused on experience development, product development as well as sales and marketing for the destination.
Potential Funding Sources

The tourism organization is currently funded through the County budget as a Division of the Economic Development Department and will need to be continually supported through County allocations regardless of model. Additional funding sources for the tourism organizations operations could include the current Accommodations Tax, a potential new district tax, the local Amusement and Admissions Tax and additional fundraising through sales and other activities.

Structure

The following approach is designed to provide the level of support and leadership needed as well as maintain the inclusive approach that has been developed in the THMP process. The on-going broad based engagement by local experts will provide an important platform for the successful implementation of the THMP. The following chart outlines the broader functions that need to be addressed and led in a successful tourism organization. More detail on these functions will be described later.

Tourism Organization Model Options: Public vs. Private

There is no hard and fast rule as to whether a public or private tourism organization is the better approach for a destination. One area that is recommended in the THMP is to start a direct sales effort designed to capture short-term opportunities with sporting events, small meetings and weddings. A successful sales approach needs to have a very clear performance based component to measure success. For the most part, a private environment that can reward success and manage results effectively is most effective.

JLL’s recommendation is to develop the proposed organizational and governance model (refer to Governance Section) within the current public structure with a longer term analysis to include the potential benefit of transitioning into a private model. The following is a description of the most common private model for tourism organizations aka Destination Marketing Organizations and or Convention and Visitors Bureaus.

Common Private Model - a 501(c)6

(Organization contracted by the County)

A common tourism model is a private, non-profit 501(c)6 with a contract for services. A 501(c)6 is a membership association dedicated to move the business of its members forward, i.e., chambers, trade associations, etc. There are many options within this model. The most important aspect of the development of this is the creation of a contract with the County that has clear accountability and responsibilities. The development of focused by-laws for the private tourism organization is another critical component.
The development of a Tourism Commission and the contracting of the sales function are initial steps that should be taken to broaden the capacity of the tourism organization while keeping the function part of county government. As these functions develop, privatization should continue to be reviewed.

**Overview of Key Functions**

**Senior Leadership**
The breadth of opportunity in St. Mary’s County and the importance of community engagement warrants the creation of an Executive Director position and/or the need for senior leadership. A senior leadership role will move the department forward and manage the overall THMP implementation plan. This position will be focused on the successful evolution of the four cornerstone areas (Organizational Structure, Economic Development, Regulatory and Workforce Training). There will be key partners who will provide expertise, however the tourism effort will need senior leadership to keep these on track. This position will also be focused on the overall funding plan. This will include advocacy for the incoming hotel tax revenue, the local admission and amusement tax, the potential formation of a Tourism Business improvement district and relevant grant funding. The senior leadership function will also provide the communication and interaction needed for the development of a successful Tourism Commission.

**Direct Sales**
The future tourism organization needs a staff member who is focused on direct sales efforts in the sports market, small groups and the wedding market. This function will have the responsibility to solicit the group organizers, work with the venue operators to secure space and secure the appropriate room blocks at the hotel. The direct sales efforts should have quantitative goals set and be evaluated based on goal achievement.

**Product/Experience Development**
The future tourism organization will require staff focus on product development and proactive experiential coordination. Many of the priorities will require focused support for success. Examples of the include farm-to-table, agri-tourism and historic sites. This function would be focused on all issues related to working with the participating organizations and companies to coordinate and develop visitor experiences. This position would also be responsible for managing the event program.

**Marketing and Stakeholder Communication**
There will be a need to continue to drive awareness utilizing the website and other vehicles though a staff position dedicated to marketing and communication. This function will be responsible for maintaining and upgrading the tourism website, researching and developing marketing approaches for the targeted tourism activities, and maintaining ongoing communications with the stakeholders, key partners and committee members. This function should also be responsible for developing an annual research plan to test market segments as well as validate interest in the enhanced assets and activities identified in the THMP.

**Visitor Services**
The recommendation to directly oversee the visitor center creates the opportunity to have a Visitor Services Manager position or the oversight of the Visitor Services function. This function would oversee the visitor center, support experience and package development activities and interface with stakeholders in support of the THMP.
services manager would also be involved in data collection of individual visitors coming into the Welcome Center, as well as other destinations including County museums. A recent opportunity has surfaced to collaborate with Department of Recreation and Parks on the oversight of the County museums. This is a great example where collaboration may leverage the ability to have a broader impact on the visitor experience through the museums and have direct oversight of the visitor services functions. This function would also support the Workforce Training approach outlined above.

**Tourism Organization Areas of Responsibilities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding</th>
<th>Direct Sales</th>
<th>Marketing and Communication</th>
<th>Product/Experience Development</th>
<th>Economic Development</th>
<th>Administration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Grants</td>
<td>• Youth sports</td>
<td>• Campaign development</td>
<td>• Hands-on coordination</td>
<td>• Liaison to tourism asset Development and recruitment</td>
<td>• Data collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• County budget/hotel tax allocation</td>
<td>• Group business</td>
<td>• Package collateral</td>
<td>• Museums and Historic Sites</td>
<td>• South County</td>
<td>• Report generation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Potential District formation</td>
<td>• weddings/social events</td>
<td>• Website</td>
<td>• Water Activities</td>
<td>• Regulatory</td>
<td>• Commission Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Agri-tourism program</td>
<td>• Agri-tourism/Farm to Table</td>
<td>• Stakeholder engagement</td>
<td>• Event Development criteria</td>
<td>• Infrastructure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Museums and Historic Sites program</td>
<td>• Outdoor Activities</td>
<td>• Research and market testing</td>
<td>• Visitor Services</td>
<td>• Hotels and Lodging</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Grants**
- **County budget/hotel tax allocation**
- **Potential District formation**
- **Agri-tourism program**
- **Museums and Historic Sites program**
- **Youth sports**
- **Group business**
- **weddings/social events**
- **Campaign development**
- **Package collateral**
- **Website**
- **Stakeholder engagement**
- **Research and market testing**
- **Hands-on coordination**
- **Museums and Historic Sites**
- **Water Activities**
- **Agri-tourism/Farm to Table**
- **Outdoor Activities**
- **South County**
- **Event Development criteria**
- **Visitor Services**
- **Liaison to tourism asset development and recruitment**
- **South County**
- **Regulatory**
- **Infrastructure**
- **Hotels and Lodging**
- **Leonardtown**
- **Data collection**
- **Report generation**
- **Commission Support**
The above represents skill sets and areas of expertise required by position and focus area for the tourism organization’s staff to be effective in supporting the THMP’s implementation.

**Work Plan**

**Work Plan – Short-Term – within 12 Months**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Set up the new Tourism Commission and begin functional operations with new oversight.</td>
<td>Determine the organization’s functionality as a subset of SMCDED.</td>
<td>Based on JLL’s recommendation of a potential transition to a private, non-profit organization, the SMCDED and Tourism Division need to determine how the organization will function as a division of County government while implementing the THMP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appoint the Tourism Commission</td>
<td>Work with stakeholders, the SMCDED and County Administration to nominate and appoint members of the Tourism Commission.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hold the first Tourism Commission meeting</td>
<td>With the Tourism Commission in place, the first meeting should be promoted for attendance.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Work Plan – Medium-Term – within 12-24 Months**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create a new budget process with Tourism Commission as part of the oversight. Develop measurement and metrics to report out to the Tourism Commission and stakeholders.</td>
<td>Develop new budgeting process to include the Tourism commission.</td>
<td>Create a process for budgeting and future planning that involves the Tourism Commission for feedback and approval of budgets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop mechanism to report on THMP progress</td>
<td>SMCDED should work with the Tourism Commission and tourism organization staff to create a THMP communication plan.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Work Plan – Long-Term – within 24-36 Months**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plan for the future of the tourism organization with privatization in mind.</td>
<td>Evaluate the potential benefits of transitioning to a private model.</td>
<td>Develop a process by which the Tourism Division will transition into a private, non-profit 501(c)6 if deemed advantageous.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finalize the organizational chart and initial staffing capacity.</td>
<td>SMCDED to work with County Administration and current Tourism Division to finalize the staffing needs based on recommended responsibilities and funding capacity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop final job descriptions and recruitment needs.</td>
<td>With the previous step completed and staffing levels finalized, SMCDED should draft job descriptions for those positions that can be budgeted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hire the additional positions.</td>
<td>Begin to hire new staff based on budget capacity for the roles and responsibilities of the tourism organization (contract for services if the organization is unable to hire individuals).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete the Welcome Center and visitor services transition.</td>
<td>Transition the Welcome Center operations to be in-house of the tourism organization.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GOVERNANCE AND ONGOING OVERSIGHT

Governance Objective

The objective of creating an oversight body is to ensure the THMP’s implementation is monitored, supported and measured for successful growth. The THMP oversight body (Tourism Commission) will evaluate and track the tourism organization’s staff and implementation efforts against the timeline.

Tourism Commission

JLL recommends the development of a Tourism Commission to act as an active advisory board to the Tourism Division and with a focus on the oversight of the implementation of the THMP. This Commission will be made up of a broad spectrum of members, appointed by the County Commissioners, who have expertise in the key areas that are identified as priorities in the plan. Those members are reflected in the black boxes below.

The following illustration shows the proposed Tourism Commission (black boxes). Each member will represent multiple areas of the tourism industry and can be appointed in conjunction with existing entities i.e., Board of Museum Trustees, friends groups, etc. The Tourism Commission will oversee the tourism organization's THMP implementation efforts and future planning processes. The tourism organization will need to have sufficient administrative resources to support the commission and advisory groups.
**Advisory Groups**

The THMP will also be supported through specific advisory groups that have been developed through the THMP process. It will be beneficial for these groups to stay engaged in the areas of focus within the THMP. These advisory groups, shown below in grey boxes, will act as a sounding board for program development, asset development, funding and additional THMP items that arise as implementation continues over the coming years. Many of these groups are key members of the THMP process. These groups will vary in terms of the frequency of meetings and level of activity based on the needs of the THMP implementation. Some groups will meet frequently and others will meet on an as needed basis. The following is a potential approach to developing the advisory groups:
With these bodies in place the tourism organization and the implementation of the THMP will have the support it needs to be successful.

**Work Plan**

**Work Plan – Short-Term – within 12 Months**

The recommended actions for this portion of the THMP oversight include the following items all believed to be capable of completion in the short-term in the following order:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop a governance document.</td>
<td>Develop a governance document that becomes a Tourism Commission member policy document which would include roles and responsibilities as well as member terms and individual duties.</td>
<td>This document should be developed by the SMCDED with the support of an outside consultant to ensure the level of detail needed for tourism is in place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain approval of governance approach.</td>
<td>The governance model including the Tourism Commission and the policy document described above should be presented to the County Commissioners of St. Mary’s County.</td>
<td>The approach to the Tourism Commission as well as the number of members, and roles and responsibilities should be approved for implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make positions public.</td>
<td>The positions available should be made public and an awareness campaign should be developed locally.</td>
<td>The Tourism Commission should be presented as an opportunity for the community and industry to get involved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commissioners of St. Mary’s County receive applications for positions.</td>
<td>Commissioners review candidates.</td>
<td>The application process should be detailed to ensure the right people are selected and appointed to the Tourism Commission based on skills and expertise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hold the first Tourism Commission meeting.</td>
<td>Within 12 months of the THMP implementation, the Tourism Commission should be formed and hold the first meeting.</td>
<td>Announce the meeting schedule to the public and develop an agenda in line with THMP implementation schedule.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**Overview**

St. Mary’s County Department of Economic Development (SMCDED) is a foundational partner in the THMP. Currently, the SMCDED is the parent department of the Tourism Division, but the need for partnership and synergy for a successful THMP implementation goes far beyond the departmental structure. SMCDED will have a key role in broadening the industry, recruiting and developing new industry-related businesses and supporting THMP initiatives through streamlined intergovernmental affairs. The collaboration amongst key county departments will play a vital role in attracting new business and supporting new experiences. The economic development effort will focus on targeting specific industries that will help expand the options for visitors. These include a broader spectrum of lodging properties, restaurants, wineries and breweries.
**Goal**

The goal of a successful economic development effort is to attract targeted new businesses that will enhance the St. Mary’s County visitor experience. In addition, the economic development effort must work in conjunction with efforts to make St. Mary’s County an attractive place in which to invest in. The goal of enhancing the tourism economy must be a shared goal amongst county departments. This should become a goal of essentially all county departments to participate in the effort to increase the number of visitors and enhance the visitor experience in St. Mary’s County.

*Situational Analysis section reference page 12.*

**Regulation**

The improvements and milestones notes in the regulatory section play a key role in the success of the economic development efforts. This includes focusing on the “ease of doing business” as well as the proposed approach to preparing properties for future development.

**Workforce Training**

n/a

**Organizational Structure**

**Staffing Needs**

The Economic Development Department currently houses the Tourism Division and as the THMP implementation evolves the SMCDED will set the tourism organization up whether it remains part of the public sector or transitions to a private organization. The tourism organization, regardless of public or private model, should have leadership that has experience in supporting tourism asset development. This is important based on the key priorities of the THMP. The tourism organization should take the lead in researching the needs of the key targeted industries and work with the SMCDED to further the THMP implementation efforts in broadening the industry offerings.

**Support for Implementation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advisory Group</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Regulatory Team  
  • Tourism Organization  
  • SMCDED  

Organizations tapped to assist the tourism organization on an ongoing basis, requiring familiarity with the THMP and the specific industry.  

• County Administration  
  • Chamber of Commerce  
  • SMADC  
  • Southern Maryland Heritage Area Consortium  

Organizations that can lend expertise or actively assist with specific THMP-related actions.  

• Targeted Industry associations  
  • Maryland Brewery Association, Maryland Winery and Grape Growing Association, Maryland Historical Trust, etc.  

Outside organizations or parties who may be called upon for advice, assistance or "reality checks" as needed.
**Target Industries**

- Breweries
- Wineries
- Restaurants
- Agriculture/aquaculture experience operators
- Lodging
- Retail
- Sports

**Focus on Current Business support – Chamber of Commerce**

Another important aspect of the success of the Economic Development plan is the focus on supporting current tourism related businesses. There are businesses that currently support the overall visitor experience that need to be successful for the future of the tourism industry. This program could be led or supported by the Chamber of Commerce. Examples of these businesses include:

- Bed & Breakfasts
- Hotels i.e. Island Inn, Hampton Inn, Country Inn and Suites
- Restaurants i.e. Ruddy Duck, Elements
- Outfitters and Guides, i.e. Patuxent Adventure Center, Fish the Bay Charters, Smith Island Cruises

**Funding Sources**

The primary funding for this will come from the County. Other economic development grant sources should be researched as part of the overall funding plan.

**Work Plan**

**Work Plan – Short-Term – within 12 Months**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify the key industries where recruitment is needed.</td>
<td>Establish the key industries and the unique requirements from the Target Industries list above.</td>
<td>Further research will be conducted to gain more understanding of the key elements that are important to each of the identified industries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finalize the most advantageous sites for future development.</td>
<td>Finalized the approach to ready the identified properties for development.</td>
<td>Review the South County Action Plan and other site recommendations and collaborate with the regulatory partners on the steps needed to prepare the sites. This will include septic, zoning and state regulations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage State Associations</td>
<td>The state associations that represent the industries that St. Mary’s is trying to attract have programs related to encouraging new businesses.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demand review</td>
<td>A demand analysis will be completed to give a preliminary overview of the market and how it will support success new business owners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finalize the plan for each industry to be ready for development.</td>
<td>A plan will be developed for each industry that will include the key requirements, a regulatory approach, potential sites, local and statewide incentives.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a program to consistently check in with identify opportunities to support local businesses</td>
<td>Potentially coordinate a plan with the Chamber to check on opportunities to provide support and get updates on business levels and plans for expansion etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Work Plan – Medium-Term – within 12-24 Months**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Determine the specific approach and target markets for identified industries.</td>
<td>Preparation of marketing materials - industries</td>
<td>Marketing material will be prepared for each industry that outlines the benefits of investing in St. Mary’s County.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finalize preparation plans for key properties</td>
<td>Preparation of Marketing Materials – key properties</td>
<td>Marketing materials will be developed for key properties that outlines the opportunity as well as the regulatory plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executing direct marketing plan to stimulate interest.</td>
<td>Execution of direct marketing plan</td>
<td>Each of the targeted industries will receive marketing materials with a plan to increase the awareness of St. Mary’s County as a viable future location for investment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Work Plan – Long-Term – within 24-36 Months**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Securing new investment</td>
<td>Monitoring results</td>
<td>A status report will be generated that demonstrates the marketing activities and the number of inquiries, leads and completed investments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal Setting</td>
<td>Goals will be set for the level of activity and investment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**List of Additional Items for Consideration**

Collaboration with Maryland Department of Transportation to enhance state tourism assets including bikeways and trails through the Transportation Alternatives Programs and Recreational Trail Programs.

**REGULATORY**

**Overview**

The impact of current regulations in St. Mary’s County is stifling for the success of tourism. Workable and innovative approaches to meeting regulatory requirements must be developed and a “can do” collaborative atmosphere fostered among all regulating agencies. The breadth of issues ranges from physical limitations including the interpretation of the critical areas laws to health department regulations that can impede opportunities for events in St. Mary’s County. Without a new approach to regulatory requirements and the preparation of designated properties, to be more attractive to development, many sites that are designated in the THMP will not be viable for most potential investors. For more detail on those properties see the South County section of this report.
**Goal**

The goal of this plan is to revisit and address current regulatory challenges and develop a sustainable platform for ongoing collaboration. With reforms and new approaches in place the goal is to make St. Mary’s County a welcoming environment for developers, entrepreneurs and current business that want to grow and thrive.

**Situation Analysis section reference page 102.**

**Economic Development**

Economic Development plays a key role in supporting the implementation of the Regulatory section of THMP because the relationship between SMCDED and the County departments i.e. LUGM and Health that have the ability to streamline regulatory issues detailed in this section. The SMCDED has an important role in diversifying the County’s economy and with the support of the regulatory agencies and departments, the County can attract the right type of development to grow the tourism industry for the future.

**Workforce Training**

n/a

**Organizational Structure**

**Staffing Needs**

The tourism organization should have leadership that has experience in supporting tourism asset development. This is important based on the key priorities of the THMP. The tourism organization should take the lead in researching the needs of the key targeted industries and work with the SMCDED to further the THMP implementation efforts in broadening the industry. This research will support the specific opportunities to support the board spectrum of industries that will be recruited to support the THMP.

**Key Collaboration**

There are many regulatory agencies and county departments that play a pivotal role in the development of a progressive regulatory approach. One opportunity that is cited below is the inclusion of the THMP implementation as an on-going agenda item for the Technical Evaluation Committee (TEC). This will keep the progress of the THMP at the forefront of regulatory discussions and stimulate on-going development of new practices to support future development and business growth.
Support for Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advisory Group</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Tourism organization  
  • SMCDED (Lead)  
  • LUGM  
  • Health Department | • Critical Areas Commission  
  (DNR)  
  • Ag and Seafood Board | • TEC - Technical Evaluation Committee (organizations included are below)  
  • Economic Development  
  • Public Works and Transportation  
  • Environmental Health Department  
  • LUGM  
  • Metropolitan Commission  
  • Soil Conservation District  
  • SMECO – Southern Maryland Electric Company  
  • Maryland State Highway Administration  
  • Alcohol Beverage Board | \[\text{Organizations that can lend expertise or actively assist with specific THMP-related actions.}\]

Terms for Implementation

- Critical Area - The Maryland General Assembly passed the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Law on June 1, 1984, with the purpose of establishing a Resource Protection Program for the bay and its tributaries and fostering more environmentally sensitive development in areas near the shoreline. The law was in response to national studies documenting the decline in water quality and productivity of the Bay and research linking this to the increased levels of pollutants, nutrients and toxins in the Bay System.
- Planned Unit Development (PUD) – zoning a particular parcel or parcels to create a new zoning pocket for a project that has a community value.
- Technical Evaluation Committee (TEC) – St. Mary’s County Committee which meets to evaluate and provide feedback on individual developer projects that have reach the engineering stage.
- PERC Testing - soils test to determine if the soils and groundwater conditions on a property are suitable for use as an on-site sewage disposal system. All properties not served by public water and sewer must have this test before beginning construction of any structure with plumbing.

Representative Issues

1. Revisiting the maximum number of events allowed on farm venues
2. Operational requirements for outdoor events
   a. Including new approach to support safe food preparation with practical application.
3. Determine proactive measures needed to “ready” targeted properties. (ex. Securing neighboring properties with septic capacity)
4. Restrictions on alcoholic beverage service in hotel lobbies
Future Land Use Checklist

1. Zoning
2. Septic – PERC
3. Growth Allocation - Critical Areas
4. Capacity – design flow
5. Current use – same or enhanced

Capital Projects

Potential capital projects involving regulatory issues can be found in the South County section.

Funding Sources

n/a

Work Plan

Work Plan – Short-Term – within 12 Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The goal is to develop a working system to raise and evaluate regulatory</td>
<td>Completion of SMC THMP.</td>
<td>Master Plan accepted by SMC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>issues on an ongoing basis. The outcome is to establish a new approach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to collaborating on regulatory issues.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish the final advisory group and tie meetings into session (TEC)</td>
<td>Establish the final advisory group and tie meetings into session (TEC)</td>
<td>This will create an on-going platform to raise issues and determine long-term solutions. THMP will be an agreed upon agenda item.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with all of the County regulatory agencies .</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish a consultative relationship with TEC</td>
<td>Establish a consultative relationship with TEC</td>
<td>Expand scope of TEC to become an advisory group for future THMP projects (above and beyond singular engineer-stage developer projects)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finalize highest initial priorities.</td>
<td>Finalize highest initial priorities.</td>
<td>Review list from THMP and finalize priorities and order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine preparatory measures that need to be taken on all designated</td>
<td>Determine preparatory measures that need to be taken on all designated</td>
<td>Locations that have been identified in South County Plan and other areas will be reviewed to determine steps that can be taken to make</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>land/locations in THMP</td>
<td>land/locations in THMP</td>
<td>them “septic” ready. This will also include maximum capacity and zoning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review other key elements from THMP example - event restriction and food</td>
<td>Review other key elements from THMP example - event restriction and food</td>
<td>Determine regulatory issues for each THMP priority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>production restrictions on private farms</td>
<td>production restrictions on private farms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a regulatory package for developers (identified parcels with</td>
<td>Develop a regulatory package for developers (identified parcels with</td>
<td>Create an overview of new regulatory opportunities (outbound piece to solicit interest).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>solutions)</td>
<td>solutions)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Work Plan – Medium-Term – within 12-24 Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present the changes that will be needed to the County Commission with recommended action. These will include policy changes that are needed.</td>
<td>Identify additional infrastructure needs or opportunities</td>
<td>Work with authorities i.e. METCOM on potential sites for capacity and expanded use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Finalize recommended action for policy changes that are needed.</td>
<td>Develop approaches to address zoning, growth allocation, septic and others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Create alignment with SMCDED strategies.</td>
<td>Develop communication plan to articulate the new approach to regulatory issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Finalize packet with all regulatory issues identified on specific parcels.</td>
<td>Determine possibilities for parcel development with regulatory issues and solutions included.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Work Plan – Long-Term – within 24-36 Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implement the needed actions to streamline the regulatory issues identified to create an approachable system for the County and investors/developers.</td>
<td>Begin to implement systemic changes to the regulatory process to enable an approachable environment.</td>
<td>Various County agencies streamline their process in line with the recommendations and highlighted areas. All areas presented to County Administration and Commissioners.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parcel Map

See South County section for detailed parcel map with locations of properties researched for regulatory issues.

List of Additional Considerations

1. Make revisions to food service flexibility and zoning to encourage B&B and Wedding Venue growth (noted in Wedding plan)
2. Move to Small Area Plans leading to revisions of Comprehensive Plan
   a. Ensure THMP is added by amendment to Comprehensive Plan
WORKFORCE TRAINING

Overview

Workforce Training is a foundational tourism component because of the need for qualified staff in the County especially in front-of-house or customer-facing tourism and hospitality businesses. In order to cater to the visitor, the assets and amenities of the County need to be staffed consistently and have regular hours which can be a challenge when resources are scarce. The SMCDED will need to be a partner in dedicating time and effort to developing a strategy for ongoing workforce training to support the assets and amenities within the County. This will also be important in the overall effort to attract new investment. This should include a county-wide certification program that is designed to inform and elevate standards of service for the tourism industry.

Goal

To create a destination with a healthy job market and potential to recruit, train and develop a workforce that is positioned to elevate the level of service and consistency needed. The development of a certification program will create a specific approach to training the tourism workforce and be a marketing tool to attract overnight visitors. The ultimate goal is to have an informed, well trained work force that can deliver a high level of service and support repeat visitors coming back to the County.

Economic Development

Economic Development will play an important role in partnership with the tourism organization to create a training program focused on developing a highly trained workforce. A certification program should be developed and implemented as a joint effort between the tourism organization and SMCDED.

Organizational Structure

Staffing Needs

The certification program approach would be administered by the visitor services function within the tourism organization.

Support for Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advisory Group</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Tourism</td>
<td>• Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>• Third Party Consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• SMCDED</td>
<td>• Hotels</td>
<td>• Maryland Office of Tourism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Organizations tapped to assist the tourism organization on an ongoing basis, requiring familiarity with the THMP and the specific industry.

Organizations that can lend expertise or actively assist with specific THMP-related actions.

Outside organizations or parties who may be called upon for advice, assistance or "reality checks as needed."
Funding Sources

The funding sources to support workforce training will be directly out of the tourism organization’s budget with support from program tuition.

Work Plan

Work Plan – Short-Term – within 12 Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop the key priorities for a workforce training program and present the results to the Tourism Commission.</td>
<td>Establish the needs and parameters for a training program.</td>
<td>The objectives of the program will be developed by the visitor services team. This will include budget requirements and intended outcomes as well as the number and types of businesses and employees who will be encouraged to participate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present the objectives and requirements to stakeholders and the Tourism Commission.</td>
<td>A presentation would be developed to present the plan and obtain feedback and support. Gain input and support from the Tourism Commission.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Work Plan – Medium-Term – within 12-24 Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secure a third party partner to develop the training program.</td>
<td>Develop an RFP for the selection of a third party provider.</td>
<td>Research the potential firms to support the program and gain insight on the requirements for a comprehensive program. This will be helpful in developing the RFP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select the certification and training plan provider.</td>
<td>A committee will review the RFP responses and recommend a provider.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare the St. Mary’s County support materials.</td>
<td>The visitor services team in conjunction with the third party provider will prepare the materials for the curriculum and are specific to St. Mary’s. This will include St. Mary specific training materials and a target list of participants.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a communication plan.</td>
<td>The communications plan will be developed to keep participants informed and motivated to engage with the program.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Work Plan – Long-Term – within 24-36 Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program implementation and engagement of the workforce and businesses.</td>
<td>Implement Program</td>
<td>The goal will be to train the majority of the tourism workforce in 12 months of starting the program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set up rolling trainings where possible.</td>
<td>In order to keep the workforce up to date, the tourism organization should prepare a plan for new hires and on-going trainings after implementation has begun.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY MASTER PLAN PROGRAMS

JLL has created, in conjunction with the Tourism Division, THMP implementation programs with specific work plans and timeframes for each of the identified areas of focus and best opportunities. Within each of these plans, JLL has specified the section objective and goals as well as identified key issues respective to the foundational tourism issues i.e. regulatory issues, economic development relationship, workforce training needs and organizational structure support.

Each of these programs also include the support needed for implementation of the THMP and identifies advisory group participants, partners and resources. This is critical in ensuring a THMP that has legs for implementation and is not left solely on the shoulders of the Tourism Division.

The following pages provide the programs’ work plans, action items and necessary steps to bring these assets, activities and amenities into the forefront for tourism success. The Situational Analysis provides more details on potential projects and programs and should be considered in tandem with this section. References to the Situational Analysis are included throughout.

LODGING

Overview

Ensuring there is a variety of lodging choices in St. Mary’s County to meet the needs and expectations of various market segments is an important factor in increasing overnight stays. Full service hotels, resort-type hotels, and unique accommodations such as B&Bs, are attractive to different markets and are often an integral part of travel-making decisions. Addressing the location and mix of lodging opportunities available to visitors will be an important component of the plan. The current mix of hotels are primarily select service hotels that were developed to support the business travel related to the Base.

An additional factor effecting the current hotel properties is the declining GSA per diem rates. As noted in the Situational Analysis, the County has historically been reliant on government business attracted by the Base. This business is dependent on government budgets and the effects of past sequestration. As the County’s GSA rates have fallen, the current hotel properties have struggled to find new business. It should be noted that an increase in the GSA per diems could positively affect the hotel market in addition to the THMP implementation efforts for diversified target markets.
Goal

The goal of this plan is to diversify the lodging types to match the activities in the County as well as the respective market segments interested in those activities. Research conducted in the Situational Analysis on lodging and accommodations associated with enthusiasts interested in traveling for sport or recreational use validates the demand for diversified lodging experiences. In addition, the ongoing success of the current lodging operators is a key component of an effective strategy. New lodging properties must be primarily supported by new visitors and not by taking visitors from current hotels in St. Mary’s County.

Situational Analysis section reference page 19.

Regulatory Environment

Waterside lodging is what the general leisure visitor seeks most. However, creating lodging along the water will be challenging given the Critical Area Legislation. See the South County section for more detail on this issue. The preferred approach is to identify properties that would be optimal locations for new lodging and then determine how to prepare the property to be attractive to future developers.

Economic Development

Economic development in this section of the THMP has a primary role in recruiting developers and operators to invest in properties for lodging development. The recruitment will be multifaceted to include B&B operators and resort and lodging developers.

Workforce Training

Front-of-house staff at lodging properties directly interface with visitors and contribute significantly to creating a welcoming destination. They serve as ambassadors on behalf of the greater destination and should be as well-versed in the tourism-related offerings of industry partners as possible.

Organizational Structure

Staffing Needs

The tourism organization’s leadership will need to work closely with SMCDED when it comes to recruiting and selecting potential lodging developers and operators.
Support for Implementation

### Advisory Group
- Tourism Organization
- SMCDED

Organizations tapped to assist the tourism organization on an ongoing basis, requiring familiarity with the THMP and the specific industry.

### Partners
- Hotels
- Bed and Breakfasts
- AirBnB Operators
- Regulatory Agencies

Organizations that can lend expertise or actively assist with specific THMP-related actions.

### Resources
- Private Developers
- Hotel Real Estate Industry
- Maryland Hotel and Lodging Association
- Smith Travel Research

Outside organizations or parties who may be called upon for advice, assistance or "reality checks as needed."

### Highlighted Projects and Programs

The following are key projects within the lodging industry that will have a positive impact on the overall goal of a successful and growing hospitality industry in St. Mary's County.

**Ensure continued operation of the boutique lodging property in Leonardtown**

The Executive Inn in Leonardtown is a key asset for future development of the tourism industry. It will be critical that that property remain a hotel and evolve into a full-service hotel that caters to the type of visitors who prefer to stay in a downtown district environment.

**Expected Outcome** - See Leonardtown section for further detail.

**Develop plan to address and advocate for the GSA issue**

As noted in the overview of this section, the hotels have recently struggled with the decline in the GSA per diem rates. The tourism organization should, in conjunction with the hotels, continue to advocate for an increase and stabilization of the GSA per diem rate.

**Expected Outcome** - GSA establishes the maximum CONUS (Continental United States) Per Diem rates for federal travel customers. Rates are set by fiscal year, effective October 1 each year. The tourism organization, along with the hotel community and SMCDED will need to make the case for the per diem to be raised and reinstated at previously higher rates.

**Measurement** - The success in getting the per diem rate raised is the measurement for success.
Assess local B&Bs and other unique lodging properties including waterfront properties to ensure operations of these existing properties can be sustained through the THMP implementation.

**Expected Outcome** - A fully vetted list of needs by property to ensure economic viability. The tourism organization will need to meet with each and every operator and prepare a communication plan specific to this industry.

**Measurement** - Engagement by the lodging properties, increased occupancy and overall awareness.

**Work Plan**

**Work Plan – Short-Term – within 12 Months**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The goal in the short-term is to coordinate a lodging effort designed to solicit competitive and unique lodging opportunities through private developers. In addition, the goal is to test market experiences through the engagement of current lodging properties. This will validate and refine future direction as well as inform future developers.</td>
<td>Development of targeted lodging types.</td>
<td>Further refine the types of lodging that will be complimentary to the high priority experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Determine key parcels and lodging types to be developed through a competitive RFP process.</td>
<td>Gain consensus on properties that should be developed in accordance with the assets and activities in the County. This will include current hotel and lodging properties that could be re-purposed i.e. the Executive Inn in Leonardtown.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Determine the SMCDED incentives for the initial developers/investors at the desired locations.</td>
<td>Work with SMCDED, LUGM and other County partners to set a path for incentivizing development. This could include public private partnerships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identify regulatory issues associated with the identified lodging development locations.</td>
<td>SMCDED, LUGM and SMCDH to create an identified list of issues associated with the selected parcels and solutions to those issues for eventual development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identify current unique properties that could be engaged to test market experiences (including Airbnb).</td>
<td>Tourism Organization to review and meet with property owners to evaluate the current experiences and determine the viability of including them in test product development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Create specific lodging packages as a test for the top activities and market segments.</td>
<td>Tourism organization will need to coordinate between the existing unique lodging opportunities including Air BnB and activities to develop new packages linked directly to enthusiasts and recreational activities travelers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Create test marketing campaign designed to promote unique lodging experiences.</td>
<td>Develop targeted awareness campaign to inform the overnight market to experience St. Mary’s County’s activities tied to complimentary lodging.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop RFP for the identified parcels.</td>
<td>SMCDED to create a RFP to solicit bids for the identified properties that meet criteria associated with the experiences in SMC i.e. fishing lodge, cabin, waterfront resort, etc. This will include a market demand analysis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Work Plan – Medium-Term – within 12-24 Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The medium-term objective is to award winners of the RFP selection process for development of the identified lodging opportunities.</td>
<td>Receive, review and award developers for 2-3 parcels.</td>
<td>Select winning bids and contract with developers for the identified parcels with plans that match the activities and target markets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop an approach to monitor the success of current lodging properties.</td>
<td>Develop a plan to monitor the success of current hotels, B&amp;Bs and other lodging properties. Enhance a reporting plan that shows the trends and success for current properties.</td>
<td>The tourism organization will develop a reporting system to gain insight on individual property performance. The combination of the Chamber, DEDC and the Tourism Organization will develop a plan for agreed upon outreach to current lodging properties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Announce new lodging development.</td>
<td>Develop campaign to announce new lodging coming to SMC and opportunities to experience the destination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop a district or lodging tax to support new marketing and product development.</td>
<td>Work with Tourism Organization, SMCDED and County Administration, to create a hotel district or entertainment tax that will support the ongoing marketing of new lodging and experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Measure results of new marketing tied to lodging and experiences.</td>
<td>Tourism Organization to work with hotels and other accommodations to track and measure the overnight stays tied to the new experiences and lodging opportunities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Work Plan – Long-Term – within 24-36 Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The long-term objective is to prepare additional locations for development tied to unique lodging.</td>
<td>Revisit the available parcels for next phase of development.</td>
<td>Conduct site surveys for new and increased lodging opportunities that meet the necessary criteria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop marketing plan for new lodging based on developers’ opening schedule.</td>
<td>Develop targeted marketing approach for driving awareness and conversion into new lodging properties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop/expand experiences to create “critical mass” or multiple day opportunities.</td>
<td>Increase the marketing efforts based on increased capacity of tourism experiences.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dining

Overview

Dining is a key component in developing the overnight visitor experience. Recruiting restaurateurs committed to providing locally sourced and unique culinary experiences and thus keying into culinary tourism trends will be a critical component of an enhanced tourism economy. In addition, supporting existing local restaurants and developing implementable farm-to-table strategies restaurants will embrace, is another key outcome of the plan. The variety of products that are produced in St. Mary’s County lends itself to a unique approach to differentiating culinary offerings.
Currently St Mary’s County has only a few restaurants that would fall into the category cited above. This makes the implementation of a farm-to-table program with existing and new restaurants a high priority for the success of the THMP.

**Goal**

The goal is to set the County on a track to recruit and develop a dining atmosphere and experience that will draw visitors to stay overnight. The resources required to reach this goal will include SMCDED and LUGM in conjunction with the Tourism Organization to recruit the targeted restaurateurs. Research conducted in the Situational Analysis on lodging and accommodations associated with enthusiasts interested in culinary experiences in traveling for sport or recreational use, validates the demand for this element of the Master Plan. In addition, the ongoing support and improvement of the current local restaurants is important to the success of this plan.

*Situational Analysis Reference Page 26.*

**Regulatory Environment**

The regulatory implication within this section is primarily on land use and growth allocation when recruiting potential restaurateurs and developers into the County. The ability to have plots of land and commercial zoning ready to move forward during the recruiting process will be key. In addition, the ability to support those restaurants that also want to do outside catering in developing regulations that promote safety and give the operators the most flexible environment to produce a high quality product.

See Regulatory Section for further detail.

**Economic Development**

Economic development in this section of the THMP has a primary role of broadening the types of restaurant offerings in the County. The SMCDED will be focused on how to recruit specific types of restaurants. This includes recruiting and fostering relationships with entrepreneurs, developers and others in the culinary industry to expand the County’s options and make opening a restaurant a positive, seamless experience.

**Workforce Training**

Workforce training will be necessary as the industry broadens and develops. Customer service is critical for front-of-house staff for restaurants and lodging properties who serve as ambassadors to the visitor on behalf of the destination. It is recommended that all visitor-facing staff take part in the Certified Tourism Ambassador program as noted in the Workforce Training section.

**Organizational Structure**

**Staffing Needs**

The staffing needs for this section of the THMP will require the Executive Director of the tourism organization to be well connected to the industry to understand the evolving wants and needs of the visitors when it comes to dining.
Support for Implementation

**Advisory Group**
- SMCDED
- Chamber of Commerce

Organizations tapped to assist the tourism organization on an ongoing basis, requiring familiarity with the THMP and the specific industry.

**Partners**
- LUGM
- Health Department
- SMADC
- Leonardtown Business Association

Organizations that can lend expertise or actively assist with specific THMP-related actions.

**Resources**
- Private Developers
- Local Restauranteurs
- SMADC
- Leonardtown Business Association

Outside organizations or parties who may be called upon for advice, assistance or "reality checks as needed."

Highlighted Projects and Programs

The following are key projects identified through the THMP process within the dining sector that will have a positive impact on the overall goal of a successful growing hospitality industry.

**Ensure continued operation of waterfront dining operations in the County.**

As detailed in the following Work Plan, the current waterfront dining establishments are important for ongoing sustainability with the THMP implementation. Research noted in the Situational Analysis supports the need for waterside visitor experiences including dining opportunities. Each existing waterfront dining operation should be assessed in the implementation process.

**Expected Outcome** - A plan should be developed to understand the current and future needs of these operations with the ability to support them.

**Measurement** - Increased engagement from existing restaurants and individual feedback on successes with the THMP implementation.

Additional projects and programs included in the below Work Plan.
### Work Plan

#### Work Plan – Short-Term – within 16 Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The goal in the short-term is coordinate a dining effort designed to recruit new restaurants and dining options.</td>
<td>Conduct assessment of every waterside restaurant in the County.</td>
<td>Determine the needs of each current waterside restaurant to thrive in the County and develop a plan to support the current operations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Determine 2-3 prime locations for dining opportunities that are a match with the County’s amenities and activities.</td>
<td>Work with LUGM and Health to determine which existing restaurant structures could be turn key for new operators as well as land that could be developed into new restaurants. (this is in addition to properties identified in South County Plan).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Determine the SMCDED incentives for the initial developers/investors at the desired locations.</td>
<td>Work with SMCDED, LUGM and other County partners to set a path for incentivizing restaurateurs and developers including marketing support.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Work Plan – Short-Term – within 16-30 Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Further investigate the parcels identified for potential restaurant development in the short-term.</td>
<td>Identify regulatory issues associated with the identified dining development locations.</td>
<td>SMCDED, LUGM and SMCDH to create an identified list of issues associated with the selected structures/parcels and solutions to those issues for eventual development. Develop a plan for readying the selected properties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop experiences with current restaurant operators.</td>
<td>Develop RFP for the identified parcels.</td>
<td>SMCDED to create a RFP to solicit bids for the identified properties that meet criteria associated with the experiences in SMC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support the process to encourage interested parties.</td>
<td>Create specific dining packages for the top activities and market segments.</td>
<td>Tourism organization will need to coordinate between the existing activities to develop new packages linked directly to enthusiasts and recreational activities travelers that include ties to local dining experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop the “demand case” in support of recruiting new restaurateurs.</td>
<td>The Tourism organization in conjunction with SMEDC will develop conduct a demand study to validate the opportunities for new restaurants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Create specific dining packages for the top activities and market segments.</td>
<td>Tourism organization will need to coordinate between the existing activities to develop new packages linked directly to enthusiasts and recreational activities travelers that include ties to local dining experiences.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Work Plan – Long-Term – within 30+ Months**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop a marketing plan and raise awareness of the culinary tourism opportunities.</td>
<td>Assuming new investment, create marketing campaign designed to drive awareness of a critical mass of experiences including dining.</td>
<td>Develop awareness campaign to inform the overnight market to experience St. Mary’s County’s activities tied to complimentary dining.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WATER ACCESS AND ACTIVITIES**

**Overview**

With more than 500 miles of shoreline in St. Mary’s County, increasing water access and enhancing more water-based experiences will attract more out of town and overnight visitors. People of all ages and backgrounds are eager to get out on the water to paddle and play, to connect with the Bay’s rich heritage, or to simply experience the joys of a summer sunset along the Potomac or Patuxent. Water access points include paddle and boat launch sites and beaches that are part of municipal, county or state parks, as well as private marinas, while water experiences include trails, excursions, fishing, sailing and paddling. The opportunity is to develop a plan for each water access point by priority. The map below identifies the highest priority access points. This is determined by the access points ability to support identified water activities.

**Goal**

The goal is to enhance the experiences on the water at adjoining access points and surrounding areas to a level where they can attract new overnight visitors to St. Mary’s County year over year. Research conducted in the Situational Analysis on access to water and travel-related water activities demonstrates the need for this transformation. The improvement of the designated water access points and enhancements of water activities will improve current experiences and provide new opportunities for water enthusiasts.

[Situational Analysis reference section page 42.](#)

**Regulation**

There are few immediate regulatory concerns with water activities. The regulatory issues within this section would have to do with the Critical Area Laws and the ability to expand and create new water access points while complying with the legislation.

**Economic Development**

Economic Development’s primary role should focus on recruiting and fostering relationships with operators to make doing business with vendors and outfitters in the County a positive, seamless experience.
**Workforce Training**

One specific opportunity for workforce development that has surfaced is the need for qualified support staff for the heritage tours. This is an example where the visitor services area of the tourism organization could develop a program to encourage participation within the community.

**Organizational Structure**

**Staffing Needs**

St. Mary’s County has local experts in many of the areas that are covered in the Water Activities Plan. The Tourism organization should keep these experts engaged as the THMP is implemented.

**Support for Implementation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Advisory Group</strong></th>
<th><strong>Partners</strong></th>
<th><strong>Resources</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Fish the Bay Charters  
• SMC Rec and Parks  
• Chesapeake Paddlers Association | • Tourism Organization  
• Local Marinas  
• Watermen  
• Lodging  
• Vendors and Outfitters  
• Patuxent Adventure Center  
• National Park Service | • Maryland DNR  
• Maryland Office of Tourism  
• Southern Maryland Heritage Area Consortium  
• Green Play Inc. (LPPRP 5-year plan) |

Organizations tapped to assist the tourism organization on an ongoing basis, requiring familiarity with the THMP and the specific industry.

Organizations that can lend expertise or actively assist with specific THMP-related actions.

**Projects and Programs**

**Improve Water Access Points**

The priority access points identified during this process by JLL, the St. Mary’s County Recreation and Parks Department and key stakeholders are cited below and appear on the adjoining map.

1. Elms Beach, County swimming beach
2. Myrtle Point, County swimming beach
3. Leonardtown Wharf Park, Municipal paddle launch and planned boat dock
4. Newtown Neck State Park, State paddle launches, swimming beach and planned boat dock
5. Great Mills, County kayak paddle launch
6. Point Lookout State Park, State paddle launches and boat docks
7. Clark’s Landing, County boat ramp
8. Piney Point Landing, boat ramp
9. River Springs Landing, County pier
10. St. Inigoes Landing, State land with County boat ramp and pier
11. St. George’s Island Landing, County pier
12. Wicomico Shores, County boat ramp and pier
13. Chancellors Point, State (Historic St. Mary’s City) paddle launch
**Expected Outcome** - These access points have the best potential for supporting the highest priority water activities. From a user and visitor perspective, these Public Access Points should be considered for further development, increased amenities and overall investment to create connectivity between sites and added infrastructure to the visitor experience. A plan to ensure an optimum visitor experience at each of these points should be developed, and linkages via water trails and packages created (see further down).

**Measurement** - A targeted annual visitor survey should be conducted following implementation of improvements to the key water access points to determine satisfaction and future courses of action.

---

**Enhance Water Activities**

The popularity of the water activities available in St. Mary’s County is on the rise. The improvement of the water access points is a fundamental requirement in the advancement of the water activities and developing multiple day experiences. The development of these activities over the medium and long-term will have a material impact in attracting overnight visitors. As with other outdoor activities, the development of a more conducive lodging opportunities coupled with new amenities in close proximity are critical components.
The highest priority activities (as described in the Situational Analysis) are cited below with key initiatives that are needed to enhance the overall experience.

- **Water Trails** - There is an opportunity to develop additional water trails with Recreation and Parks, the Maryland Office of Tourism and other organizations. This should be a consideration of the Land Preservation Recreation and Parks Plan and mentioned in the Work Plan.

- **Water Excursions and Eco-tours** - The development of proximate water access points is a key factor in encouraging visitors to take water excursion and eco-tours. This will make St. Mary’s County more attractive for experienced waterman which will attract future overnight visitors.

- **Watermen's Heritage Tours** - The historic nature of St. Mary’s County creates opportunity to expand the Heritage Tours. The improvement in the water access points noted above as well as new diversified lodging opportunities are key factors in growing this visitor market.

- **Paddle Boarding and Kayaking (Paddle Sports)** - The development of water access points that are in close proximity to the most desired paddle sports locations is a high priority. In addition, new overnight accommodations that would encourage multiple day paddle excursions will encourage overnight stays.

- **Sailing** - St. Mary's County has sailing opportunities that have been identified in the Situational Analysis. The goal is to develop the resources and access points with amenities that will attract sailors in the future. The Sailing Center Chesapeake is a great resource in developing the

- **Boating** - The opportunity to increase the overnight visitation and economic impact derived from boating activities rests on the development of the marinas that have been cited in the THMP. This in addition to the development of amenities for boaters in close proximity to the marinas will support increased boating activity.

- **Fishing** - The most important development that will enhance current fishing experience in St. Mary’s County is new and more diversified lodging options that are located in closer proximity to the most popular water access points. The South County plan has identified parcels of land that could fulfill this need.

**Expected Outcome** - With the improvements to the water access points and enhancements to the activities the overall visitor experience will increase dramatically. With the THMP projects and programs implemented it is expected that an accompanying marketing plan will drive incremental overnight visitors.

**Measurement** - An annual visitor survey could be conducted following implementation to determine satisfaction and future courses of action.

**Target Markets**

Overall the water activities of St. Mary’s County have a broad base of potential markets. The primary focus of segments for this section of the THMP should be on the enthusiasts and recreational users of paddle sports, fishing, eco-tours, etc. within this plan. As the water experiences are further developed targeted research and marketing should be implemented to gauge interest and further refine the potential offers. One example of this would be to create experiences that includes Solomon’s Island. This would include creating itineraries that would leverage popularity of Solomon’s with the new opportunities in St. Mary’s County.

These targets fall within the Maryland Office of Tourism’s generic target audiences ranging from 25-64 with a strong skew to women; household income (HHI) $75,000+; well-educated; and working in managerial and professional occupations. They have made a trip of more than one day’s duration within the United States in the past 12 months, which includes business, vacation, weekend travel and short trips.
Key Terms for Implementation

- **Water Access Point** – public water access operated locally, by the County or State including soft launches and landings for paddle sports as well as motor boat launches
- **Private Marina** – privately owned and operated marina with slips for purchase or rent, typically for motor and sailboats
- **LPPRP** – Land Preservation Parks and Recreation Plan which is a state of Maryland 5-year planning process that allows municipalities to apply for funding for various initiatives including purchasing of land and development of land.
- **Infrastructure** – physical needs, including amenities, that should be developed to make an access point more visitor-friendly

Work Plan

**Work Plan – Short-Term – within 12 Months**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the short-term the goal is to finalize the priorities for water access points and develop budgets for the top ranked areas.</td>
<td>Work with Recreation and Parks on strategies to enhance water access points.</td>
<td>Integration with the LPPRP plan in conjunction with SMC Rec and Parks 5 year plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The experiences that are noted in the Situational Analysis (in water trails, water excursions, heritage tours, etc.) will need to be fully developed</td>
<td>Determine priority access points for investment.</td>
<td>Visit each access point and validate the proposed priorities for water access. These include: public landings, launches (soft and hard) and Marinas (refer to grid).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Determine measurement strategy.</td>
<td>Work with Rec. and Parks to determine feasible methodology for tracking incremental out of town visitors to the top ranked sites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Create enhanced activity programming for existing water activities – finalize experiences.</td>
<td>Work with the advisory group to detail the identified experiences (i.e. water trails, weekend stays with kayaking and farm to table experiences).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop a budget to improve the top 3-5 priority access points.</td>
<td>Based on the prioritized ranking of access points it is recommended that at least the 3-5 top points are planned in to increase visitor-friendly amenities in conjunction with Rec and Parks and other partners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop implementation timeline specifically for access point investment.</td>
<td>An implementation schedule should be developed to ensure the top ranked access points are addressed in a timely fashion taking into consideration seasonality and demand.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Work Plan – Medium-Term – within 12-24 Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The medium-term goal is to secure the investment for the remaining priority water access points</td>
<td>Develop budgets for the remaining priority water access points.</td>
<td>Coordinate budgets with Rec. and Parks and key partners (specifically the LPPRP).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This effort will be accomplished in coordination with the development of key amenities and success of the initial implementation.</td>
<td>Development of visitor, room night and tax/revenue projections for the enhancements and new sites planned.</td>
<td>Develop projections the ROI for the programs that are being developed in conjunction with access point improvements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic projections and target audience marketing plans will be developed.</td>
<td>Develop implementation timeline specifically for remaining access point investment.</td>
<td>An implementation schedule should be developed to ensure the remaining access points are addressed in a timely fashion taking into consideration seasonality and demand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finalize the investment and support needed for experience development.</td>
<td>Execute targeted marketing initiatives.</td>
<td>Identify and gain approval for potential County-funded opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine alternate funding strategies.</td>
<td>Implement on-going capital funding plan.</td>
<td>Based on initial investment; a marketing plan including experience development will be created with a focus on the specific target markets.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Work Plan – Long-Term – within 24-36 Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The goal for the long-term is to have the capital improvement completed and begin a measurable marketing approach</td>
<td>Execute targeted marketing initiatives.</td>
<td>Create and implement a marketing campaign designed to targeted water activity enthusiasts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Implement on-going capital funding plan.</td>
<td>Track and report on funding levels and success measures.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**List of Additional Items for Consideration:**

1. Consider the addition of public water access at the recently acquired Shannon Farm property (Dameron area) and at the potential Snow Hill Farm acquisition site (Sandgates area).
LEONARDTOWN

Overview

Having a vibrant tourism hub that brings together shopping, dining and lodging and serves as a base for outward exploration is a critical element of developing the visitor experience. Visitor-focused development in Leonardtown, an emphasis on unique galleries and shops, cool events, waterfront activities and an after-hours vibe to attract younger visitors will have a far-reaching impact on tourism in the County. The town has a state-designated Arts & Entertainment District and an active arts community which promotes the arts. The Town’s master plan calls for a facility such as a conference center or resort hotel or a performing arts center on Tudor Hall Farm, a waterfront property awaiting development. More immediate plans include construction of a restaurant at the Wharf Park and a Firemen’s museum—a project of the local volunteer fire department which will enhance the town’s limited offering of historic sites and museums.

Goal

The goal is to solidify a plan and a connection for complimentary work towards developing the identified assets of Leonardtown. The Leonardtown Master Plan includes everything from waterfront development to hotel and lodging opportunities to restaurant development. The alignment of resources with the County and Town will support more effective development and increase the likelihood of success. SMCDED is a lead partner in this effort in collaboration with the Town administration.

Situational Analysis section reference page 92.

Regulation

The primary regulatory concerns that would impact the Leonardtown portion of the THMP would be any of the land use or growth allocation issues specific to developing properties for tourism assets. The agencies noted in the regulatory sections should provide support in analyzing any issues that will inhibit development in Leonardtown.

Economic Development

The primary economic development focus for Leonardtown involves the synergy and relationship development between the Town and County moving into the future. The SMCDED will need to be aligned with the Town’s planning, recruitment and development processes to collaborate on the direction of all development so it is thought through in connection with the THMP needs.

Workforce Training

As a town of small merchants, the service and hospitality ethos in Leonardtown’s retail establishments is high. Because of its concentration of businesses and its strong business association, the town offers a great venue to implement a pilot for the ambassador training program to be implemented countywide (see the Workforce Training section).
**Organizational Structure**

**Staffing Needs**
The tourism organization will need to be closely connected to the SMCDED and Leonardtown as it is the major hub for visitors. The tourism organization, especially the senior leadership and marketing staff should allocate time and resources to support the promotion of Leonardtown.

**Support for Implementation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advisory Group</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• SMCDED</td>
<td>• SMC Administration</td>
<td>• LUGM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Leonardtown Administration</td>
<td>• Leonardtown Council Leonard Downtown Business Association</td>
<td>• SMC Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tourism Organization</td>
<td>Organizations that can lend expertise or actively assist with specific THMP-related actions.</td>
<td>• Private developers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Organizations tapped to assist the tourism organization on an ongoing basis, requiring familiarity with the THMP and the specific industry.

**Target Markets**
The target markets for Leonardtown are an expansion of those who are currently coming plus new segments of the region who will book an overnight stay based on the enhancement of the County’s assets and amenities. These include:

- Water activities enthusiasts
- Outdoor activities enthusiasts with a focus on cyclists
- Millennials interested in hands-on experiences
- Older couples interested in arts and culture
- Young couples interested in culinary tourism
- Middle age to older couples interested in SMC with multiple experiences who need full service lodging

These targets fall within the Maryland Office of Tourism’s generic target audiences ranging from 25-64 with a strong skew to women; household income (HHI) $75,000+; well-educated; and working in managerial and professional occupations. They have made a trip of more than one day’s duration within the United States in the past 12 months, which includes business, vacation, weekend travel and short trips.

**Highlighted Projects and Programs**
The following projects are identified in the Situational Analysis as important elements in growing the tourism economy:
- Downtown Development
- Downtown Lodging
- The Wharf Park
- North Leonardtown and the Port of Leonardtown Park
- Tudor Hall Farm Property
- Public Art

These projects and others identified by the Leonardtown Advisory Group will be the focus of the future collaboration with the County, Leonardtown and other key partners. Leonardtown is also unique within the County as the place for arts and culture. With the Leonardtown Arts Council in place, the County could grow the segment of visitors interested in that aspect of the experience. For additional detail on the Arts and Culture offerings please see page 79 of the Situational Analysis. Further detail on these projects and programs are set forth in the following Work Plan.

**Work Plan**

**Work Plan – Short-Term – within 12 Months**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop an on-going approach to regular collaboration and coordination on identified projects.</td>
<td>Determine the members of a Leonardtown advisory group.</td>
<td>This group would be led by SMCDED and the Town administration. This advisory group would be implemented after the THMP is submitted and accepted by the County.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review the status of the projects that were identified in the Situational Analysis (Downtown, Downtown lodging, the Wharf Park, North Leonardtown Park, Tudor Hall Farm Property).</td>
<td>Finalize the key projects that will be the focus of the advisory group, i.e., Leonardtown Wharf development.</td>
<td>Review the THMP and Situational analysis with the advisory groups and finalize priorities and current status.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a collective vision for the type of development that will support attracting out of town visitors. Focus on local and unique experiences.</td>
<td>Determine the frequency of meetings and the approach to creating meeting agendas.</td>
<td>Develop a workable approach to regular communication and updating progress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct working session on the breadth of opportunities to collaborate to include joint economic development approach, regulatory approaches, funding and incentive strategies.</td>
<td></td>
<td>After the advisory group and approach is solidified, an extended session will develop an agreed upon approach to maximize the resources of the County, Town and key partners.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Work Plan – Medium-Term – within 12-24 Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finalize the approach to encourage development and investment in the agreed upon priorities.</td>
<td>Develop the approach to each of the key projects.</td>
<td>The advisory group would finalize the approach to each of the key projects with clear responsibilities for all parties. This will include proactive outreach to prospective investors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop proactive outreach plan to developers regarding project opportunities.</td>
<td>Create a strategic outreach plan for private developers geared toward awareness of Leonardtown opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work with the Town to secure the Executive Inn as a boutique hotel property.</td>
<td>Explore avenues for the County to support the Town’s efforts in keeping the Executive Inn zoned for hotel use with new investment and direction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop a marketing plan for the Town as the County’s visitor hub.</td>
<td>Position Leonardtown as the premier location in the County for a “hub and spoke” program where visitors can stay, walk to dining and shopping and explore the County.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Work Plan – Long-Term – within 24-36 Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop and solicit bids to bring Leonardtown projects to life. Also develop a marketing plan with these new projects in mind for visitors.</td>
<td>Facilitate feasibility studies for respective projects.</td>
<td>SMCDED and the tourism organization should work with the town to facilitate a feasibility study on additional lodging, conference center, etc. and other projects deemed possible in the short-term section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop RFP and solicit bids.</td>
<td>SMCDED and the Town should develop and RFP process to see the projects from the short-term section to the next level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Create a joint marketing plan based on successful development and the enhanced experience.</td>
<td>SMCDED, tourism organization and the Town should develop a joint marketing plan to position the Town further with new planned projects in place.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**South County**

JLL has completed an extensive review of South County in St. Mary’s County. This process has included the engagement of South County business leaders, regulatory agencies and elected officials. JLL has developed recommendations to develop South County into a unique and vibrant destination that takes advantage of the rural beauty, historical significance and breadth of potential activities.

“South County” is defined as the area south of Gate 3 of NAS Patuxent River on the Patuxent River side of the county and St. Mary’s City south on the Potomac River side of the County. South County ends with Point Lookout at the tip of the county peninsula. This area includes attractions such as miles of untouched coast line, Point Lookout State Park and Historic St. Mary’s City to name a few.

South County is less than a 2-hour drive from Washington DC. The area was once a charter fishing center known throughout the Mid-Atlantic and favored by fishermen. Scheible’s Fishing Center was a hub of activity and ran a daily head boat, operated a restaurant, and provided modest accommodations consisting of eight rooms. South County’s economic vitality has since declined due to several factors including the health of the Chesapeake Bay. South County is in need of investment and revitalization to deliver a quality visitor experience and sustain a healthy economy for its residents.

**Framing South County - A short-term opportunity**

One of the early recommendations for the development of South County is to “frame” what South County is to both residents and out of town visitors. This will include developing a brand and lead to signage and distinct section on the tourism website. Once this was accomplished, additional awareness activities would be developed to keep South County top of mind as an area with great potential for the future. These activities could include events that are designed to raise awareness of South County as a current and future destination within St. Mary’s County.

**Catalytic Opportunities – Initial Development Focus**

There are catalytic opportunities in South County that have been identified in this report. The map below highlights these and identifies potential support properties. The key opportunities include parcels of land with commercial marine zoning including Scheible’s, Buzz’s Marina and Point Lookout Marina. Additional opportunities include lodging in St. Inigoes, developing septic capacity support for existing restaurants and amenities in Ridge, including new restaurants and lodging. These opportunities, when fully developed, will provide the needed additions to create a viable out of town visitor experience in South County.

**The Regulatory Environment**

The development of the South County Master Plan has brought together different regulatory groups who have a role in the approval process for new projects. A recommendation has emerged to look at the current regulatory hurdles and determine the best course to prepare properties for future investment. This will increase the area’s attractiveness for future investment. This has led to the recommendation of having the THMP adopted as an ongoing “agenda item” at the TEC. The TEC is a regular forum where the regulatory agencies meet and discuss pending projects. This will be a critical new approach that will support ongoing improvements in the regulatory process.
A Collaborative Approach to South County’s Development

A South County Advisory Group was assembled to give feedback and participate on an ongoing basis in the planning process. The task force has been active and has given valuable insight. This has included meetings, conference calls and one on one reviews. JLL would like to thank them for their invaluable participation.

Kick Start Action Plan Items

As stated above, South County is in need of both a short-term and long-term plan. The items below are short-term actions that will kick start South County’s economic development, diversification and long-term vitality:

- Announcement of the THMP and development of a marketing plan for a “new South County.”
- Local awareness campaign to involve and support the residents’ needs and wants for the future.
- Conduct resident-focused THMP working sessions to gain additional insight.
- Developing event-driven opportunities to bring residents and visitors to experience South County and raise awareness of the future vision.

Master Plan Overview

South County is an area rich in resources and with great visitor appeal. However, business owners who want to grow their business or start a new one, face numerous regulatory and environmental challenges. Strategies that “reimagine” a new future for this once vibrant tourism mecca will require the collective commitment of local regulatory and economic development entities working in conjunction with the South County tourism community.

Goal

To create connectivity between experiences and develop a necessary “critical mass” of visitor amenities and activities while working within or seeking to adjust challenging regulations. The potential of South County for tourism experiences is virtually untapped, but is challenged by the regulatory environment. This plan will address and provide steps to overcome or circumvent regulatory challenges and grow South County’s ability to engage future visitors.

Situational Analysis reference section page 90.

Regulation

The regulatory implications for South County are the foremost issue within this section of the THMP. The regulations and process imposed on potential developments is daunting to say the least. New business recruitment and operator selection for restoring and rehabbing existing operations to invigorate business in South County are being impacted by a difficult regulatory process. The regulations and issues that have surfaced include:

- Restrictions in number of events on key properties.
- Critical Areas restrictions including buffer areas.
- Land use and zoning challenges.
- Sewage capacity and flow requirements.
Economic Development

The economic development requirements for this section of the THMP are focused on supporting the implementation through departmental collaboration to create a streamlined process for permitting, zoning and technical requirements as well as working with LUGM to expand the scope of the TEC to become more consultative in their work. The SMCDED is the most important organization to develop and recruit developers and operators for new businesses in South County.

Workforce Training

The workforce training implications for this section of the THMP is a long-term process to foster the new businesses positioned to develop in South County with the additional goal of creating a recruitment strategy for new employees. This will be focused on current hospitality and tourism industry as the THMP is implemented and then new businesses when they are up and running. A successful workforce training program will be an advantage when recruiting new businesses to South County.

Organizational Structure

Staffing Needs

The tourism organization will need dedicated time on this section of the THMP. At this level of sophistication and complication including the regulatory issues and coordination with SMCDED for business recruitment, the senior leadership should be focused on navigating the South County Master Plan in conjunction with the SMCDED and County Administration.

Support for Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advisory Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Historic St. Mary's City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Woodlawn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fish the Bay Charters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• SMC Economic Development Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Maryland Department of Natural Resources - State Parks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Organizations tapped to assist the tourism organization on an ongoing basis, requiring familiarity with the THMP and the specific industry.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Tourism Organization - Dedicated coordination (staff)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• SMC Economic Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• SMC Health Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• SMC LUGM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• SMC Rec and Parks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Organizations that can lend expertise or actively assist with specific THMP-related actions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Lodging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Private Marina Operators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• St. Mary’s College of Maryland</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Outside organizations or parties who may be called upon for advice, assistance or "reality checks" as needed.
**Target Markets**

The South County target markets for the THMP include an active demographic interested in hands-on experiences in a rural setting. This will primarily be a drive in market with a focus on visitors who are traveling a great enough distance to warrant an overnight stay in South County. The target markets for the THMP are focused on segments that will be inclined to experience an overnight visit which include:

- Heritage travelers
- Families with children < 18
- Extended families with young adults 18-25 still in the home
- Middle Age to older couples without children
- Water activities enthusiasts 24-60

These targets fall within the Maryland Office of Tourism’s generic target audiences. However, the South County target may skew more to the male water enthusiasts as implementation of the THMP rolls out as they are typically more inclined to participate in these activities and enjoy the rustic experience. A secondary target market for the initial implementation would include the middle age to older couples without children looking for a quiet getaway.

**Projects and Programs**

*Priority Sites Enhancement (waterfront)*

The Priority Sites Enhancement projects include already identified sites (see insert) where the parcels are zoned for commercial operations with potential to positively impact the tourism economy in South County. The first tier priorities include sites that maximize the limited waterfront through existing zoning. These opportunities include:

1. Schieble’s (vacant) – the Schieble’s property (parcel 19&20) became a top case study for reinvestment and development in South County because of its history and previous success as a waterfront restaurant, hotel and marina. As this parcel and existing structure is zoned for commercial marine use the operation should be restarted as a priority for South County. Schieble’s currently has septic capacity for the existing structure’s capacity and any expansion would require further testing by the Health Department to determine additional capacity. The rental units on site are also part of the existing structure and could be used for the same purpose. The docks on site can be restored without additional permitting needs as long as they are not more than 50% damaged – it appears they are within that condition. Schieble’s also has individual slips for boat tie-ups and has been grandfathered in for the existing slips on site.

2. Point Lookout Marina (owner occupied – potential interest in sale) – The Point Lookout Marina (parcel 3) is zoned for commercial marine use and is a working boatyard with slips and open land. The current operation has a pool on site and has looked into adding campsites in the past. The lot sits on Critical Area land and has a buffer zone. The back half of the parcel is also zone for RPD.

3. Buzz’s Marina (owner occupied) – Buzz’s Marina is on a large parcel (parcel 71 grid 20/parcel 236) with a main house, garage, office building and working boat yard with commercial marine zoning. The front half of the property (water-facing) is zoned for commercial marine use while the back half of the property (street-facing) has LDA zoning. The parcel was appraised for $715,000 in 2016 and the owner has indicated interest in selling. There is a potential for multiple uses/operations on this parcel because of the multilayered zoning i.e. agriculture on the back half of the parcel. The parcel also has a dredge spoil site which will need to be further investigated to determine how to position the asset. It is also estimated that the commercial marine side of the property has capacity for sewage as well as an underground tank for commercial gasoline storage and sale.
Priority Site Development (Village/Town Centers)
The Priority Site Developments in the Village/Town Centers of Ridge and St. Inigoes include identified sites (see insert) where the parcels are zoned for hotel and/or restaurant operations or have capacity for sewage that would support existing operations with potential to positively impact the tourism economy in South County. These include:

4. St. Inigoes General Store (owner occupied) – the St. Inigoes General store is one of the few amenities in the small town center of St. Inigoes that provides food and beverage for visitors to South County. The operation at St. Inigoes has been hindered due to inconsistent PERC testing. There are one or more lots in the adjacent subdivision that could be purchased by the County to alleviate the capacity requirements for St. Inigoes and support a sewage “plant” for this store and other future visitor amenities.

5. Subdivision with PERCs St. Inigoes— (vacant/developer owned) – parcel that has PERC tested positively for sewage capacity and should be analyzed for purchase/granting for existing operation support.

6. Potential Lodging Parcel St. Inigoes (vacant lot) – parcel within the town center that is estimated to have capacity. This parcel would require further examination by the County’s Health and LUGM Departments.

7. Adjacent Undeveloped Parcels St. Inigoes (vacant) – two adjacent parcels to the south west of the St. Inigoes town center. Both parcels are estimated by LUGM to have capacity for sewer land application and spray irrigation/infiltration. These parcels could be developed or support existing operations with sewage capacity.

8. Old Restaurant with Lodging, Ridge (tenant occupied) – parcel zoned for restaurant and lodging operation within the town center southwest on Route 5, north by one parcel of Wynne Rd. This parcel could potentially provide dining and lodging in South County.

9. Undeveloped Lots with PERCs, Ridge (vacant) – parcels south of the town center along Route 5. These parcels are estimated by LUGM to have capacity and should be further analyzed for potential zoning and operating potential.

Expected Outcome - It is expected and projected that these opportunities in South County will contribute to creating a “critical mass” as mentioned above. With these planned developments, South County would be poised to increase their visitor assets and amenities desired for overnight stays.

Methods of Measurement

- Hotel/Lodging occupancy
- Hotel tax revenue
- Package sales
- Visitor satisfaction survey
- South County Business operator reports on out of town visitation

Reinvestment and Announcement/Destination Marketing

The reinvestment initiatives and announcement plans for the marketing of South County’s new assets and amenities should include further investigation for Main Streets funding to revamp the store fronts as well as prepare a “roll out” plan to include events and other initiatives to bring groups to South County. These include:

- Ridge Barber Shop – candidate for a Main Streets grant to revamp the store front
- Event strategy – Memorial Day Parade and other opportunities to bring awareness to South County.
**Incentives for Business Development/Recruitment**

1. Fast-tracked permitting and processing
2. Financial
3. Marketing Support

**Terms for South County Implementation**

- Technical Evaluation Committee (TEC) – St. Mary’s County’s Land Use and Growth Management committee to review proposed development projects and plans
- Regulatory Resolution Process – broad term for all regulatory issues that are identified and expanded on should be included and worked through and either placed on a schedule to resolve or determined are impassible
- Demand Case – leisure and group traffic that would stress that need to develop the identified projects
- Regulatory Milestones – identified regulatory issues identified and part of the Regulatory Resolution Process and laid out on a schedule to achieve
Map of Locations

Map also provided as in landscape orientation in the Appendix for more detailed viewing capabilities.
## Work Plan

### Work Plan – Short-Term – within 12 Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The goal in the short-term is to finalize locations identified in the THMP for businesses development and solidify the approach for recruiting new businesses including making the case for current and future demand in South County.</strong></td>
<td>Join and participate in regulatory resolution process.</td>
<td>Advisory group will meet with SMC LUGM and Health Department to determine approach to address identified regulatory issues through TEC. Meetings will occur regularly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Finalize locations of recommended amenities.</td>
<td>Based on THMP recommendations, the advisory group will submit a finalized map of locations identified for the County for future recruitment focus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Determine incentives for initial investors.</td>
<td>Develop a package to be used to entice new investment in South County.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Determine infrastructure improvements.</td>
<td>Finalize the improvements that will position South County - example is bringing sewer to key area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zoning Changes</td>
<td>Determine and start process to update zoning where possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop awareness campaign – demand generators.</td>
<td>Include potential events and other activities that will drive awareness of South County.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Finalize demand case for amenities.</td>
<td>Advisory group to further illustrate case for demand from THMP based on current transient and social group business and projected traffic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop the “framing” and awareness approach.</td>
<td>In conjunction with the advisory group, develop an approach for describing South County. Develop materials for the website, potential signage, and an initial event that will raise awareness of the potential of South County.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Work Plan – Medium-Term – within 12-24 Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The medium-term objective is to begin the proactive recruitment of business operators and developers in SOCO as well as to achieve regulatory milestones identified in the THMP.</strong></td>
<td>Finalize economic development strategy for business recruitment and development.</td>
<td>Advisory group and SMCDED to jointly determine strategy for proactive SOCO business recruitment and development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop and distribute outreach for identified business development.</td>
<td>SMCDED to finalize and execute outreach plan for business development and operators at specific SOCO locations. Solicit interest through RFP/RFQ where applicable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review business opportunities and awards.</td>
<td>SMCED and Advisory group to review, award and begin working with SOCO investors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Achieve first regulatory resolution.</td>
<td>Advisory group to work with SMC LUGM, SMCDED, SMC Health to achieve specified regulatory milestones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Implement framing and awareness plan.</td>
<td>From the input gathered develop the look and feel and overall narrative to describe South County. Post the material and launch or resurrect an event that is uniquely positioned to be in.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Work Plan – Long-Term – within 24-36 Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Market South County as a distinct destination with new and improved assets and amenities for the visitor.</td>
<td>Develop South County Marketing Plan for investors.</td>
<td>Work with partners and SMCDED to develop and begin to execute on a marketing plan specific to South County.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Track and measure results.</td>
<td>Begin to track marketing campaign results with agreed upon measurements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MUSEUMS AND HISTORIC SITES

Overview

The County’s museums and historic sites offer a wide range of enticing experiences for visitors that bring the area’s heritage to life. Anchor museums such as Historic St. Mary’s City and the Patuxent River Naval Air Museum are complimented by lighthouses and hidden gems such as the Civil War Museum at Point Lookout. However, inadequate funding and support constrains the ability of local museums to operate at optimum levels and deliver the types of experiences needed to attract overnight visitors. JLL has worked closely with the senior leadership of higher profile museums to develop an approach to investing in experiences that will have the potential to attract overnight visitors in the future.

Investment in enhancing visitor programs and capital projects will pay-off in increased overnight visitation. Collaborative initiatives that create “connectivity” between sites and “packages” that combine site visits with dining and lodging, are important strategies for attracting overnight visitors.

Goal

To enhance the experiences at St. Mary’s County historic sites and museums, including County owned and operated sites as well as private or State-run sites, to a level where they can attract new overnight visitors to St. Mary’s County year over year. Travel research and the input of the leadership at the historic sites validates the need for this transformation. The type of investment that is described below will move the experiences in the right direction.

Situational Analysis section reference page 71.

Regulation

The regulations related to outdoor events and food and beverage service can impact the historic sites ability to host groups and produce events attractive to visitors and donors. These restrictions can have impacts on revenue which is needed to support new programs.
Workforce Training

The Museum and Historic Sites will require increased staffing at both Historic St. Mary’s City (HSMC) and Sotterley Plantation in order to implement the enhanced and new programming. The tourism organization, in conjunction with the historic sites and SMCDED will need to collaborate to create a sustainable workforce recruitment plan for the staffing needs. Staffing needs will range from hourly, seasonal employees which could be filled by college students to professional actors and interpreters.

Organizational Structure

Staffing Needs

The tourism organization will need a person dedicated at least part time to support the coordination and implementation of the historic sites master plan. This falls under the product development area of the organizational plan as well as the funding support area to investigate alternative sources of support.

Support for Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advisory Group</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Historic St. Mary’s City  
• Sotterley Plantation  
• St. Mary’s County Museum Division  
• Southern Maryland Heritage Area Consortium  
• Tourism Organization | • SMC Rec and Parks  
• Southern Maryland Heritage Area Consortium  
• St. Mary’s College of Maryland (SMCM)  

Organizations that can lend expertise or actively assist with specific THMP-related actions. | • SMC Economic Development  
• State and local legislators  
• DNR  
• Maryland Office of Tourism  
• Lodging Industry  

Outside organizations or parties who may be called upon for advice, assistance or "reality checks as needed."

Target Markets

The target markets for Museums and Historic Sites extend beyond the current focus of school age children for educational purposes. The target markets for the THMP are focused on segments that will be inclined to experience St. Mary’s County’s museums and historic sites for an overnight visit which include:

- Heritage travelers
- Millennials interested in hand on experiences
- Middle Age to older couples interested in SMC with multiple experiences
- Young families with kids
These targets fall within the Maryland Office of Tourism’s generic target audiences ranging from 25-64 with a strong skew to women; household income (HHI) $75,000+; well-educated; and working in managerial and professional occupations. Overall the Maryland traveler is interested in historic experiences as the majority of visitation to Maryland destinations is coming from Maryland residents, as noted in the Situational Analysis, which shows a strong interest in the State’s history and heritage. This is a key factor for future marketing efforts.

Projects and Programs

**Enhanced Experiential Program**

The Enhanced Experiential program for the Museums and Historic Sites in St. Mary's County will be a multi-phased approach to implementation. The first phase of this should be focused on the higher profile sites that will raise the profile of St. Mary's County and support additional development. The following is an overview of the approach for two primary sites (Historic St. Mary's City and Sotterley Plantation) in offering visitors new, experiential opportunities:

**Sotterley**

- Colonial Kitchen Garden Interpretation - interprets colonial farming, gardening and foodways of the 18th century. Owners wives, children and enslaved would be tending such gardens. Visit a living history interpreter at the kitchen garden on selected weekends. Rebecca Bowles, Eleanor Bowles, Doll (enslaved).
- LIVES Legacy - Visit with Adelaide Orr, the governor of Eleanor Satterlee in 1910 or Rebecca Bowles, wife of James Bowles on the Riverside of the house on selected weekends. Visit a living history interpreter, George or Alice Elsa Cane at the slave cabin selected weekends. You can visit an interpreter portraying Mary Blades at the gatehouse selected weekends.
- Learn and Play - Visit Sotterley pier for a fishing demonstration or a kayaking experience. Advance Reservations required for Kayaking. Visit the Sotterley's own play and learn facility where children of all ages can exercise, experience the outdoors and put their hands into history. Located behind the Visitor’s Center.
- Labor Legacy – Enhance the Land, Lives and Labor exhibit to include trade demonstrations on site. Memorial to those who lived. Visit and reflect at an African American gravesite on Sotterley's Memorial Trail. Visit the exhibit Transportation and Trade located near the Visitor Center. Sotterley’s people and goods traveled by boat for the majority of its history. Experience travel and trade by sailing ships and then by steamboat in this interactive exhibit. All aboard! See and smell how food was preserved at Sotterley’s smokehouse with an interpreter selected weekends. At the South Gatehouse, visit artisans as they spin, weave and prepare textiles, and furniture selected weekends. Visit the Sheep pen. Sheep provided both food and cloth during Sotterley’s history. Take part in sheep shearing (seasonal.) Bring in the crop. Help the farm workers bring in selected crops and prepare them for market. (seasonal).

**Historic St. Mary’s City**

- Additional staff employed to support more detailed interpretation and more frequent/regular hours.
- Food and Fire program - An interpreter dedicated to colonial culinary arts would deliver an interactive cooking program every day. Cooking over a fire will engage all the senses, provide a rewarding social experience with friends and family, connects visitors to people from the past through sense memory and cultural association, educates the visitor about where food comes from and how to cook, teaches about local food traditions and introduces many 21st century Americans to making a family meal together. Millennials actually enjoy cooking more than their Boomer counterparts. They value the consumption of clean, healthy foods and are trending towards farmer's markets and urban gardens in pursuit of healthier options. The museum offers plenty of learning experiences that visitors can translate
to their daily lives; visit a house garden at the Plantation to learn about herbs and medicinal plants; learn about seasonal foods at the plantation; find out what sailors ate on board a tall ship at the waterfront. Unfortunately, the museum does not have adequate staff to dedicate to daily cooking demonstrations.

**Patuxent River Naval Air Museum**

The Patuxent River Naval Air Museum has the potential to be primary demand generator with a well-designed experiential approach. The museum includes flight simulators that currently can be used only on Saturdays from 10-5 and have an additional $10 cost for thirty minutes. The rest of the museum experience is primarily observation and self-guided. The museum has a gift shop popular with base personnel and offers its facilities from many base-related functions.

- The multimillion-dollar construction and renovation project should position the museum as a high profile attraction in St. Mary's County. The overall focus is on research, development, testing and evaluation. The museum will have interactive opportunities with simulators and 22 new one of a kind aircraft that will be accessible to the public. This increased interactivity will greatly enhance the overall experience.
- Ongoing plans include renovating the current buildings and adding a Flight Academy and a Children’s Discovery Zone. There is also a plan to acquire nearby parking to expand parking for visitors and tour buses.
- The museum is committed to developing new exhibits and experiences in an effort to stay relevant and continue to grow attendance including visitors.
- Another important on-going mission is to nurture technology startups developed from the Naval Base. This will provide ongoing relevancy for future visitors. The additional of an executive director and paid professional staff will provide the internal support needed for a sustainable high profile attraction in St. Mary’s County. An additional opportunity that could be developed in conjunction with the museum is to attract military reunions in conjunction with the groups sales efforts of the tourism organization.

**St. Mary’s County Museums – Piney Point Lighthouse Museum and Historic Park and St. Clements Island Museum**

The following is an overview of the current activities at the Piney Point Lighthouse Museum and the St. Clements Island Museum. These are additional higher profile opportunities to enhance the current visitor experience. Further development of these locations are noted in the action steps below.

**Piney Point Lighthouse Museum and Historic Park**

- Piney Point Lighthouse, Museum and Historic Park located on the Potomac River in Piney Point, Md. The recently restored 1836 lighthouse and keeper's quarters are the focal point for visitors from all over the world. The museum exhibits feature the lighthouse, WWII Navy torpedo testing, the Coast Guard presence and Potomac River/Chesapeake Bay maritime history as it pertains to the site and region. A U-1105 submarine sunk in the Potomac River near the park is recognized as Maryland’s first underwater preserve and is interpreted through an exhibit and site signage. The park supports a picnic area, boardwalks, pier, kayak launch, interpretive signage and examples of Bay Wise and storm water management features. Programs, tours and special events are offered March 25 through December on seasonal schedules or by appointment.

**St. Clement Island Museum and State Park**

- St. Clement’s Island State Park is located in the southern Potomac River between the Wicomico River and St. Clements Bay. The Island is said to be the first landing site and short-term refuge of the Maryland
colonists as they sought permissions for a permanent settlement site from the Piscataway Indians. The state park supports walking trails with interpretive signage; a full scale replica of the Blackistone Lighthouse; boating piers; picnic and composting restroom facilities. Programs and tours are available on a seasonal basis or by appointment.

- St. Clement’s Island Museum is located on the Maryland shore of the Potomac River within view of St. Clement’s Island. The museum offers exhibits and interpretive programming that illustrate the history of St. Clement’s Island, the Potomac River and lesser known elements of St. Mary’s County history. The museum grounds offer picnic facilities, a one-room schoolhouse and a St. Mary’s County Dory Boat exhibit and public boating pier. Programs, tours and special events are offered March 25 through December on seasonal schedules or by appointment. A water taxi service from the museum pier to St. Clement’s Island is offered on a seasonal basis.

These are the types of experiences that would also need to be developed at other historic sites. In order to develop this level of planning and programming at additional sites, the tourism organization will need to meet with and continue to work with the County museums and the Patuxent River Naval Air Museum’s Board and Executive Director to create experiences that will enhance the current programming.

**Expected Outcome** - It is expected that these experiential opportunities at the cornerstone historic sites will draw increased visitation, overnight stays and overall increase in visitor traffic to the County. Combined with a marketing plan to promote the experiences, these activities will increase ticket sales and revenue to the sites.

**Methods of Measurement**

- Ticket sales
- Package sales
- Visitor count
- Visitor satisfaction surveys

**Funding Sources**

Funding sources for this portion of the THMP include County funding as a baseline as well as state funding for HSMC and private revenue from fundraising. The specific sources for this section also includes the Maryland Historic Trust. The THMP also includes the potential to form a tourism district to collect and support ongoing implementation of the experiential programming. The County and Historic sites will collaborate to identify additional funding sources.

**Terms for Implementation**

- Infrastructure – physical need and manpower associated with supporting the historic site programming
- Advocacy Plan – “campaign” to announce and gain support for the new initiatives and pursue funding opportunities outside of the County
- Shared Resources/Collaboration Plan – tangible items and manpower needed at each site for programming that could be shared pending final schedule and plans
- Site Visions – new experiential programming created to elevate the historic sites
- Lodging Program – specific initiative tied to increasing overnight stays
Work Plan

Work Plan – Short-Term – within 12 Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Launch implementation effort, complete sites priorities and support structure. Determine what can be done with limited budgets as the initial Phase One approach. Initial fundraising strategies developed and site projections formalized.</td>
<td>Finalize tourism infrastructure and coordination support.</td>
<td>Create and implement the new tourism organization with specific dedication to the coordination effort of the Museums and Historic Sites program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finalize new historic site programming priorities and criteria for success.</td>
<td>Finalize new historic site programming priorities and criteria for success.</td>
<td>Commitments will be secured and vetted from Sotterley, Historic St. Mary’s City, Piney Point Lighthouse Museum &amp; Historic Park, PAX Naval Museum and St. Clement’s Island Museum for Phase One.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build advocacy plan.</td>
<td>Build advocacy plan.</td>
<td>Work with local and state legislators to gain support for initiatives and funding opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop funding strategy to include multiple sources.</td>
<td>Develop funding strategy to include multiple sources.</td>
<td>Determine viable funding channels through federal opportunities, Maryland DNR, State Tourism and HSMC direct channels and a local hotel tax or district. Funding plan must be a sustainable, multiyear commitment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine opportunities for shared resources.</td>
<td>Determine opportunities for shared resources.</td>
<td>Resolve ability to cross utilize staff, contractors and other needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finalize Site Visions.</td>
<td>Finalize Site Visions.</td>
<td>Work with site operators to develop experiential programming for Phase One (initial limited budget items) and Two (enhanced items requiring additional funding).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine economic impact projections for Site Visions.</td>
<td>Determine economic impact projections for Site Visions.</td>
<td>Prepare visitor numbers for day and overnight projections due to initial program implementation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Work Plan – Medium-Term – within 12-24 Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With a functional support structure in place, complete budgetary process</td>
<td>Development of site budgets.</td>
<td>Each site will need to determine the budget based on finalized programming (Phase One and Two).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with each site and overall funding plan approved. Also present and</td>
<td>Implement funding plan.</td>
<td>Begin execution of funding plan with goals and milestones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>approve site visions and overall relationship.</td>
<td>Preliminary presentation and</td>
<td>Presentation to EDC, County Commission and other public presentations with approval of funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>acceptance of site visions and</td>
<td>mechanisms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>phased funding models.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Development of lodging program.</td>
<td>Hotel and lodging offers specific to historic sites to drive overnight stays.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Finalize marketing campaign.</td>
<td>Develop and begin marketing campaign to support new programming.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Development of visitor, room</td>
<td>Work with each site to develop the ROI for the programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>night and tax/revenue projections.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop collaboration plan</td>
<td>Work with each site to leverage staff, capital and marketing efforts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>between sites.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Work Plan – Medium-Term – within 24-36 Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complete and report on Phase One implementation success, finalize and</td>
<td>Report Phase One Results.</td>
<td>Measure success with ticket sales, attendance, overall satisfaction (survey) and overnight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>implement Phase Two (second summer season) with new funding and material.</td>
<td>Secure expertise and support for additional phasing.</td>
<td>overnight stays.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complete initial funding campaign.</td>
<td>Track and report on funding levels and success measures (money raised for Phase Two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>implementation).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Finalize Phase Two Plans.</td>
<td>Prepare and present Phase Two experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Launch Phase Two.</td>
<td>Second season implementation of historic site programming – Phase Two.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Events

Objective

The development of an effective event plan in St. Mary’s County is an essential element of a successful tourism effort. Currently there are few events, if any, that drive many overnight visitors. An effective plan has a clear approach to supporting the development of current events to the level and with the programming that will bring overnight visitors to St. Mary County. As has been a consistent theme, the “bar” that must be achieved for this type of draw is high and requires either a multiple day program or synergy with other activities.

That said, the majority of events in the County are produced by local, nonprofit organizations with little strategic focus on expansion for visitors. The County also does not realize any Admission and Amusement Tax revenue from nonprofit-produced events. Therefore, although supporting these events via public relations, marketing and communications supports local quality of life, the current Tourism Division’s deployment of limited resources towards events should be carefully considered in the future. The development and support of current and future events in St. Mary’s County is an essential element of a successful tourism effort. This requires a process to determine the most effective opportunities for future investment.

The other dynamic that should be considered in the development of an event plan is the potential to create a signature event that would potentially encompass unique characteristics of St. Mary’s County and be produced on a scale that would attract out of town visitors. Multi-day signature events can economically benefit the greater community and serve to enhance an area’s “brand.”

Goal

Create an objective approach to supporting events that have the highest potential for attracting overnight visitors. This will ensure that tourism resources are maximized in marketing and supporting events. The implementation of this will require an approach that is viewed as objective and focused on the larger mission. In the longer term, St. Mary’s County should consider developing a signature event that emerges from a current event or is newly developed.

Situational Analysis section reference page 36.

Regulation

One area for regulatory review are the current restrictions on food preparation and service for an outdoor event. This needs to be reviewed with the goal of developing an approach that is safe and provides a workable approach for event organizers. The permitting process for new events must also be user friendly.

An additional regulatory issue in this section of the THMP is the threshold of events for small, noncommercial venues that host weddings and social events. The current cap on events for these venues is 20 which puts a limit on the level of business they can do as well as the larger economic impact that could be brought to the County as a whole.
**Economic Development**

Economic Development as a department will have a lesser role in the event strategy, however the impact that a successful events plan will have as a demand generator to attract new investors can be substantial.

**Workforce Training**

Events offer an opportunity to introduce visitors to the area and as such, the role of event staff should expand to serving as destination ambassadors. The training program previously mentioned should be considered for specific events determined to be a draw for future visitors. And therefore an investment of the tourism organization.

**Organizational Structure**

**Staffing Needs**

The tourism organization will need to utilize an event scoring matrix such as the one introduced in the Situational Analysis and included in this section, to develop criteria, screen events and ultimately select events that will drive overnight stays in the County. This level of screening and supervision of the events should be done within the marketing and communications function and in conjunction with the senior leadership. The tourism organization will also participate in searching for external funding opportunities to support designated events.

**Events Advisory Group**

An Events Advisory Group will include representatives from the hotel industry, venues, agriculture, business associations and others should participate in the scoring process and establishment of an event partnership program.

**Support for Implementation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advisory Group</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Restaurants</td>
<td>• Fairgrounds Board</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Attractions</td>
<td>• Health Department</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hotels</td>
<td>• Leonardtown Business Association</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Organizations tapped to assist the tourism organization on an ongoing basis, requiring familiarity with the THMP and the specific industry.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Outside organizations or parties who may be called upon for advice, assistance or &quot;reality checks as needed.&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Private event operators</td>
<td>• SMCDED</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Organizations that can lend expertise or actively assist with specific THMP-related actions.
Projects and Programs

**Event Partnership Program**

Develop an Event Partnership Program that provides assistance in areas of strategic planning, marketing and advertising to events who have demonstrated potential to increase overnight stays. Incorporate an event scoring system such as the one introduced in the Situational Analysis and included below. Develop program components to include application and review criteria in conjunction with an events review committee composed of industry stakeholders to include hotel and local businesses.

**Signature Event Program**

Evaluate feasibility and benefits of creating a multi-day signature event to include consideration of various models such a private contract, public-private partnership, and a collaborative structure that brings together numerous local nonprofits.

**Event Scoring Criteria**

The following is an approach to evaluating current or proposed events that are being reviewed for receiving specific tourism organizational support. The matrix is designed to create guidelines to help event organizers determine how to position their event to become a viable draw for overnight visitors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Components</th>
<th>Total Points</th>
<th>Max Points Per Component</th>
<th>Fail</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Above Average</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Total Points Awarded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Point Allocation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Components</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism Promotion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefit to the Destination</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of Partnership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Capability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Structure and Capability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Impact</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Brand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Research</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suitable Target Market</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive Marketing Approach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree of Match</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous Replacement Funding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation/Measurement Plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendee Satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room Nights</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale of Project</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application Quality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique Selling Proposition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>95</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

St. Mary’s County Tourism & Hospitality Master Plan | 62
### Work Plan

#### Work Plan – Short-Term – within 12 Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create a full inventory and calendar of availability 3 years into the future.</td>
<td>Develop the criteria to be used for evaluating and supporting current events.</td>
<td>The sample criteria will be reviewed and revised by the internal tourism organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine the resources available to support designated events in the County and develop a task force to evaluate the event criteria.</td>
<td>Develop an advisory group to advise on event evaluation and support.</td>
<td>Create an advisory group made up of tourism related industry leaders to support the evaluation of current events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Release applications and select events for the next 1-2 years to happen in the County.</td>
<td>Inform event organizers of the evaluation process and criteria.</td>
<td>In conjunction with the advisory group develop the final criteria, timeline and initial communication plan to launch the event program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine resources that will be available to support the events.</td>
<td>Determine resources that will be available to support the events.</td>
<td>The tourism organization will propose resources that will be available to further the event plan. Any grant funding opportunities will be researched to bring additional resources.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Work Plan – Medium-Term – within 12-24 Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review the applications that have been returned and determine initial approach to supporting a focused direction.</td>
<td>The advisory group will make recommendations based on the criteria for focused support of designated events.</td>
<td>The advisory group, in conjunction with the tourism organization, will complete the evaluation process and determine the resources that will be available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A reporting plan will be developed to measure success.</td>
<td>The hotels will participate in a reporting plan to track overnight visitors.</td>
<td>The tourism organization with develop an approach to gathering the data to measure the success of the designated events.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Work Plan – Long-Term – within 24-36 Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate the opportunity and options for a signature event.</td>
<td>The task force will be engaged in determine the types of events that will highlight the uniqueness of St. Mary’s County.</td>
<td>This is a multi-year process of gaining input and gaining consensus on the opportunities to showcase features of the County and potentially develop a signature event.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AGRI-TOURISM AND FARM-TO-TABLE

Overview

St. Mary’s County’s farm and water heritage present tremendous opportunities to develop experiences around the farming tradition that connects the visitor with what is authentic and unique to St. Mary’s County. Visitor programs at local oyster farms, organic farms, Amish markets, wineries and “watermen tours,” could be combined to create exceptional multiday stays. Supporting new ventures and developing visitor programs is a worthy collaborative effort for the tourism and agriculture industries. There are three components of this area that are unique and also interlinked creating a broader experience for future visitors. These are:

1. Farm to Table
2. Agri-tourism and Visitor On-Location Experiences (“food on farms")
3. Industry Development

Goal

To create new and enhance existing farm and food practices for visitors to get a taste of the authentic culinary experience derived from the farming tradition of St. Mary’s County. The potential to create a robust farm to table program to bring the farm and water harvesting heritage of the County to tourists and the restaurants will provide a platform to sell and experience St. Mary’s County from a culinary perspective. Research conducted in the Situational Analysis on travel related to food and culinary experiences, especially when connected to the unique, local history and heritage validates the demand for this element of the Master Plan.


Regulation

The primary regulatory issues in this section of the THMP are focused on the agri-tourism or “food on farm” portion and the permitting, food processing and preparation as is required in order for the farms to participate in such a program. The regulations would require further analysis and collaboration with LUGM and Health Departments to streamline the process. Issues that have arisen from research on this portion of the THMP include:

- The ability to cut and prepare food on a farm
- Ability to serve food on farms requires a commercial kitchen, commercial license for catering and being registered with the state.
- Current practice requires caterers to prep food off site and deliver cooked food to the site in hot boxes
- Opportunities for overnight farm stays

Economic Development

SMCDED business development and the Chamber of Commerce should be involved in the program development with focus on the restaurant component of the Farm-to-Table program. The primary economic development needs surround the ability to work with the Health Department to promote the agri-tourism/farm-on-food programs. Industry development in new and emerging ag-related sectors to include wineries, breweries, distilleries and aquaculture will require economic development strategies and should be front and center in SMCDED’s programs.
**Workforce Training**

Safe, visitor-friendly farm environments are essential, and both interpretive training and Certified Tourism Ambassador training should be offered.

**Organizational Structure**

**Staffing Needs**

Program implementation will require a person dedicated at least part time to the coordination and development of the farm to table pilot program. In season, there could be a need for administrative support at an hourly or intern-level to support the coordinator's work load.

**Support for Implementation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advisory Group</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• SMC Ag. &amp; Seafood&lt;br&gt;• Allen's Heirloom Homestead</td>
<td>• Tourism Organization – staff support&lt;br&gt;• Local Farms and Watermen&lt;br&gt;• Local Restaurants&lt;br&gt;• SMCDED&lt;br&gt;• SMC Agriculture and Seafood Commission&lt;br&gt;• SMADC</td>
<td>• Maryland Department of Agriculture&lt;br&gt;• Maryland Agricultural Resource Council&lt;br&gt;• Maryland Office of Tourism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Organizations tapped to assist the tourism organization on an ongoing basis, requiring familiarity with the THMP and the specific industry.

Organizations that can lend expertise or actively assist with specific THMP-related actions.

Outside organizations or parties who may be called upon for advice, assistance or "reality checks as needed."

**Target Markets**

The target markets for the farm to table and agri-tourism that will drive overnight visits include:

- Millennials interested in hands-on experiences
- Young couples interested in culinary tourism
- Middle Age to older couples (Baby Boomers) interested in multiple experiences

These targets fall within the Maryland Office of Tourism’s generic target audiences ranging from 25-64 with a strong skew to women; household income (HHI) $75,000+; well-educated; and working in managerial and professional occupations. They have made a trip of more than one day’s duration within the United States in the past 12 months, which includes business, vacation, weekend travel and short trips.
Projects and Programs

Farm-to-Table Program

The goal of this component is to develop a program that delivers primarily St. Mary’s County products to the plates of restaurant patrons. This differs from the USDA definition of farm to table which is a 400-mile radius from the participating restaurant. This program is designed to create opportunities for visitors to experience local farm products prepared by locally owned and operated restaurants and/or food handlers (for example, caterers)

Expected Outcome – The expected outcome is a program that features St. Mary’s products in a manner that is attractive to an out of town visitor.

Methods of Measurement – The local restaurants in conjunction with the Tourism organization will develop a method of surveying customers to understand the volume of out of town visitors who are participating in the farm to table program. In addition, farmers and watermen who have held events on farm that include local watermen, local farm foods and wine with the food produced by the farmers.

Agri-tourism/Food-on-Farm Experiences

On-Farm Program: This program will assist in developing on farm, and largely, “hands-on” programs at farms and other agriculture and aquaculture operations. The program will include “traditional” farms as well as operations committed to sustainable and innovative farm practices. Once fully established, itineraries and “packages that connect these experiences with dining, lodging and other activities will be developed.

Amish and Mennonite Operations: These communities are a significant part of the St. Mary’s County farm experience and have the potential to be a tremendous visitor draw. However, this will require a different approach that centers on farm markets and on-farm retail rather than on farm interpretation. The visitor experience should be well considered and fully integrated into the plans and operations of the relocated North County Market, and year-round operations should be considered. Itineraries and organized tours of the network of on-farm quilt, craft and furniture shops located in St. Mary’s and Charles Counties should be developed.

Oyster-Farming: This is an area in which St. Mary’s County could be a strong contender and grab an industry leadership position. The county has five oyster farms. As is the case with introducing the general public into land-based farm operations, developing visitor’s programs will be challenging. Tomales Bay and Hog Island Oyster Companies in California offer models that might be emulated. The Tourism Division has agreed to become a partner in development of a Southern Maryland Oyster Trail under a third party grant. If the project moves forward, it will be incorporated into the county-based program.

Expected Outcome – Tourism studies have indicated a strong upward trend in interest in hands on, local experiences on farms and in restaurants that serve local fare. It is expected and projected that these experiential opportunities will draw increased visitation, overnight stays and overall increase in visitor traffic to the County.

Methods of Measurement

- Packages for on-farm experiences sold
- Number of farms and aquaculture sites participating in the program
- Visitor satisfaction survey
Industry Development (oyster farming, wineries, distilleries)

The development of emerging industries such as oyster farming and winegrowing is a key aspect to ensuring this aspect of the agri-tourism program becomes sustainable for the long-term. Economic Development and the Agriculture and Seafood Commission will be the top partners to recruit and support the industry overall.

**Expected Outcome** – The expected outcome is that St. Mary’s County will develop into a place where these watermen, farmers, entrepreneurial restaurateurs and specialty food handlers can do business and new enterprises will start-up and grow

**Methods of Measurement**

- Number of new businesses of this type opening
- Additional agreed upon metrics to be determined with the advisory group and County partners

**Capital Projects**

Relocated North County Market (see Amish section above).

**Funding Sources**

The funding sources to support the farm to table and agri-tourism experiences will be further analyzed with the advisory groups as the programs develop.

**Work Plan**

**Work Plan – Short-Term – within 12 Months**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finalize participation</td>
<td>Finalization of coordinator position/role.</td>
<td>Gain approval to hire and/or reorganize to develop a direct staff coordination position to support of the Farm-to-Table program on behalf of the tourism organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop the initial set of experiences for farm to table</td>
<td>Determine 2-6 farms that will participate in the pilot program.</td>
<td>Visit each farm/participant and determine level of participation, experience and pricing model that will benefit farms and restaurants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop the most effective coordination method within the tourism organization to support the program.</td>
<td>Determine 2-3 restaurants and/or specialty food handlers (or caterers) that will participate in pilot program.</td>
<td>Work with the restaurateurs and others to determine the experience and how local farm products can be incorporated and what level of coordination will be needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify any regulatory challenges and an approach to rectify associated issues.</td>
<td>Soft opening using local participants.</td>
<td>Develop awareness campaign to inform and invite the local community to enjoy and test the experiences.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Work Plan – Medium-Term – within 12-24 Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finalize the experiences and launch the farm to table pilot program with the initial participants.</td>
<td>Finalize regulatory issues related to developing experiences on farms.</td>
<td>Develop a plan to overcome the regulatory issues that need to be resolved for visitor access. (i.e. Oyster Farmers). This will include the current restrictions to on-farm events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue with ongoing work related to regulatory issues while the program gets underway.</td>
<td>Finalize the initial agri-tourism experiences.</td>
<td>Develop the initial set of experiences including pricing and logistics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop the lodging packages to support overnight stays.</td>
<td>Develop the lodging (including Airbnb) component.</td>
<td>Develop the participation of the hotels and other accommodations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formulate larger economic development strategies to recruit and grow the restaurant industry.</td>
<td>Coordination with Economic Development.</td>
<td>Support the development of targeted economic development strategies (i.e. Breweries; Wineries, Restaurants).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Work Plan – Long-Term – within 24-36 Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop and implement a marketing plan targeting audiences that are predisposed to engage in hands-on farm to table activities.</td>
<td>Determine regional target markets.</td>
<td>Conduct research to determine target audiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop marketing plan for initial offerings.</td>
<td>Develop targeted marketing approach for driving awareness and conversion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop additional experiences for expansion of program.</td>
<td>Engage broader agriculture community to expand the offerings beyond the pilot program.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Overview
St. Mary’s offers a wide variety of outdoor recreational opportunities to include hiking, cycling, running, birding, hunting, and to a limited extent mountain biking. Among these, cycling deserves key focus The County’s rural nature is a good fit for outdoor activities and in particular for cycling, due to its relatively flat terrain, scenic landscape and roads with wide shoulders. Recreational cycling is an activity that generates overnight stays. Tapping into existing state and federal cycling initiatives and linking trails across counties represent big investments but are ones that have the potential to transform the tourism landscape. The outdoor activities master plan includes other opportunities listed below.

Goal
Create new and enhance existing outdoor resources, infrastructure and activities to a level that builds the County’s reputation as an outdoors mecca for leisure, and amateur enthusiasts. With regards to cycling, accomplish this through regional state and federal programs and initiatives that offer opportunities for linkages so as to create a true regional network of trails necessary to attract overnight recreational cyclists.

Situational Analysis section reference page 62.

Organizational Structure

Staffing Needs
St. Mary’s County has local experts in many of the areas that are covered in the Outdoor Activities Plan. The Tourism organization should keep these experts engaged as the THMP is implemented.
Support for Implementation

Activities Include

As noted above, the outdoor activities in St. Mary’s County vary in interest and type offered for recreational and enthusiasts interest. As discussed in the Situational Analysis, the outdoor activity with the highest potential ROI for the County is cycling with running, as a sporting event, being a close second. Other outdoor activities including hiking, birding and hunting need to be explored further. Below is the list of outdoor activities available in St. Mary’s County.

1. Hiking
2. Cycling
3. Mountain Biking
4. Running
5. Birding
6. Hunting

Target Markets

Overall the outdoor activities of St. Mary’s County have a broad base of potential markets. The primary focus of segments for this section of the THMP should be on the enthusiasts of these niche sports including recreational and racing cyclists, sporting or competitive mountain bikers, hunters and birders. These niche sports have participants that travel to engage in their respective activities. Enthusiasts read industry publications like Bicycling Magazine, Bicycle Times Magazine, Adventure Cycling, Field & Stream, Fishing and Hunting Journal and Outdoor Life among others.

The primary demographics of these enthusiasts are primarily:

Advisory Group
- Recreation and Parks
- PAX Velo
- Fish the Bay Charters
- St. Mary’s College
- Tourism Organization

Organizations tapped to assist the tourism organization on an ongoing basis, requiring familiarity with the THMP and the specific industry.

Partners
- Maryland DNR
- Maryland State Highway Administration
- Maryland Office of Tourism
- Southern Maryland Heritage Area Consortium

Organizations that can lend expertise or actively assist with specific THMP-related actions.

Resources
- Southern Maryland Mountain Bikers
- Marathon Organizers
- Maryland Mountain Club
- Mid-Atlantic Bicycle Racing Association
- Bike Maryland
- Ducks Unlimited
- Maryland Bowhunters Society
- Maryland Outfitters Guide Association
- Chesapeake Bay Running Club
- St. Mary’s Century Race

Outside organizations or parties who may be called upon for advice, assistance or “reality checks” as needed.
• Male
• Ages 30-65
• Median HHI $63,000
• Married with children

Capital Projects

Cycling

1. Three Notch Trail – This trail has the potential to become a premier cycling opportunity. Supporting the completion of the trail on faster timeline, and advising on how to make it an attractive visitors experience should be incorporated into all future planning efforts. In addition, there is potential to, create a trail through the Lexington Manor area in conjunction with plans of the Community Development Corporation that “extends” the Three Notch Trail further into South County, with transition onto Route 235 to continue as an on road trails to Point Lookout (see below).

2. Potomac Heritage Trail – Working with Prince Georges and Charles Counties, create a regional plan for a contiguous hiking/biking trail through the three counties and ultimately connects to Point Lookout.

3. Point Lookout State Park - Confirm that the State Highway project to widen the road to Point Lookout is funded and ensure Point Lookout adds separate cycling access at gate as planned.

State Parks

1. Newtowne Neck State Park - Advocate for funding and implementation of master plan’s components and press for faster timeline.

2. St. Inigoes State Forest - Advocate for funding of a master plan and then press for fast implementation.

Funding Sources

The major activities that make up the outdoor section have either regional, state or national organizations that provide varying levels of support for projects. This should be explored for each of the activities.

Work Plan

Work Plan – Short-Term – within 12 Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop the oversight approach. Including a working committee and key subject matter experts. Develop the top initiatives for advocacy and coordination.</td>
<td>Develop an effective approach to manage the advisory group with the variety of activities in the Outdoor Activities area.</td>
<td>Each activity has a different priority and needs for support. A manageable approach to maintaining contact and focusing on the highest priorities must be developed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In conjunction with the advisory group, finalize the top priorities with the diversified spectrum of activities represented.</td>
<td>Host an extended sessions and consult with local experts to finalize the activities that are outlined in the Situational Analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Create synergy between the LPRPP to ensure the top priorities have funding and support.</td>
<td>As the Recreation and Parks Department is a member of the advisory group, the 5-year plan they will implement in 2017 should be made in conjunction with the THMP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Present priorities to partner organizations.</td>
<td>As this section has varying activities and sub-activities the priorities and outcome of the advisory group sessions should be outlined and presented to the partners, EDC and County Administration.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Work Plan – Short-Term – within 12-24 Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conduct targeted research to validate key priorities in targeted markets.</td>
<td>Develop an in-house research plan to test new opportunities and validate interest with enthusiasts.</td>
<td>It is important to develop a manageable approach conduct in house research to determine the level of interest in each of the areas represented by outdoor activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop an event plan that highlights the outdoor activities of St. Mary's County.</td>
<td>Finalize the details of the individual plans for each activity.</td>
<td>A plan will be developed for each activity that is identified in the plan. The initial opportunities are discussed in the Situational Analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Determine which current activities (i.e. St. Mary's Historic Half Marathon) have potential. And determine which activities have the potential to become stand-alone events.</td>
<td>Initiate discussions and planning with the local experts to gain an understanding for where the opportunities are. This will include each of the six activities in this section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work with Recreation and Parks to promote the enhancement of Point Lookout State Park</td>
<td>Extend the opportunity for overnight visitation by promoting the widened shoulders and other amenities of the park.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work with SMCDED and DNR to advocate for Newtowne Neck Master Plan.</td>
<td>Work with elected officials as well as the DNR to push for further study and positioning of Newtowne Neck State Park.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Work Plan – Long-Term – within 24-36 Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop marketing plans for attracting key enthusiast to the newly developed experiences.</td>
<td>Assuming new developments are completed or scheduled the tourism organization will develop marketing plans designed to target visitors who have a propensity for the specific activity.</td>
<td>The process will include research the most effective vehicles for reaching the target audiences and developing messaging and a creative approach.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WEDDINGS

Overview

The weddings market is a proven demand generator for out of town visitors to St. Mary’s County. Many of the popular venues are at capacity and have been successful for many years. St. Mary’s County has many spectacular wedding settings in many areas. The track record of the wedding market makes it an important focus for potential short-term gain. The potential of increasing the capacity of current popular wedding venues could have an impact in the next 12 to 24 months.

Goal

The opportunity is to increase the capacity for weddings in the County. An increased number of venues represents a short-term opportunity to drive incremental overnight visitation.

Situational Analysis section reference page 86.

Regulation

The primary regulatory issue in this section of the THMP is the threshold of events for small, noncommercial venues that host weddings and social events. The current cap on events for these venues is 20 per year which puts a limit on the level of business they can do as well as the larger economic impact that could be brought to the County as a whole.

Organizational Structure

Staff Support

The tourism organization has raised awareness of St. Mary’s County as a wedding destination for many years. This activity should continue. The sales person that is proposed in the THMP will provide support when needed. Due to the established demand for this market, the proactive effort will primary be raising awareness as opposed to direct sales.
Support for Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advisory Group</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• n/a Organizations tapped to assist the tourism organization on an ongoing basis, requiring familiarity with the THMP and the specific industry.</td>
<td>• Hotels • Agriculture industry • Local Caterers • Venue operators Organizations that can lend expertise or actively assist with specific THMP-related actions.</td>
<td>• SMADC • LUGM Outside organizations or parties who may be called upon for advice, assistance or &quot;reality checks as needed.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Target Markets

Wedding parties are interested in the St. Mary’s County environment. Due to the accessibility this is mostly a regional or “drive” market. This is one of the few seasoned group markets in St. Mary’s County.

Funding Sources

Revenue should be available to support the THMP implementation and marketing for weddings.

Work Plan

Work Plan – Short-Term – within 12 Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work with the regulatory partners to propose the change to the current limitation. Determine the number of events that will work for all parties. Develop a reporting approach to capture the impact of the wedding industry</td>
<td>Establish internal advisory group for regulatory review.</td>
<td>The tourism organization will determine with the support of LUGM who is needed to participate in determining acceptable new annual event limits where applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Propose the changes to the current regulations.</td>
<td>The advisory groups will establish an agreed upon proposal for increasing the number of events allowed at currently restricted sites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engage hotels and wedding venues in a reporting plan to demonstrate the current size of the market.</td>
<td>Forms will be developed to support this with regular outreach to both venues and hotels. Once a baseline approach is established, there will be an opportunity to show annual growth and the impact of the new opportunity when the regulations are adjusted.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Work Plan – Medium-Term – within 12-24 Months**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop new marketing plan to drive awareness based on increased capacity in the County.</td>
<td>With the new inventory of space available, an enhanced marketing plan will support the increased opportunity</td>
<td>Research will be conducted by reviewing the current markets that are most prevalent and developing different tactics to raise awareness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engage the visitor services staff (see organizational model) to become a resource for handling wedding inquiries and guiding prospective wedding parties through the process</td>
<td>Develop a process by which wedding inquiries are handled by the visitor services team, leads are generated and booked through to the venues.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Work Plan – Long-Term – within 24-36 Months**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create a marketing campaign to increase wedding bookings.</td>
<td>Tourism organization direct sales staff and visitor services staff to develop an enhanced marketing campaign taking into account new opportunities that have been developed through THMP implementation.</td>
<td>Tourism organization to work with venues for campaign development including determine new sales and marketing initiatives to expand overall awareness of St. Mary’s as a wedding destination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop targets for marketing campaign.</td>
<td>Target new regional market for weddings that would cause overnight stays.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Launch campaign.</td>
<td>Distribute collateral to target markets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Report ROI on weddings sales, bookings and marketing to stakeholders.</td>
<td>Produce report for stakeholders showing tourism organization’s results and impact in the weddings industry for the County.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SMALL MEETINGS**

**Overview**

Meetings are an important component of a balanced tourism plan. With Washington DC in close proximity there are thousands of associations and corporations within driving distance that conduct meetings all over the world. St. Mary’s County could be a unique opportunity for groups to meet and experience an appealing rural environment close to home base. Many of the activities that are being developed will provide great “off site” opportunities for groups meeting in the County. However, meeting planners need to have meeting space in close proximity—and preferably in walking distance, to hotel rooms and amenities such as restaurants, shops and attractions. St. Mary’s County currently lacks the type of meeting space that is conducive to multi-day meetings. The most desirable space must be large enough to have general sessions for all of the attendees as well as breakout rooms for smaller meetings as part of a multi-day conference.
Goal
The goal is to determine if there are viable opportunities that currently exist as well as determine the feasibility for a larger Conference Center as part of St, Mary’s County’s future. The recommended addition of a direct sales effort will provide immediate activity to determine the short and long-term plan to grow the small meetings market. The ultimate goal is to develop an attractive experience for a small meetings and grow the amount of business in the future.

Situational Analysis section reference page 87.

Regulation
The expansion of the numbers of events for farm based venues may open up opportunities to bring certain types of group business during times of year that are less popular for weddings.

Economic Development
The effort to attract more corporations to relocate to St. Mary’s County will provide additional potential demand for meetings. The potential of a conference center could also be viewed as a helpful amenity for new corporations. DEDC should work with the tourism organization to gain an understanding of the level of interest by local corporations in a conference center.

Organizational Structure

Staffing Needs
The hiring of a group sales manager who is partially focused on the small meetings market will play an integral role in the development of a short and long-term approach and validating the level of interest in a future conference center.

Support for Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advisory Group</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Hotels and Lodging
• Meeting Venue Operators
Organizations tapped to assist the tourism organization on an ongoing basis, requiring familiarity with the THMP and the specific industry. | • Chamber of Commerce
• SMCDED
Organizations that can lend expertise or actively assist with specific THMP-related actions. | • Mid Atlantic Society of Association Executives
• Maryland Society of Association Executives
• Maryland State Tourism
• Chesapeake and Capital Chapters of PCMA
• SMC Tourism Business industry
Outside organizations or parties who may be called upon for advice, assistance or “reality checks as needed.” |
Target Markets

The focus would be on the drive-in markets which would include Washington D.C. and Baltimore. Associations and Corporate groups are the most important meetings segments to consider. There are over 500 associations located within the state of Maryland and a few thousand more in Washington DC that are unaware of the offerings in St. Mary’s County. All of the potential markets would need to be prospected by the new sales effort as well as provide insight on what future meeting venues are most needed. In addition, Military reunions could be a viable small group market; capitalizing on the Naval Base and newly expanded PAX Naval Air Museum.

Projects and Programs

Initial Group Sales Effort

The initial group sales effort should focus on the venues currently available for groups within the County (see Situational Analysis for details) as well as explore new venues for small meetings growth. The initial group sales effort should start with a new direct sales hire within the organization or contracted out by the tourism organization to book small meetings business into the County.

Expected Outcome - With a group sales manager hired to prospect, sell and book small meetings business into the County it is expected that the St. Mary’s County would see an increase in overnight visitation and with that an increase in the Accommodations Tax.

Methods of Measurement - The measurement for small groups includes tracking the sales activity and the number of groups that have been booked through the sales efforts. The other key metric is the number of room nights that have been generated through the newly focused sales effort.

Capital Projects

The long-term capital project for this market would be the development of a Conference Center. A Conference Center feasibility study should be done three to five years after the initial implementation of the THMP. This will enable the focus sales efforts to gain an understanding of the potential of the small group market for St. Mary’s County.

Funding Sources

The group sales and small meetings portion of the THMP can be funded through shifting resources in the current allocation. It is also recommended that a tourism district be considered to support raising additional funds for the tourism organization’s sales efforts. The hotels have expressed an interest in seeing a direct sales effort launched as an outcome of the THMP. This may be an area that would drive support for a funding district in the future.
### Work Plan

#### Work Plan – Short-Term – within 12 Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developing the group sales effort.</td>
<td>Hiring of the group sales manager or creation of a dedicated sales effort.</td>
<td>Develop a job description and performance plan. Work closely with the hotels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveying the current meeting facilities</td>
<td>Develop complete inventory of current meeting facilities.</td>
<td>Work with the current meeting venue operators to gain an understanding of the current facilities and their capacity. This will include costs and other operational considerations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conduct sales calls to targeted meeting planners to validate their priorities and level of interest</td>
<td>A portion of the new sales person’s role would be to validate the priorities and level of interest of potential meeting planners. This will bring important insight on the current opportunities and the viability of a future conference center.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Work Plan – Medium-Term – within 12-36 Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Determine the market potential. Determine initial interest in a conference center from developer community.</td>
<td>Develop a plan to understand the full market.</td>
<td>Work with SMCDED to select an outside consultant to prepare a small meetings market analysis to understand the full potential for group sales in the County.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Facilitate sessions with developers to understand interest in a conference center.</td>
<td>Work with SMCDED, tourism stakeholders and developers to gain deeper insight into the appetite for investing in a conference center.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism organization and SMCDED should develop an RFP for a conference center feasibility study.</td>
<td>Based on the previous steps showing favorable results, the County should embark on a full feasibility study for a conference center. This would include size, capacity, cost projections, funding and return on investment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Work Plan – Long-Term – within 36+ Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Determine the feasibility of a conference center.</td>
<td>Release RFP for feasibility study and award bid to consultant.</td>
<td>Work with the consultant over a six to 12 month period to finalize the feasibility study of a conference center.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a conference center.</td>
<td>Develop conference center</td>
<td>Based on the consultant’s feasibility study, projections and recommendations the County should determine the next steps to develop the conference center.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Release RFP for developer and award bid.</td>
<td>Begin conference center development.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SPORTS

Overview

The popularity of sports and the level of participation in youth and amateur sporting events warrants a plan to determine short and longer term opportunities for St. Mary’s County. Youth sports tournaments, thought small in number, are one activity that fills weekend rooms in local hotels. There are both short and long-term opportunities for St. Mary’s County in the sports market. In addition, there are larger participatory sporting events such as marathons and cycling races that may drive overnight visitors. The St. Mary’s County community and local officials recognize the need to evaluate the demand for a sports complex and at this time, funding is included in the Capital Improvement Plan budget with a feasibility study starting in FY19.

Goal

The ultimate goal is to attract more sporting events that will drive overnight visitation. There is a short-term goal of developing a sales effort that focuses on the current venues and identifies sporting events that will fit and have an interest in coming to St. Mary’s County. The immediate challenge is to determine if the plans cited above can potentially be shaped to cater to travel tournament play and if not, how best to determine if in the medium and longer term, whether to move forward with the development of a sports complex.

Situational Analysis section reference page 38.

Regulation

The determination of the viability of a sports complex will include determining most advantageous locations. The regulatory agencies will need to collaborate in this area.

Economic Development

The sourcing and recruitment of potential private partners in the development of a sports complex will be important pre and post feasibility.

Organizational Structure

The tourism organization will hire a direct sales person to support the sales effort. In addition, the concept of the formation of a sports commission will be examined. A sports advisory group should be formed to ensure that local experts are engaged. This sports advisory group could evolve into a Sports Commission which would be part of the tourism organization.
Support for Implementation

Target Markets

The primary market for the sales efforts and long-term development is youth and amateur sports. Also included in the sports area is attracting annual sporting events that generate out of town visitors.

Youth sports was detailed in the Situational Analysis further for the current offerings in the County. Based on that analysis the target markets would potentially include:

- Soccer
- Lacrosse
- Swimming
- Hockey
- Running
- Basketball
- Baseball

Sporting events target markets could potentially include:

- Cycling
- Recreational running races (half or full marathons)
- Sailing

Projects and Programs

Work with the Sports Division of St. Mary’s College of Maryland to in-fill openings in their sports facilities with youth tournament play. Develop a short-term plan on which tournament sports will have the highest likelihood of using current facilities. The development of a direct sales approach from the tourism organization will support the goal is securing more sporting events in the short-term as described in the following Work Plan.
Capital Projects

The highest profile capital project is the potential to develop a sports complex to support bringing tournaments and events to St. Mary’s County. This project is currently included in the Capital Improvement Plan in FY2019 which will include the conducting a feasibility study and determining potential locations that have the needed foot print and proximity to amenities that are important to traveling families. This is a market that will welcome the current selection of limited service hotels in St. Mary’s County.

Funding Sources

The development of a Tourism Improvement District may support these initiatives in the long-term. See Funding section of the THMP for further detail on a potential district.

Work Plan

Work Plan – Short-Term – within 12 Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retain a dedicated sales person to lead the effort.</td>
<td>Develop the job description and hire the tourism organization sales person</td>
<td>The advisory group will be engaged in finalizing the approach to the new sales position including incentives and performance management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finalize the inventory of current facilities.</td>
<td>Finalize the available inventory and capacities of current facilities.</td>
<td>A full inventory will be developed for all of the potential indoor and outdoor facilities. A marketing piece will be created to give to potential sports planners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a target list of sporting events that will fit in the current facilities</td>
<td>Conduct a market survey to identify the events that have the highest propensity to come to St. Mary’s County.</td>
<td>The tourism sales person will research potential groups and conduct a survey. This effort will establish the most important sports markets to pursue.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Work Plan – Long-Term – within 24-36 Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate the potential of forming a “sports commission” as a function of the tourism organization.</td>
<td>In conjunction with the sports advisory group, determine the benefit of forming a Sports Commission.</td>
<td>The sports commission would be a function of the tourism organization and function as the advisory group in bringing new sporting events to St. Mary’s County. The commission would include sports experts and hotels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine the viability of conducting a feasibility study for a sports complex (approved in FY19 CIP).</td>
<td>Support the County and Recreation and Parks Department in executing the approved feasibility for FY19.</td>
<td>Engage a third party to help in developing the RFP. Engage the sports advisory group in this process to provide input. Engage private sports complex operators for discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure the first set of sporting groups in current facilities</td>
<td>Reporting in place for sales results</td>
<td>Develop a reporting plan for the sales efforts showing sales activity and sporting events that have been secured.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage private sports complex owners and operators.</td>
<td>Engage the sports complex industry in the process.</td>
<td>Source the top Sports Complex operators to gain insight and gauge interest in participation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Work Plan – Long-Term – within 36+ Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conduct an RFQ process to select most qualified private developer/operator</td>
<td>Develop and RFQ that outlines the goals of the sports complex</td>
<td>Engage the community to gain insight on the respective interests in a sports complex. Determine how to balance resident and visitor needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine the most advantageous approach to funding the sports complex</td>
<td>Based on a favorable feasibility study, determine the most effective development process</td>
<td>Develop approach to attract private developers/operators and begin development process.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY MASTER PLAN CONCLUSION

The overarching conclusion after an extensive process that engaged a cross section of industry stakeholders, community leaders, key experts and public and private sector leaders is that St. Mary’s County has a great future as a tourism destination. There are current demand generators that will continue to attract visitors such as the Naval Base and there is a plethora of opportunities that have great potential if supported with ongoing investment and engagement.

The THMP focuses on the most effective approaches to support the development and growth of the key attributes of St. Mary’s County. These attributes range from outdoor activities to groups coming to St. Mary’s County to convene or participate in a meeting or event. This plan is designed to create road maps for how to develop and engage in each of the areas deemed as a priority for attracting visitors. This includes building an organization that is designed to play an engaged role in economic development, funding, experience development, Workforce Training, stakeholder participation as well as sales and marketing.

This plan is not a typical tourism master plan that would be primarily be focused on sales and marketing. There are some viable opportunities to develop a direct sales effort that should pay dividends by finding new groups and events that will come to St. Mary’s and utilize existing facilities. However, the primary focus of this plan is to take the opportunities that have been identified as priorities and develop them to a point that they become attractive to a visitor who is planning to stay overnight in St. Mary’s County while partaking of these newly enhanced experiences.

Effective coordination and collaboration within the County will be a fundamental element of success. JLL has had the opportunity to interface with many County departments and are encouraged with the level of interest in engaging in the planning process. This level of cooperation will be very important in moving the areas cited in the work plans forward. The key departments include Parks and Recreation, Land Use and Growth Management, Economic Development and Agriculture and Seafood. In many cases the foundational aspects of impacting a focus area require engagement from multiple county departments.

The role of the tourism organization, currently configured as a two-person division within the County’s Department of Economic Development, must serve as a leader in moving the multiple facets of the THMP forward. JLL has recommended an approach to realign the focus of the Tourism Division and increase its capacity over time. It is not realistic to assume that the current staff are experts in all of the areas needed to support the plan, which underscores the importance of encouraging the on-going engagement of the broad spectrum of experts and resources that have contributed to the THMP.

The role of the broader community has been pivotal in the development of the recommendations and overall direction of the THMP. The Master Planning Committee is made up of many experts who both participated as a committee member and also dedicated additional individual time in lending their knowledge base and guidance to this effort. This dynamic must continue for many reasons. First, many of the participants are experts in particular activities or underlying principles. This expertise in invaluable in determining the most effective course of action and how to create experiences that will appeal to specific audiences. Second, this level of engagement by this cross section of leaders will keep tourism at the forefront when decisions are made and resources are allocated. The recommendation of the institution of a Tourism Commission was an outgrowth of JLL’s experience with the
community. If this commission is built around having a broad base of expertise in the members, it will provide a great resource to support on-going success.

As stated in the beginning of the THMP, St. Mary’s County is positioned well to develop a vibrant tourism economy and accomplish the goal of diversification. This isn’t going to be accomplished by adding some more resources to run more advertising. It will be accomplished by the development of an effective approach to stimulate specific investment, actively engage in supporting experience development, develop new opportunities for current tourism related businesses and having the ongoing organization infrastructure needed to support a destination with nearly boundless potential.

JLL would like to thank all of the participants who have contributed greatly to this plan. In particular, St. Mary’s County Tourism Manager Carolyn Laray and Tourism Coordinator Andrew Ponti who have worked tirelessly to contribute and support the planning process. Additional thanks are extended to the Master Plan Executive Team and the Master Plan Committee.
APPENDIX

COUNTY MAP OF PROJECTS

Map in landscape on next page.
North County
1. Charlotte Hall Welcome Center Enhancement
2. North County Farm Market New Construction
3. Budds Creek Racing Center Development
4. Wicomico Shores Re-visioning

Seventh District
5. St. Clement’s Island Museum Master Plan Completion

Leonardtown Area
6. Old Jail Museum Re-visioning
7. Tudor Hall Restoration
8. Firemen Museum Construction
9. Tudor Hall Farm Conference or Arts Center Development
10. McIntosh Run Nature Trail Bridge Construction
11. Newtowne Neck State Park Master Plan Build-Out
12. Newtowne Neck Manor Restoration

Hollywood-California-Lexington Park
13. Three Notch Trail Completion
14. Lexington Manor Art Park and Trails Implementation
15. African American Interpretive Center Complex Enhancements
16. Patuxent River Naval Air Museum Build-Out

Lower Potomac
17. Piney Point Lighthouse Museum Master Plan Completion

South County
18. Shannon Farm Water Access Creation
19. Home Grown Farm Market Build-Out
20. Historic St. Mary’s City MD. Heritage Interpretive Center Construction
21. Historic St. Mary’s City Chancellors Run Nature Site Construction
22. Historic St. Mary’s City Leonard Calvert House Construction
23. Historic St. Mary’s City Tall Ship Refurbishment or New Construction
24. St. Mary’s City/St. Inigoes Dining and Lodging Additions
25. St. Mary’s City/St. Inigoes Septic Capacity Expansion
26. Ridge Town Center Beautification
27. Scheibles Revitalization
28. Ridge Area Dining and Lodging Additions
29. Point Lookout State Park Civil War Museum Relocation
30. Point Lookout State Park Lighthouse and Boat Shed Restoration
31. Scotland Route 5 Widening

Locations To Be Determined
Sports Complex
Conference Center
Launch Sites throughout County Targeted Improvements
ST. MARY’S COUNTY TOURISM & HOSPITALITY MASTER PLAN PROJECT EXAMPLES

The following is a brief description of projects listed on the map on the previous page. Projects listed are those that are already in process or in the planning phase at local sites and attractions, as well as those identified during the course of this master planning process. Together, they convey a broad range of potential opportunities. Many of those described received mention in the Phase I Situational Analysis. In those instances, a reference and online link is provided.

1. Charlotte Hall Welcome Center Enhancement
   County-owned property. Refurbish upstairs to provide offices and meeting space for expanded tourism operations. Construct west terrace to function with lawn as an outdoor venue space. See Situational Analysis p. 137.

2. North County Farm Market New Construction
   County project under development. Relocate market and provide new facility with year round operations. Include interpretive offerings regarding local food traditions and lifeways, and consider expanding offerings to include Amish crafts. See Situational Analysis p. 28, p. 84.

3. Budds Creek Racing Center Development
   Proposed public-private partnership. Facility leveraging the race venues and displaying cars, bikes and race paraphernalia from all three, so as to provide a year round attraction of general family appeal. See Situational Analysis p. 43.

4. Wicomico Shores Re-visioning
   Suggested future alternative use for County owned property. Leverage water location and launch site and link to the Potomac Segment Plan of access points along the river. Transform into a nature park with trails and environmental programs. Utilize facility for corporate retreats. See Situational Analysis p. 47.

5. St. Clement's Island Museum Master Plan Completion
   County owned and operated. Complete last phases of master plan to include additional exhibit space and expanded interpretation. See Situational Analysis p. 74.

6. Old Jail Museum Re-visioning
   County-owned building maintained and operated by the St. Mary’s County Historical Society. One of only two open historic sites in Leonardtown. Strengthen Town-County Historical Society Partnership leading to upgraded facilities and enhanced programs. See Situational Analysis p. 98.

7. Tudor Hall Restoration
   Owned by the St. Mary’s County Historical Society. One of only two open historic sites in Leonardtown. Address structural issues that jeopardize the integrity of the building so that it may continue to serve the visiting public. See Situational Analysis p. 98.
8. Firemen’s Museum Construction
Leonardtown Volunteer Fire Department/Town project. Complete construction of the museum and adjacent green space on 1.65 acres in the downtown. This project will be partially funded, built by, staffed and maintained by the Leonardtown Volunteer Fire Department. See Situational Analysis p. 97.

9. Wharf Park Build-out
Town of Leonardtown project. Complete build-out to include a restaurant with banquet space and a pier for transient docking. Pier could serve as departure point for excursions offered by a private operator to sites along the Potomac River. See Situational Analysis p. 96, p. 54.

10. Tudor Hall Farm Conference or Arts Center Development
The Town of Leonardtown shares this 400-acre parcel along Breton Bay with an outside developer. As part of the project to develop it, the town envisions a major visitor amenity such as a performing arts center or a resort hotel with conference center. See Situational Analysis p. 80, p. 89.

11. McIntosh Run Nature Trail Bridge Construction
Town of Leonardtown project. The Town plans to construct a bridge across McIntosh Run to link the Port of Leonardtown Park to the Tudor Hall Farm property which has wooded paths that could be developed into trails. See Situational Analysis p. 96.

12. Newtowne Neck State Park Master Plan Build-out
State project. The Newtowne Neck State Park's master plan calls for a series of amenities and facilities to include parking for vehicles and horse trailers, paddle launches, an overnight paddle-in campsite, and a pier for transient boat tie-ups. See Situational Analysis p. 98.

13. Newtowne Neck Manor Restoration
Church-owned. The St. Francis Xavier Church is a Religious Freedom National Scenic Byway site. The Manor House adjacent to the church is in need of preservation. Use of the structure once restored, remains to be determined by the Parish.

14. Three Notch Trail Completion
County project. The trail is to eventually connect o Pegg Road in Lexington Park and will then provide approximately 28 miles of continuous trail from the southern portion of Charles County. See Situational Analysis p. 62.

15. Lexington Manor Art Park and Trails Development
County owned. Community Development Corporation project to establish an art-themed park in the old “Flat Tops” neighborhood. The abandoned roads could serve as a “link” between the end point of the Three Notch Trail at Pegg Road and on-road cycling through the southern portion of the County further down Route 235, thus achieving an almost continuous cycling route traversing the county from north to south. See Situational Analysis p. 62.

16. African American Interpretive Center Complex Enhancements
County owned. A path of interpretive makers connects the US Colored Troops Memorial to the Interpretive Center operated by the Unified Committee for African American Contributions. Add a small outdoor in-ground amphitheater for intimate story-telling and music events to enhance programming. See Situational Analysis p. 83.

17. Patuxent River Naval Air Museum Build-Out
County owned. Operated under agreement with The Patuxent River Naval Air Museum Association. The Association proposes location changes in access and parking, and construction of a shelter for the outdoor aircraft. Actions would be accomplished via agreements with the US Navy. See Situational Analysis p. 73.

18. Piney Point Lighthouse Museum Master Plan Completion
County owned and operated. Complete master plan to include additional exhibit space upstairs in the main building. See Situational Analysis p. 74.

19. Historic St. Mary’s City Maryland Heritage Interpretive Center Construction
State project. Create a gateway to orient visitors to the historic site and to serve as a research and education center. The new center will be located along Route 5. Construction is scheduled for FY 20-21. This will replace the current visitor center on Rosecroft Road.

20. Historic St. Mary’s City Chancellors Run Nature Site Construction
State project. The project now underway includes repaving of road, adding parking, a boardwalk to the beach, interpretive signage, a toilet and a picnic area. There are plans to add a building to serve as a nature center eventually. See Situational Analysis p. 92.

21. Historic St. Mary’s City Leonard Calvert House Construction
State project. Construct the Governor Leonard Calvert House exhibit to complete the architectural backdrop of the museum’s Town Center interpretive site. Construction is expected to be completed in FY2020.

22. Historic St. Mary’s City Tall Ship Refurbishment or New Construction
Restore the Maryland Dove and/or commission a new tall ship. The Dove is the main visitor attraction at HSMC.

23. St. Mary’s City/St. Inigoes Dining and Lodging Development-Septic Expansion
Cross-departmental and public-private effort. Developing dining and lodging to serve visitors to South County depends on finding ways to expand septic capacity. Use of a yet to be identified existing structure on the grounds of St. Mary’s College may offer a lodging possibility. Expanded capacity could benefit the existing St. Inigoes General Store which could add sit-down service. See Situational Analysis p. 105.

24. Shannon Farm Water Access Development
County owned. Purchased by the County in 2014, the 212-acre site is scheduled for passive recreational and shoreline activities thus providing an additional access point along the Chesapeake Bay shoreline. See Situational Analysis p.78, p.92.

25. Home Grown Farm Market Buildout
County-owned facility operated by an LLC. Expansion of the market is planned and eventually may include an additional building, kitchen and other amenities. The market serves as the “gateway” to South County.

26. Ridge Town Center Beautification
Suggested County/community effort. Beautification project for this designated Village Center to provide an enhanced “sense of place, thus making this small section along Route 5 that has septic capacity more attractive to potential businesses and visitors. See Situational Analysis p. 105.

27. Scheibles Reinvestment
Re-establish the Scheibles fishing center complex in whole or in part as an anchor for South County Tourism. The original center included pier, restaurant and a small “lodge” of eight rooms. All structures are extant but in vary in condition. See Situational Analysis p. 57, p.105.

28. Ridge Area Dining and Lodging Development-Septic Expansion
Cross-departmental and public-private effort. Develop additional dining and lodging to serve visitors to South County depends on finding ways to expand septic capacity. See Situational Analysis p. 105.

29. Point Lookout State Park Civil War Museum Relocation
State project. Currently park authorities are contemplating moving the museum to a different location in the part (park store) to make it more accessible. A longer term solution might be relocating the facility outside the Park for even greater accessibility. This might be accomplished as a state-county venture. See Situational Analysis p. 82, p. 92.

30. Point Lookout State Park Lighthouse and Boat Shed Restoration
State project. Restoration of the lighthouse and adjacent boat sheds is now underway. The project will enhance interpretation and visitor opportunities. See Situational Analysis p. 84.

31. Scotland Route 5 Widening
State Highways project. The project to widen Route 5 from Camp Brown Road to the park entrance has been defunded at this time. DNR had contemplated adding a separate access point into the park for use by cyclists in tandem with the road widening. This was an important component of the tourism strategy for South County and hopefully the plan will be reactivated at a future date.

32. Sports Complex
County project. Project is in the current capital budget but location and type of facility is yet to be determined. See Situational Analysis p.41.

33. Conference Center
Develop a conference center as part of a long range strategy to become a destination for small meetings. The town of Leonardtown may develop a conference center at some point on the Tudor Hall Farm property. See Item 10. See Situational Analysis p.88.
34. Launch Sites throughout County Targeted Improvements
County, municipal and state owned sites. Enhance launch sites to attract and better serve visitor needs. See Situational Analysis p.47, p.51.
South County Soil and Wetlands Map:
Limitations for sewage disposal