

Critical Area Commission

STAFF REPORT

July 6, 2022

APPLICANT:	St. Mary's College of Maryland
JURISDICTION:	St. Mary's County
PROPOSAL:	Maryland Heritage Interpretive Center
COMMISSION ACTION:	Vote
STAFF RECOMMENDATION:	Approval
STAFF:	Susan Makhoulouf
APPLICABLE LAW/ REGULATIONS:	COMAR 27.02.05 State Agency Actions Resulting in Development on State-Owned Lands

DISCUSSION

St. Mary's College of Maryland (SMCM) proposes to construct a new facility, the Maryland Heritage Interpretive Center building, on the SMCM campus. St. Mary's College of Maryland is located on the St. Mary's river and adjacent to Historic St. Mary's City in St. Mary's County. The facility will be located south of Anne Arundel Hall between Old State House Road and Point Lookout Road (MD 5). The MHIC will serve as a focal point for both SMCM and Historic St. Mary's City (HSMC) visitors and will include a visitor center, exhibit galleries, a multifunctional room for films and meetings, and an outdoor plaza and garden.

The site is currently occupied by pedestrian walkways, utilities, and lawn area; a parking lot, which has since been removed, also previously occupied the site. The proposed work involves site grading, constructing the MHIC building, and installing associated site improvements including walkways, utilities, and stormwater management (SWM) facilities. Construction is anticipated to start in Summer 2022 and extend through Summer 2024.

This project requires Commission approval because it does not qualify for approval under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between SMCM and the Critical Area Commission. Under the updated MOU, new buildings are limited to 2,000 square feet and the LOD for non-linear projects is limited to 5,000 sf. The project exceeds these qualifying parameters; therefore, review and approval by the full Critical Area Commission is required under COMAR 27.02.05.

Project Impacts and Mitigation

The project site is located on the SMCM campus at 47373 Old State House Road, St. Mary's City. The 1.81-acre site is located entirely within the Critical Area and is designated as Intensely Developed Area (IDA). Existing impervious is 0.39 acres, which includes the previously removed parking lot, and proposed impervious is 0.40 acres. No trees will be removed.

Buffer Impacts

The site is located entirely outside of the 100-foot Buffer; therefore, no Buffer impacts are proposed.

10% Phosphorus Reduction/Stormwater Management

The proposed project is required to meet the Critical Area Commission's 10% phosphorus reduction requirements. The 10% pollutant reduction requirement is 0.13 pounds of phosphorus per year (lb P/yr). The proposed SWM facilities, three (3) micro-bioretenion facilities, one (1) green roof, one (1) non-rooftop disconnection, and two (2) rooftop disconnections, will provide 0.81 lb P/yr which meets and exceeds the pollutant reduction requirement.

Tidal and Nontidal Wetlands

No impacts to tidal or nontidal wetlands are proposed as none exist within the project site.

Permits and Review by Other Agencies

Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE)

On April 7, 2022, MDE approved a modification of the approval dated March 27, 2012 (11-SF-0357) for the stormwater management (SWM) and erosion and sediment control (ESC) plans for the project.

Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR)

In a letter dated June 7, 2022, the Department's Wildlife and Heritage Service (WHS) indicated there are no official records for rare, threatened, or endangered species within the project area.

Maryland Historical Trust (MHT)

In an email dated May 4, 2022, MHT stated that the following, "MHT has had extensive coordination with the College and HSMC regarding this complex project. The College and HSMC have been completing the various mitigation measures outlined in the project's Memorandum of Agreement. While there are some outstanding issues that remain to be completed by HSMC with regards to the archeological data recovery, analysis, and reporting - we are confident these responsibilities will be accomplished prior to and in conjunction with construction of this last remaining element of the larger project. We have no objection to Critical Area Commission review and approval of the project."

Climate Resiliency

Per COMAR 27.02.05.03, State agencies who are proposing development activities on State-owned lands shall demonstrate that the agency has considered the likelihood of inundation by sea level rise over the course of the design life of the project, and to demonstrate that the development identifies and incorporates climate resilient practices in order to avoid or minimize environmental or structural damage associated with a coastal hazard, an extreme weather event, sea level rise, and other coastal impacts.

SMCM completed a climate impact and coastal resiliency analysis for this project. Based on this analysis, the entirety of the project site is located outside of vulnerable locations. The proposed building is not located within the 100-year or 500-year FEMA floodplains and there are no mapped wetland adaptation areas onsite. In addition, the project is located beyond the projected storm surge of Category 1 through 4 hurricanes and beyond the projected 10-foot sea level rise zone.

Public Notice

In accordance with COMAR 27.03.01.03, a sign was posted at the project site and notice of the project was published in *Southern Maryland News* on May 6, 2022. As of the writing of this staff report, no public comments have been received. Any comments received will be noted at the Commission meeting.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the project as proposed.

