

Calvert County
FY 2025
Program Open Space Annual Program

Adopted June 18, 2024

INTRODUCTION

The *Program Open Space Annual Program* must be submitted to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and the Maryland Department of Planning in order for local governments to be eligible for state funding for acquisition and development of recreation land. Upon review, the *Annual Program* becomes the basis for total allocations to each of the local governments. The State determines the amount of funding based upon a formula developed for the apportionment of the annual appropriations for Program Open Space. A municipality may submit its annual program through the county in which it is located. The *Annual Program* must be consistent with the county's *Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan*.

CALVERT COUNTY RECREATION PLANNING

OBJECTIVES

The Calvert County Comprehensive Plan, Calvert 2040, adopted in 2019 and amended in 2022, sets forth an overall goal and four broad objectives in the Parks and Recreation section. A few key actions in the 2019 plan are noted below as sub-bullets. These actions were in the prior Calvert County Comprehensive Plan as objectives. The objectives were updated and included in the 2019 plan as actions; there were no changes to them when the plan was amended in 2022.

- Increase the amount of land area dedicated to recreation and natural resources.
- Ensure that a wide selection of public recreational facilities and programs are provided to meet the interests and needs of all ages, incomes, and abilities.
 - Enhance the network of recreational sites and facilities, including hiker/biker and horseback riding trails, based on the unique natural, cultural, and historical features of the county.
 - Continue to improve and expand opportunities for public access to the Chesapeake Bay and the Patuxent River.
 - Provide safe access to parks and recreational facilities including, where feasible, pedestrian and bicycle access.
- Increase the variety of uses of community facilities.
- Expand community involvement in recreational programming.

Calvert County's most recent *Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* was adopted in November 2022. The purpose of the plan is to maintain the county's eligibility to participate in Maryland's Program Open Space and to guide the county's management and enhancement of its public parks, open spaces, and preserved land for the next five years.

The Recreation, Parks, and Open Spaces chapter of the plan sets forth four goals and 19 recommendations.

2022 GOALS FOR RECREATION, PARKS, AND OPEN SPACE

GOAL 1: Improve and enhance existing Calvert County Parks & Recreation facilities and amenities.

GOAL 2: Continue to improve programming and natural resource opportunities within all parks and recreation areas.

GOAL 3: Continue to look for opportunities to develop new facilities and amenities.

GOAL 4: Continue to improve and strategize organizational efficiencies.

The *Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* is available online <http://www.calvertcountymd.gov/LPPRP>.

ANNUAL PROGRAM PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS

Projects listed in the Annual Program are either taken directly from the *Calvert County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan* or identified as potential acquisition or development projects by the Board of County Commissioners. They have not necessarily obtained final approval from the Board. Projects specifically requested by municipalities are also listed.

For projects other than those already listed in the *Calvert County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan* or requested by a municipality, the selection process begins when any individual or organization proposes a project for consideration. The proposal is forwarded to an in-house Open Space Committee composed of the Capital Projects Analyst and representatives from the Department of Parks & Recreation, the Department of General Services, the Department of Economic Development, and the Department of Planning & Zoning. The Open Space Committee makes preliminary findings of fact and determines whether the project is consistent with criteria listed in the *Calvert County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan*. The committee presents its findings to the Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners for action.

Listing a project in the Annual Program is a first step toward implementing a project and is a requirement for using Program Open Space funding. Title 3, §3-205 of the Land Use Article of the Maryland Annotated Code specifies that certain types of projects may not be constructed or authorized in the local jurisdiction until approved by the planning commission as consistent with the plan (comprehensive plan) or geographic sections of the local jurisdiction. Types of public projects that must be reviewed include squares, parks, and open spaces. Each year, the Calvert County Planning Commission reviews such projects in the six-year Calvert County Capital Improvement Plan for consistency with the *Calvert County Comprehensive Plan*.

PROPOSED BUDGETED COUNTY PROJECTS FOR ACQUISITION

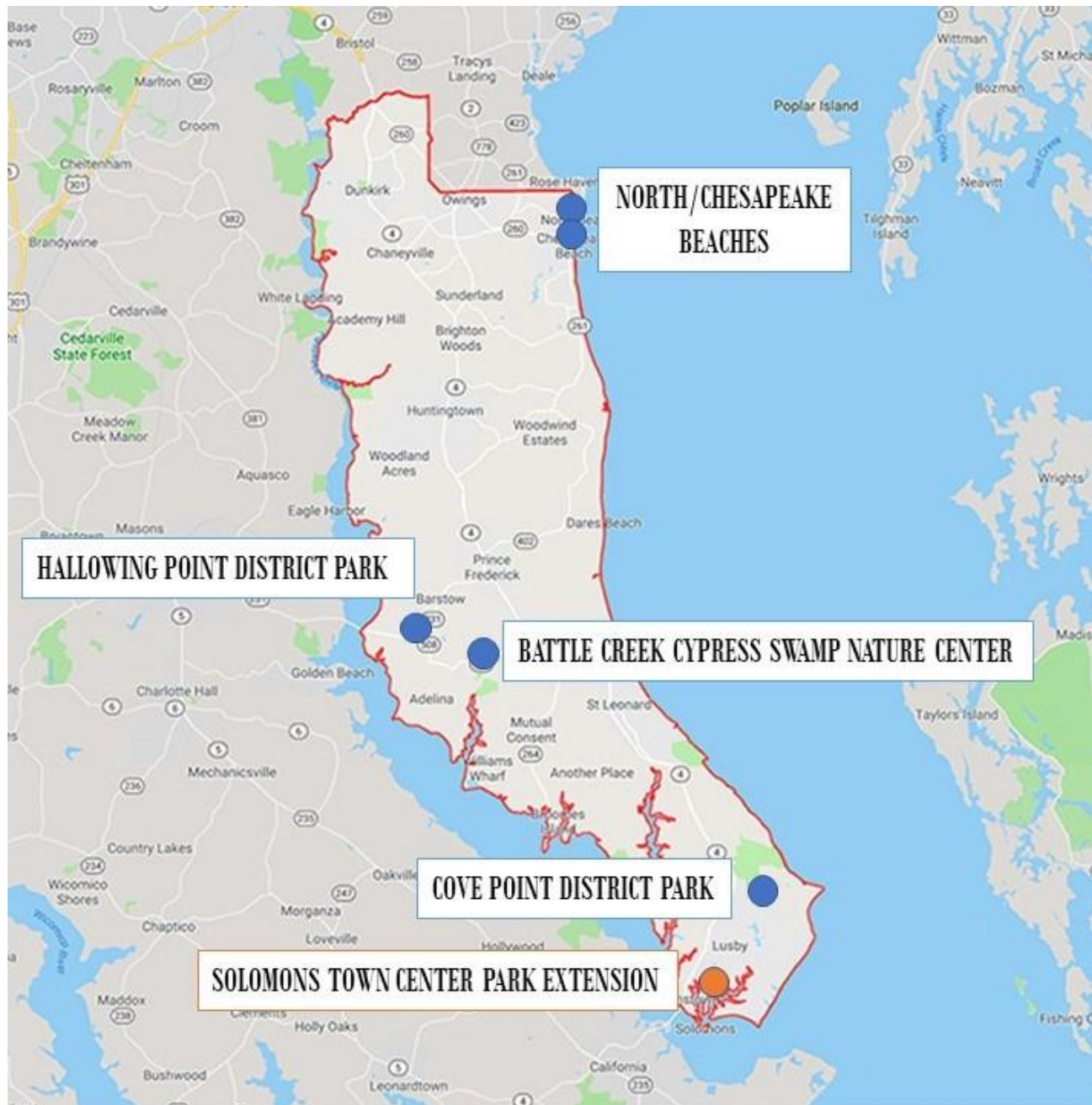
SPONSOR	PROJECT NAME PROJECT DESCRIPTION	ACREAGE			SOURCE OF FUNDS FOR ANNUAL PROGRAM ONLY (\$)				
		EXISTING	ULTIMATE	PROJECT	TOTAL	LOCAL	LOCAL SHARE POS	STATE SHARE POS	FEDERAL/ OTHER
CALVERT	A-24 CALVERT COUNTY LAND PRESERVATION, PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN	N/A	N/A	N/A	125,000	NA	125,000*		
CALVERT	A-31 SOLOMON TOWN CENTER PARK EXTENSION	21.2	26.6	5.4	580,000	0	580,000		

*Calvert County requests \$25,000 annually over a 5-year span for LPPRP planning expenses. Our next LPPRP update will be 2027.

APPROVED BUDGETED COUNTY PROJECTS FOR DEVELOPMENT

SPONSOR	NAME OF RECREATION AREA TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT	ACREAGE	SOURCE OF FUNDS (FOR ANNUAL PROGRAM ONLY) \$				
		PROJECT	TOTAL	LOCAL	LOCAL SHARE POS	STATE SHARE POS	FEDERAL /OTHER
CALVERT	D-2 HALLOWING POINT DISTRICT PARK – PAVED PATHWAYS AND LIGHTS	102	400,000		300,000		100,000
CALVERT	* D-4 COVE POINT DISTRICT PARK- PARK IMPROVEMENTS (PLAYGROUND)	267	1,100,000		300,000		800,000
CALVERT	D-16 BATTLE CREEK CYPRESS SWAMP NATURE CENTER-BUILDING AND EXHIBITS	100	750,000	200,500	75,000		500,000 (estimate from fire insurance)
CALVERT	D-22 & D-27 KINGS LANDING PARK BOARDWALKS AND TRAILS	260	56,250	15,000	41,250		

*Project D-4 is not included in the FY25 CIP but could be pulled forward in the early FY25 depending on fiscal stability.



FY 2025 ACQUISITION PROJECTS

A-24 Calvert County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan

The State of Maryland requires local governing bodies to prepare a local Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan (LPPRP) under the Maryland Natural Resources Code, Title 5 Forest and Parks. The State is requiring the LPPRP to be more detailed and statistically based. The LPPRP is to include a survey on the use of county parks and recreation facilities and programs and a level of service analysis that must include a *Proximity Analysis* and a *Park Equity Analysis*. The most recent LPPRP was completed in 2018. The next plan will be due in 2021 and is in the process of being completed. The next allocations will be encumbered for the LPPRP due in 2026 annually for the maximum amount of \$25,000 each year.

A-31 Solomons Town Center Park Extension

The acquisition of the Dowell Road property would expand the current Solomons Town Center Park to include natural green space for unimproved paths and passive recreation in a park that does not currently offer that environment. It would also preserve forest canopy, protecting forested habitats from commercial development in the future.

FY 2025 DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

D-2 Hallowing Point District Park

Hallowing Point Park is one of three district parks in the county. The county is in the process of updating the Hallowing Point Park master plan to continue developing and improving the park. In FY23, the restroom/snack stand complex was renovated to become a larger and more modern restroom complex. There are plans to add food truck locations in place of the snack stands. In FY24, new energy efficient LED lighting was installed around the tennis courts and Athletic Field 4, and the back parking lot and roadways were paved to accommodate a second entrance. In addition, a new dedicated pickleball facility is under construction and slated for completion in the fall of 2024. For FY25, the Hallowing Point Park pathways project may include a new asphalt path that encircles the park and connects current amenities, along with pathway lighting, signage, and needed crosswalks.

D-4 Cove Point District Park

Cove Point District Park is one of three district parks in the county. Funding will be needed to implement the new master plan for the build-out of the park, adopted in late FY 2020. Cove Point Pool had the decking replaced in phases and this project was completed in FY23. Future planning includes tennis and basketball court repaving along with a full playground replacement. The Cove Point playground upgrades in consideration for FY25 may include a new tot lot for kids under 5, a large play structure for kids 5-12, swing sets, and one or more spinners, along with all new surfacing, benches, upgrades to the surrounding walking paths, and water fountains.

D-16 Battle Creek Cypress Swamp Nature Center

The Battle Creek Cypress Swamp Nature Center serves as the headquarters for the Natural Resources Division, as well as a Visitor Center for the Sanctuary. In 2022, an electrical fire caused significant damage resulting in the gutting of the majority of the interior walls, electrical wiring, plumbing and HVAC systems. Expenses are currently being funded through LGIT, the county's Insurance Program. Renovations are expected to take at a minimum 12 months. Other improvements include construction and renovations of the existing picnic pavilion, adding an outdoor classroom pavilion, and new animal display exhibits would provide significant improvements. New exhibits will entice and educate visitors as well as serve the many school groups that come to the facility. Plans for FY24/25 development include reinstall, renovation and upgrades of interior exhibits and ambassador animal facilities and exhibits. Exterior signage and trail improvements, including repairs to the boardwalk and development of an ADA compliant trail, will better serve the diverse audiences visiting the swamp. Stormwater repairs are also needed in the parking lot of this facility, currently included in ARPA funding.

D-22 Shared Used, Natural Surface Trails County-wide

- There is a need for shared use, natural surface trails to accommodate trail running, off-road bicycling, horseback riding, and/or hiking. Trail plans could be developed at existing facilities, such as Kings Landing Park, Flag Ponds Nature Park, Dominion Energy Regional Park and Ward Farm Recreation and Nature Park, as well as new locations for a trail connecting Prince Frederick to the Patuxent River. Plans for FY25 include development of a comprehensive plan for the current trail system at Kings Landing Park, and repairs and relocations to some worn sections of existing trails and boardwalks.

D-27 Water Access-Boating, Fishing and Crabbing

There is a need for adding, expanding and improving water access throughout the county. This project will pursue improvements for water access, including kayak/canoe launching, fishing and crabbing through repairs and renovation of existing facilities and installation and construction of new structures to increase opportunities for water-based activities and access to the Chesapeake Bay, Patuxent River and its tributaries. Potential projects targeted for FY25 include the installation of an ADA accessible kayak launch facility at the existing Kings Landing pier. Other improvements to this site could include improved access to onshore amenities.

FY 2025 Program Open Space Annual Program Projects: Consistency with Comprehensive Plan Adopted June 18,2024

Recreation Objectives, Calvert County Comprehensive Plan (adopted 2019, Amended 2022):

1. Increase the amount of land area dedicated to recreation and natural resources.
2. Ensure that a wide selection of public recreational facilities and programs are provided to meet the interests and needs of all ages, incomes, and abilities.
3. Increase the variety of uses of community facilities.
4. Expand community involvement in recreational programming.

Municipal projects are noted with an asterisk (*). **Highlight** indicates new project for the FY 2025 Annual Program.

Project Number and Name	County Objective(s)	Notes	Consistent with 2022 Calvert County Comprehensive Plan
A-24 Calvert County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan	1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12	Development of the plan will assist with multiple objectives	Consistent
A-31 Solomons Town Center Park Extension	1,3	Acquisition will expand and improve an existing park	Consistent
D-2 Hallowing District Point Park	1, 3	Development will expand and improve an existing park	Consistent
D-4 Cove District Point Park	1, 2, 3, 4	Development will expand and improve an existing park	Consistent
D-16 Battle Creek Cypress Swamp Nature Center	2, 3, 4	Renovation will enhance visitor experience and provide space for staff and volunteers	Consistent
D-22 Shared Use Natural Surface Trails	2, 3	Renovation will improve the existing park amenities	Consistent
D-27 Water Access for Boating	2, 3, 4	Renovation will improve the existing park amenities, allow ADA access	Consistent

Calvert County
FY 2025 Program Open Space
Annual Program
Project Descriptions

Adopted June 18, 2024

A-24 Calvert County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan

The State of Maryland requires local governing bodies to prepare a local land preservation and recreation plan (LPPRP) under the Maryland Natural Resources Code, Title 5 Forest and Parks. The plan addresses parks and recreation, natural resource land conservation, and agricultural land preservation. The plan may include additional topics such as an economic analysis and discussion of cultural resource preservation, historic preservation, tourism, education, and environmental literacy, etc. The State is requiring the next plan to be more detailed and statistically based than previous plans. The plan is to include a survey on the use of county parks and recreation facilities and programs and a level of service analysis that must include a proximity analysis and a park equity analysis.

The preparation of the Plan will help promote the State's Planning Visions:

- #1 Quality of life and sustainability
- #2 Public participation
- #4 Community design
- #5 Infrastructure
- #8 Economic development
- #9 Environmental protection
- #10 Resource Conservation
- #11 Stewardship
- #12 Implementation



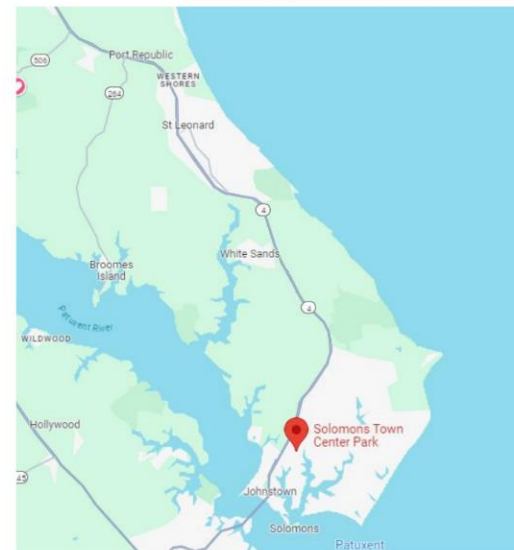
(Refer to the last page for a list of the State of Maryland's Planning Visions.)

A-31 Solomons Town Center Park Extension

The acquisition of the Dowell Road property would expand the current Solomons Town Center Park, adding 5.4 acres to include natural green space for unimproved paths and passive recreation in a park that does not currently offer that environment. It would also preserve forest canopy, protecting forested habitats from commercial development in the future. This is consistent with the 2022 LPPRP in the following areas:

Goal 1: Improve and enhance existing CCPR facilities, specifically 1.1A pertaining to increasing access to walking, running, hiking and nature opportunities. This is a priority for the Department of Parks and Recreation.

Goal 2 B&C – Make open spaces a key consideration when procuring new properties and balance passive and active recreation opportunities.



D-2 Hallowing Point District Park

Hallowing Point Park is located on MD 231 approximately six miles west of Prince Frederick. It is one of three district parks in the county and currently provides 18 playing fields, four tennis/pickleball courts, a basketball court, playground, picnic pavilion, and comfort stations. The purchase of the property and initial development more than 20 years ago were Program Open Space projects. Calvert County is in the process of updating the Hallowing Point Park master plan to continue developing and improving the park. Recent projects include upgrades to sports fields, tennis courts and the food concessions area, and new dedicated pickleball facility is under construction and slated for completion in the fall of 2024. For FY25, the Hallowing Point Park pathways project may include a new asphalt path that encircles the park and connects current amenities, along with pathway lighting, signage, or needed crosswalks.

These improvements are consistent with Calvert County's goal of expanding and improving existing sites. By developing this site efficiently, Calvert County is meeting Planning Vision #3, which calls for growth to be concentrated in existing population and business centers.



D-4 Cove Point District Park

- Cove Point Park is in the 1st election district and contains approximately 80 acres. Facilities include a swimming pool complex, playing fields, tennis courts, basketball courts, a picnic shelter, and a playground. Funding will be needed to implement the new master plan for the build-out of the park, adopted in late FY 2020. Cove Point Pool had the decking replaced in phases and this project was completed in FY23. Future planned development projects include tennis court improvements and basketball court paving and upgrades along with a full playground replacement. The Cove Point playground upgrades in consideration for FY25 may include a new tot lot for kids under 5, a large play structure for kids 5-12, swing sets, or one or more spinners, along with all new surfacing, benches, upgrades to the surrounding walking paths, and water fountains.

These improvements are consistent with Calvert County's goal of expanding and improving existing sites. By developing this site efficiently, Calvert County is meeting Planning Vision #3, which calls for growth to be concentrated in existing population and business centers.



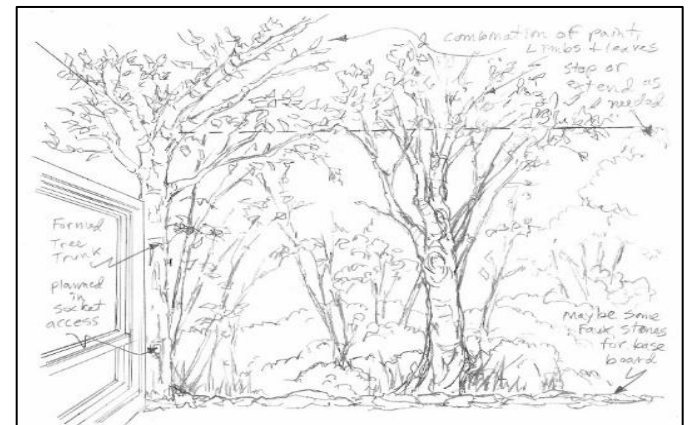
D-16 Battle Creek Cypress Swamp Nature Center

The Battle Creek Cypress Swamp Nature Center serves as the headquarters for the Natural Resources Division, as well as a Visitor Center for the Sanctuary.

In November of 2022 an electrical fire caused significant damage to the interior of the building. The majority of the electrical, data, HVAC and plumbing infrastructure will be replaced. The majority of the restoration will be covered through Calvert County's insurance program (LGIT), although any upgrades and improvement will require outside funding. Plans for FY24/25 development include reinstall, renovation and upgrades of interior exhibits and ambassador animal facilities and exhibits.

The existing exhibits need to be evaluated annually for replacement and/or renovation to maintain and further the mission of the Natural Resources Division. Construction of new live animal exhibits are planned due to damage from the fire. Existing interior and exterior exhibits will be renovated while new exhibits will be developed, including design, fabrication, and installation. The renovated and new exhibits will entice and educate visitors. The new exhibits will focus on the ecology of this unique habitat and reinforce the field trip lessons that school groups, including every Calvert County Public School 1st grade class, experience when they visit the Nature Center. A new ADA-compliant trail to the swamp would provide accessible interpretation of the cypress swamp.

The project is consistent with the State's Planning Vision #1 regarding quality of life and stewardship.



D-22 Shared Used, Natural Surface Trails County-wide

There is a need for shared use, natural surface trails in Calvert County. These trails would allow for trail running, off-road bicycling, horseback riding, and/or hiking. Kings Landing Park and Biscoe Gray Heritage Farm have trails for hikers and horses. Chesapeake Bay Railway Trail is suitable for hikers and bicycling; otherwise, there are very few trails for bicycling off-road. Trail plans could be developed to accommodate bicycling at existing facilities. There is the potential to develop natural surface trails on public property.

Potential FY25 projects for shared use, natural surface trails include:

- Trails at Kings Landing Park: Plans for FY25 include development of a comprehensive plan for the current trail system at Kings Landing Park, and repairs and relocations to some worn sections of existing trails and boardwalks.

This project is consistent with State Planning Vision #12: Implementation: strategies, policies, programs, and funding for growth and development, resource conservation, infrastructure, and transportation are integrated across the local, regional, state, and interstate levels to achieve these visions.



D-27 Water Access-Boating, Fishing, and Crabbing

There is a need for adding, expanding, and improving water access throughout the county. This project will pursue improvements for water access, including kayak/canoe launching, fishing, and crabbing through repairs and renovation of existing facilities and installation and construction of new structures to increase opportunities for water-based activities.

Potential projects targeted for FY25 include the installation of an ADA accessible kayak launch facility at the existing Kings Landing pier. Other improvements to this site could include improved access to onshore amenities. Canoeing and kayaking are low-impact recreational uses, which help promote the State's Planning Vision #1 on quality of life and sustainability.



The Planning Visions

Adopted by the State of Maryland in the 2009 Smart, Green, and Growing Act (SB 273/HB 294)

1. Quality of life and sustainability: a high quality of life is achieved through universal stewardship of the land, water, and air resulting in sustainable communities and protection of the environment;
2. Public participation: citizens are active partners in the planning and implementation of community initiatives and are sensitive to their responsibilities in achieving community goals;
3. Growth areas: growth is concentrated in existing population and business centers, growth areas adjacent to these centers, or strategically selected new centers;
4. Community Design: compact, mixed-use, walkable design consistent with existing community character and located near available or planned transit options is encouraged to ensure efficient use of land and transportation resources and preservation and enhancement of natural systems, open spaces, recreational areas, and historical, cultural, and archeological resources;
5. Infrastructure: growth areas have the water resources and infrastructure to accommodate population and business expansion in an orderly, efficient, and environmentally sustainable manner;
6. Transportation: a well-maintained, multimodal transportation system facilitates the safe, convenient, affordable, and efficient movement of people, goods, and services within and between population and business centers;
7. Housing: a range of housing densities, types, and sizes provides residential options for citizens of all ages and incomes;
8. Economic development: economic development and natural resources-based businesses that promote employment opportunities for all income levels within the capacity of the state's natural resources, public services, and public facilities are encouraged;
9. Environmental protection: land and water resources, including the Chesapeake and Coastal Bays, are carefully managed to restore and maintain healthy air and water, natural systems, and living resources;
10. Resource conservation: waterways, forests, agricultural areas, open space, natural systems, and scenic areas are conserved;
11. Stewardship: government, business entities, and residents are responsible for the creation of sustainable communities by collaborating to balance efficient growth with resource protection; and
12. Implementation: strategies, policies, programs, and funding for growth and development, resource conservation, infrastructure, and transportation are integrated across the local, regional, state, and interstate levels to achieve these visions.