



Strategic Vision

4 St. Marys Strategic Vision

This section of the Master Plan sets out the underlying theme for St. Marys' growth and development for the next ten years. Through these concepts, St. Marys builds on its history, its people and its distinguishing characteristics to create a philosophical commitment to a vigorous and dynamic future.

Vision Statement

One St. Marys. One Vision. One Future.

We are a vibrant, welcoming and friendly coastal community where our residents play an essential role in our success;

We cherish our environment, our heritage and our role as the Gateway to Cumberland Island National Park;

We proudly support our nation's security by maintaining a strong relationship with the military forces who are our neighbors;

We believe that all residents should have access to a safe neighborhood, job opportunities, quality education, and community services;

We envision a resilient community with a thriving and diverse economy, mobility, and recreational and cultural activities for all citizens;

We are One St. Marys.

Values

We value:

- Our people
- Our small-town ambiance
- Our peaceful and safe environment
- Our gateway to Cumberland Island

We respect:

- Our rivers, marshes, wildlife and coastal environment
- Our diversity and individual differences
- Our rich history

We strive for:

- Prosperity for all citizens
- Protection of our unique natural environment
- Inclusiveness
- Exceptional educational experiences

A mutually beneficial relationship with the Submarine Base
A balanced tax base to adequately finance city services

We envision a St. Marys where:

All lives are respected
All voices are heard
All families can thrive
All neighborhoods are vibrant and inviting
All individuals have adequate economic opportunities
All businesses have the opportunity to prosper

Mission Statement

The mission of the St. Marys city government is to implement the City's vision in a fair, open and responsive manner through services and programs that will benefit its residents and businesses.

Goals & Policies

The Master Plan Steering Committee has identified the following goals as the guiding framework for the City to realize the Vision set forth in this Master Plan. The policies listed below each goal are intended to provide direction to City officials, staff, and appointees as they make decisions and work towards achieving these goals.

Economic Prosperity

Support the development and expansion of businesses and industries that are suitable for the community, generate employment opportunities, and contribute to the vitality of the local, regional and national economy.

- ⇒ Use economic incentives to both attract new businesses and industry and to encourage the expansion of existing business and industry.
- ⇒ Encourage the redevelopment and enhancement of existing commercial and industrial areas within our community, including vacant or underutilized sites or buildings.
- ⇒ Support increases in residential density in downtown St. Marys and adjacent to the Osborne commercial corridor in order to create a neighborhood residential base to support local retail businesses.
- ⇒ Promote continued improvement in the efficiency and effectiveness of processes for permits and licenses.
- ⇒ Undertake the annexation of unincorporated land both inside the City as well as land to the east of the City to extend and complete the natural uninterrupted boundaries of the City.

Community Health

Promote public policies that enable all community residents, regardless of age, ability, or income, to have access to quality goods and services for a healthy and vital lifestyle.

- ⇒ Create new partnerships and work with existing resources to improve and build parks and trails, recreational facilities and related programs.
- ⇒ Encourage the creation of walkable, safe, and attractive neighborhoods throughout the community, where people have easy access to schools, parks, and necessary services (i.e. grocery store, drug store) without having to travel by car.
- ⇒ Consider the needs of all age groups and families when developing and/or promoting cultural and programs and recreational activities.

Sense of Place

Protect, enhance, and promote the City's signature qualities, including the marshes and waterfront, access to Cumberland Island, and the warm, hospitable and friendly nature of the people of St. Marys.

- ⇒ Encourage the revitalization of downtown and the waterfront as a vibrant gathering location for the community and its visitors that adds to the quality of life for all.
- ⇒ Encourage the aesthetic improvement of the City's commercial corridors.
- ⇒ Encourage redevelopment of the Midtown area as a vibrant commercial center.

Resource Management

Protect and promote the efficient and effective use of our community's natural, cultural and human resources.

- ⇒ Consider impacts on infrastructure, environmentally sensitive areas and valuable historic, archaeological or cultural resources when making decisions regarding improvements for existing buildings as well as for new economic development projects.
- ⇒ Encourage low impact development that preserves riparian buffers, the floodplain, natural topography, and existing vegetation of development sites.
- ⇒ Ensure that residents, businesses and developers undertake improvements or new projects that are physically and visually consistent with the City's commitment to protection from floods or other natural disasters.
- ⇒ Improve use of technology and technological upgrades for the provision of City services and the security of City records.
- ⇒ Improve City processes to achieve efficiency, simplification and a sense of customer service.

- ⇒ Support programs for the training and development of City staff in order to reduce the expense incurred through the use of external consultants.

Efficient Land Use

Maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the costly conversion of undeveloped land at the periphery of the community.

- ⇒ Extend infrastructure or provide City services to development outside of City limits only when a customer base would support such extension.
- ⇒ Annex all areas currently served or potentially served by City water and sewer, and ensure policies are in place that will promote return on investment for current and future facilities.
- ⇒ Protect existing infrastructure investments by encouraging infill redevelopment, and compact development patterns
- ⇒ New land uses should protect the environment, preserve historical and cultural resources, and conserve meaningful open space.
- ⇒ Assure that City-owned land and buildings are used for the optimal benefit of the community from both a service and financial aspect.

Local Preparedness

Identify and implement the necessary improvements and programs to achieve St. Marys' Vision, including infrastructure maintenance, regulations to appropriately manage growth, resiliency planning and leadership training for City Council and staff.

- ⇒ Plan and prepare for natural disasters and the recovery thereafter from hazards including hurricanes, tornados, storm surge, and sea level rise.
- ⇒ Make appropriate, proactive infrastructure investments to accommodate planned growth, and address the impact of storm surge and sea level rise.

Regional Cooperation

Foster an atmosphere of cooperation with neighboring jurisdictions as well as regional, State and federal agencies to address shared needs through adequate funding, legislation and technical assistance.

- ⇒ Seek opportunities to share services and facilities with neighboring jurisdictions when mutually beneficial.
- ⇒ Work jointly with neighboring jurisdictions to develop solutions for shared regional issues.
- ⇒ Pursue joint processes for collaborative planning and decision-making with neighboring jurisdictions.

- ⇒ Consult with the Navy and other public entities in our area when making decisions that are likely to impact them.
- ⇒ Provide input to other public entities in our area when they are making decision that are likely to have an impact on our community or our plans for future development.

Housing Opportunities

Promote a healthy range of safe, affordable, inclusive, and resource efficient housing that meets the needs of all residents of the City.

- ⇒ Encourage development of housing options that include affordable housing, assisted living and aging in place living.
- ⇒ Incentivize infill housing development in neighborhoods where appropriate.
- ⇒ Consider access to alternative modes of transportation when considering new residential development.
- ⇒ Accommodate a diverse population by encouraging a compatible mixture of housing types, densities and costs in new neighborhoods.
- ⇒ Encourage innovative yet visually consistent building options such as attached, semi-attached and detached buildings, as well as mixed-use buildings.

Transportation Options

Promote multi-modal transportation methodology; safe, reliable, and accessible sidewalks; and public vehicular and nautical transit options that can safely and efficiently accommodate the variety of vehicles and vessels in use by residents and visitors.

- ⇒ Improve and maintain a transportation system that will implement the "Complete Streets" policy and minimize detrimental environmental impacts.
- ⇒ Promote connectivity of the City's road network by fostering a grid network of streets and multiple connections between subdivisions and commercial developments.
- ⇒ Develop golf cart rules and regulations to ensure their safe use on City streets.
- ⇒ Support and invest in opportunities to provide alternative modes of transportation, including public transit, for the City's residents.
- ⇒ Ensure safe and secure dockage and facilities for intracoastal and water trail transportation in partnership with nautical related businesses and other governmental authorities.
- ⇒ Consider the impact on traffic flow for all new development or business, neighborhood expansions.