



MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release:
March 1, 2010

For more information contact:
Karen Everett
301-475-4200 ext. 1342

St. Mary's County Comprehensive Plan Draft

The Draft St. Mary's County Comprehensive Plan is posted on the county's website for review.

Citizens are encouraged to review the plan and submit comments by March 5 prior to the Board of County Commissioners Work Session on March 9. The Work Session will be part of the Board of County Commissioners meeting on March 9 which is an open meeting and televised live on County Government Cable Channel 95 and on the county's website at www.stmarysmd.com (click on 95 Live).

The Plan will remain posted on the county's home page (www.stmarysmd.com) until March 9. To request copies or to submit comments, call 301-475-4200, extension 1500, send email to bocc@co.saint-marys.md.us or write to Board of County Commissioners, Box 653, Leonardtown, MD 20650. To be considered at the March 9 work session, comments must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on March 5, 2010.

The County Commissioners anticipate adopting the Final Plan in March. The process of updating the Comprehensive Plan began in 2009 with three public hearings held by the Planning Commission and three public hearings held by the Board of County Commissioners. As part of the public hearing process, the Board of County Commissioners is continuing to receive comments. Feedback received prior to March 5 will be part of the work session on March 9.

The current Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2002. The updated Comprehensive Plan adds a water resources element and priority preservation areas element required by state law among other changes.

"We have heard many comments from our citizens on this important document and are now considering needed changes for the final approved document," said Francis Jack Russell, president, Board of County Commissioners. "It is subtitled, 'Quality of Life in St. Mary's County- A Strategy for the 21st Century. This comprehensive plan will serve as the blueprint for our county for the next six years and will lay out the vision, goals and priorities for our county."

Following the adoption of the plan, a number of steps may be taken over the next six years to implement it. The plan will guide preparation of the county's annual budget, especially as it pertains to roads, parks, schools, and other permanent facilities. It will help determine where new public water and sewerage service is to be located. A principal means of implementing the plan is through the zoning ordinance, which helps the county manage growth

and preserve rural character and other resources. The process to revise and adopt a new St. Mary's County Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance (CZO) will begin shortly after the plan is adopted; public hearings should begin in the spring. The current Ordinance was adopted in 2002. This ordinance is updated periodically, most recently in December 2009. The process to update the CZO will be a public process involving the Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners.

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