

1 Introduction

The City of St. Mary has completed this strategic Master Plan to plot the course for the City to fully realize its potential as a vibrant coastal community. The City is uniquely positioned as a historic, waterfront community that hosts the gateway to Cumberland Island, one of the last remaining largely-undeveloped and scenic barrier islands on the eastern seaboard.

This Master Plan highlights what is special about St. Marys, while simultaneously encouraging the kind of economic revitalization that will improve the quality of life for the City's residents and improve the City's capacity to enhance the tourism economy.

This Master Plan is supplemented by several addenda including a Data Assessment, which includes an analysis of Census and other demographic information, a Multi-Mobility Transportation Study, a Public Participation Program Report, and a Report on the Committee System.

Planning Scope

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) administers the rules and regulations for Comprehensive Planning in the State of Georgia. These rules provide local governments a framework for the development, management and implementation of local comprehensive plans. Effective local planning is essential to the State of Georgia's overall economic prosperity.



Pergola at St. Marys Howard Gilman Memorial Waterfront Park

The Official Code of Georgia Annotated (O.C.G.A) Section 50-8-1 established authority for the DCA to define minimum standards and procedures for developing comprehensive plans for local governments in the State of Georgia. These standards and procedures are designed to help the City prepare a plan that identifies immediate needs within the community and looks for opportunities to allow the City to achieve its vision for the future. An adopted Comprehensive Plan allows the City to maintain its "qualified local government status," which makes the City eligible for selected state funding and permitting programs.

In preparing this Master Plan, the City of St. Marys has addressed and exceeded the minimum planning elements required by DCA and will seek to include the Community Goals, Needs and Opportunities, and the Community Work Program in the Camden County Comprehensive Plan. In addition, a multi-mobility transportation study and a robust community engagement program were conducted as part of this overall effort, and are summarized in addenda to this Master Plan. Lastly, the City elected to begin an update of the Zoning Ordinance through this process,

with both the Master Plan and zoning ordinance update processes running parallel and informing each other.