



City of St. Marys Master Plan Summary

The proposed new Master Plan for the City of St. Marys looks to redefine the city's character and future after losing its major industrial employer in 2002 and seeing its housing boom deflate in the great recession of 2008.

The essence of the Master Plan is stated in the Executive Summary which is an overview of the plan and sets forth the broad outline of the goals and opportunities to be met by the city over the next ten years.

The Master Plan has seven chapters exclusive of the Executive Summary. The table of contents identifies plans and exhibits that are included by reference, the inclusion of which would add hundreds of pages to the primary text of the Master Plan. The summary of each chapter is as follows:

1. Introduction

The introduction gives a brief description of St. Marys and identifies the parameters set by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs that the consultant and Steering Committee followed in preparing the Master Plan.

2. Setting the Stage

This chapter gives a brief history of St. Marys and provides demographic statistics about St. Marys including population, education, business, employment, housing costs, and similar statistics. Of interest is the observation that certain areas of St. Marys are underserved in that they don't have easy access to retail businesses that provide food and general merchandise. The whole city is underserved with respect to transportation services. The chapter also identifies existing planning documents between and among the county, Woodbine, Kingsland and the Navy to which the city is a party.

3. Community Engagement

This chapter describes the information gathering process that the Steering Committee followed to supplement the published demographic information as well as the outreach conducted to keep the public informed of the Steering Committee's progress. Over the eighteen months that the Steering Committee did its work, there were numerous public workshops designed to obtain citizen input into the final version of the Master Plan. In addition, the City created a special webpage for the Master Plan and all of the documents reviewed or created during the process were posted for public review. Over 600 people answered the online survey created for the Master Plan and the Steering Committee conducted in depth interviews with about eighty local business and community leaders.

4. St. Marys Strategic Vision

This chapter contains the City's strategic vision statement as well as the proposed mission statement to be considered by the City Council for adoption. It also identifies the values, goals and priorities that are designed to be the benchmarks against which the City's performance of the CWP will be measured.

5. Land Use

This chapter looks at how various areas of the city are currently used for residential, business and commercial purposes. It also looks at the best uses for the city's land areas over the next ten years and has created new character areas that define the various parts of the city. It then takes each character area and defines the issues that the city needs to face in each area and what development strategies would provide the best use of that area in the context of the Master Plan.

The City Council also charged the consultant and Steering Committee to develop a new zoning code for the city as a separate but concurrent plan. The chapter has a section devoted to the new revision to the zoning code that include a reduction in the number of zoning districts, provide for form based zoning in the downtown and historic area, moving some of the matters currently reserved to the Planning Commission to the Community Development Director to create greater economy and efficiency to the public, builders and developers. It also proposes changes to the application and hearing processes to reflect current best practices.

6. Needs and Opportunities

The Steering Committee took the following subject areas and identified the needs that have to be addressed and the opportunities for the City to address and resolve the issues it faces and will face over the next ten years.

Economic Development	Land Use
Housing	Natural Historic and Cultural Resources
City Facilities, Services and Funding	Resiliency
Military Relationship	Community Health
Technology	Education
Transportation	Master Plan Implementation

7. Community Work Plan

This chapter sets forth the specific projects to be accomplished over the next ten years by subject matter. Each project is given a priority, a time frame in which it is to be completed, a task leader and funding source.