

**St. Mary's County
Airport Advisory Board
2024 Annual Report**

01/31/2025



**George Hill, Chairman
Charles Stickney, Vice Chairman
Secretary-Vacant
Albert Babcock
Chris Fuller
Adam Osborne
Matt Dimarco
Robert Zaorski**

Appointed Ex-Officio Members:
Allison Swint, Deputy Director Transportation and Airport Manager
LCDR Sam Hughes, NAS Patuxent River

Assigned Technical Advisor and Staff Support:
Gary B. Whipple, P.E.

St Mary's County Regional Airport (2W6)



Aviation is in the DNA of St. Mary's County, and it is rooted even deeper in the history of this place where exploration and discovery form the foundation of Maryland itself. It is here that military and civil aviation launch dynamic collaborations. Today, the connection between Naval Aviation PAX River, our centralized and modern airport, and our strategic location in the state and nation position us to take flight in ways never before imagined.

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE AND GOALS OF THE BOARD

The Bylaws of the St. Mary's County Airport Advisory Board, adopted January 15th, 2019, govern the purpose, composition, and procedures of the Board. The purpose of the Board is to "advise the Commissioners of St. Mary's County concerning the development and management of the St. Mary's County Regional Airport." This broad purpose encompasses airport operations, planning, economic development, responsible growth, and identification of the needs and best interests of the citizens of St. Mary's County. Specific goals of the Board are:

- Ensure safe and secure facilities for general aviation
- Promote safe ground and flight operations
- Maintain a friendly environment for the aviation community and the general public
- Engage economic development potential and revenue
- Provide an observation area, and pilot lounge for the benefit of the airport community and general public
- Complete the extension of the runway to meet or exceed Federal Aviation Administration standards for the Airport Reference Code (B-II large, aircraft less than 12,500 pounds)
- Protect and enhance airspace and approaches
- Ensure that commercial, private and public development in and around the airport meets standards with respect to safety and noise
- Promote the sustainment and growth of general aviation through local activities that showcase the airport to the general public, introduce youth to potential aviation careers, and support Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) education
- Focus on identifying and resolving airport-related issues in a timely manner.

Mission Statement

"To satisfy aviation demand and promote airport development that both integrates with the community and serves the region's general aviation needs."

BOARD COMPOSITION

The Board currently consists of seven volunteer members appointed by the Commissioners of St. Mary's County, plus two Ex-Officio members, one from Patuxent River Naval Air Station and one from Naval Test Wing Atlantic. Board officers are elected by the Board each January or as required. The Board meets on the fourth Monday of each month in the conference room of the Captain Walter F. Duke Terminal Building in California, Maryland, unless otherwise indicated on the county website or a special meeting is necessary.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The St. Mary's County Airport Advisory Board (AAB) submits this 2024 annual report in accordance with Bylaws Article III. The report includes the following highlights:

- AECOM will be working to update the 2002 Airport Master Plan and associated Airport Layout Plan. The pavement study has been completed but is awaiting final approval by the FAA.
- The environmental impacts of the discovered garbage dump have caused both time and money issues in the completion of the runway extension. The extension is now anticipated to be completed in 2025 which will include the runway, taxiway, and Precision Approach Path Indicator (PAPI) certification.
- Renovations to the terminal included the addition of sound proofing panels which made it much more user friendly. The Bird Dog Bistro has been a welcome addition.
- AUVSI Student UAS Competition included US and International competitors. This is planned to be an annual event at 2W6.
- LCDR Sam Hughes, is the Air Traffic Control Facility Officer, and ex-officio Board member from NAS Patuxent River. This critical position has streamlined communications and improved safety and traffic deconfliction between the two airports. An example is the update of the Letter of Agreement (LOA) with NAS Patuxent River that was completed.
- Annual Budgeting – Capital Budget Improvements remain on track with the 2002 Master Plan. In FY2024, the airport operated at a net gain of \$58, 214 when comparing direct operational expenses and direct revenues. Consistently operating at a net gain means that the airport remains self-sufficient.
- Airport Activity and Capacity – FAA Based Aircraft Inventory was updated December 2024 showing a total of 233 aircraft are based at the airport. The airport is currently at aircraft storage hangar capacity with several aircraft owners on the waiting list for occupancy. Outdoor tie-downs remain available.

SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES DURING 2024

STUDENT UNMANNED AERIAL SYSTEMS COMPETITION

Coordinated through the Department of Economic Development, this competition saw a number of both US and international teams displaying technology development, mission planning, and educational teaming opportunities for participants.

The SUAS Competition, sponsored by the Association of Uncrewed Vehicle Systems International (AUVSI), was again held at 2W6. Teams from around the world competed.



This Competition fosters interest in Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS), stimulates interest in UAS technologies and careers, and engages students in a challenging UAS mission.

Students are required to design, integrate, report on, and demonstrate a UAS capable of autonomous flight and navigation, remote sensing via onboard payload sensors, and execute specific tasks.

AEROPARK AIRPORT INNOVATION DISTRICT

AeroPark combines business, industry, education, and research centered on the St. Mary's County Regional Airport. Per the Department of Economic Development, "This effort provides a unique opportunity to strengthen and expand the local economy, deliver education and employment opportunities, and create a world-class research and innovation hub."

The Department of Economic Development has contracted with the Maryland Economic Development Corporation to provide recommendations for hangar construction ideas that could be developed for the West End of the airport. This initiative could provide more hangar capacity and a worthwhile use of available land.

The Airport Advisory Board looks forward to future developments with AeroPark.

AIRPORT CONSTRUCTION

Environmental impacts of the discovered garbage dump have caused both time and money issues with the completion of the runway extension. The extension is now estimated to be completed in 2025 and will include the runway, taxiway, and Precision Approach Path Indicator (PAPI) certification.

AIRPORT DATA

SAFETY & SECURITY

The AAB made substantive additions to the airport info in the FAA Chart Supplement to improve safety, situational awareness, and traffic de-confliction with NAS Patuxent River. General aviation pilots using 2W6 were alerted that military traffic may overfly the airport without being on Common Traffic Advisory Frequency or ADS-B. A similar caution was added to the AWOS weather recording to improve safety of operations.

The FAA Safety Team (FAASTeam) mission is to "lower the Nation's aviation accident rate by conveying safety principles and practices through training, outreach, and education; while establishing partnerships and encouraging the continual growth of a positive safety culture within the aviation community." The FAASTeam Program Manager at the Washington Flight Standards District Office (FSDO) provides national policy and guidance for the southern Maryland region. Local FAASTeam Representatives are James Alexander, Jacque La Valle, and Bill Posnett. Of note, the FAASTeam hosted its annual pilot forum with NAS Patuxent River Air Traffic Control in

early spring to improve communication, increase traffic awareness/deconfliction, and enhance safety between 2W6 and Pax River air traffic. The event was well received.

The voluntary Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) Airport Watch Program continues to enhance safety, security, and a sense of ownership among airport tenants. The program features a centralized nationwide toll-free hotline (1-866-GA-SECURE) for reporting and responding to information provided by the airport community. In 2023, the Office of the Sheriff responded to several reported security-related matters at the airport, the most serious involving theft of avionics equipment from airplanes in tie-down locations. The perpetrators were apprehended following a wide sweeping investigation. While these incidents have been few, it emphasizes the importance of diligence and watchfulness by the airport community.

ANNUAL BUDGETING

Since 1978, the Federal and State Aviation Administrations have funded 30 grants at the St. Mary's County Regional Airport of more than \$34 million. FAA funding provides 90% of the grant amount, with the State and County providing 5% each. However, beginning in FY2021, the State of Maryland only provides the 5% match for construction costs due to significant State budget constraints. Planning, design and construction management are not currently funded by the State.

The draft FY2026 Capital Budget Master Plan Improvements include:

- \$5.4M in prior approval for Phase 3 airfield construction (FAA Airport Improvement Program, 100% federally funded under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act).
- \$1.075M in prior approval for perimeter fence replacement and airfield and ramp pavement repairs (Local funding).
- \$120,000 in prior approval for a pavement management study in advance of existing runway rehabilitation.
- FY2024 \$380,000 for terminal exterior improvements and \$750,000 for additional solid waste removal costs. (Local funding).
- FY2025 \$500,000 for additional maintenance and repair (Local funding)
- FY2026 \$285,000 for additional property acquisition, and an Airport Property Map update, \$500,000 for an Airport Master Plan Study,
- FY2027 \$600,000 for Runway Rehabilitation design, \$80,000 for access and security improvements design, and \$450,000 for the Master Plan's Environmental Assessment.
- FY2028 \$7,600,000 for Runway Rehabilitation construction, \$400,000 for the Commercial Apron design, and \$600,000 for Access and Security Improvements construction.
- FY2029 \$5,400,000 for Commercial Apron Construction, \$600,000 North Parallel Taxiway design.
- FY2030 \$7,600,000 for North Parallel Taxiway Construction.

The table below presents the costs and revenue associated with maintaining and operating the airport. Expenses are grouped by type. Revenues include tie-down and hangar rentals, office space rent, and fuel sales.

Facility Expenses	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Facility Maint/Utility	\$ 12,076.30	\$35,511.48	\$20,395.39	\$6,108.82	\$18,698.22
Electric (incl. Nav Aids & Lighting)	\$ 18,336.77	\$21917.01	\$23,778.43	\$26,905.29	\$28,497.26
Airport Lighting	\$ 1,615.44	\$1,200.01	Combined in above	Combined in above	Combined in above
Liability Insurance	\$ 6,160.00	\$ 7,700.00	\$ 7,700.00	\$7,700.00	\$7,700.00
Property Insurance (structure)	\$ 3,847.00	\$ 3,980.00	\$ 3,980.00	\$5,613.00	\$5,613.00
Grounds	\$ 10,495.00	\$ 7,626.00	\$ 3,183.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00
Runway/Taxiway Maint.	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$9,748.37
Total expenses	\$ 52,530.51	\$77,934.50	\$59,036.82	\$47,987.12	\$71,756.85
Income					
Direct Revenue	\$122,009.68	\$ 119,724.19	\$ 127,077.12	\$122,814.23	\$129,970.54
Gain/Loss					
Asset / (Liability)	\$ 69,479.17	\$41,789.69	\$41,789.69	\$74,987.12	\$58,213.69

ECONOMIC IMPACT

The MAA issues an economic impact report every three years. Comparing the results of the survey from 2018 with the most recent results indicate the following:

Type of impact	2018	2024
Business Revenue	\$35, 376,000	\$108,428,000
Total Employment	499 jobs	917 jobs
Personal Income	\$32, 682,000	\$80,322,000
State and Local Taxes	\$8,290,000	\$17,206,000

A more detailed description of the Economic Impact of the airport can be found at the following website:

<https://marylandregionalaviation.aero/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/St.-Marys-County-Regional-Airport-2W6-Brochure-2024.pdf>

AIRPORT CAPACITY

The FAA's National Based Aircraft Inventory assists the FAA in administering its various national airspace planning programs. The data update ensures that all planes are accounted for by location and tail number and is a requirement for receiving continued Federal and State funding. The FAA required each airport to review and update their based aircraft inventory by December 31st, 2022. As of that date, 227 total aircraft are recorded in the inventory: 223 fixed wing (including 191 single-engine, 20 multi-engine, eight gliders, four jets, and one ultralight) and six rotary wing. Total airport capacity is 74 tie-down spaces, 123 general aviation hangar spaces, and 14 commercial hangars (including the county hangar). The waiting list, as of December 2023, shows 60 requests for space with 13 of those for immediate occupancy. While outdoor tie-downs are available, there continues to be a shortage of hangar facilities for indoor aircraft storage and that is unlikely to change due to land availability.

AIRPORT OPERATIONS

Each take-off and landing is considered a separate aviation-related operation. The MAA conducts a study every three years for aircraft operations at all Maryland airports. A new study was conducted in 2019 and St. Mary's County Regional Airport had 40,263 operations in 2019, an increase of 13.1% over the previous report. The study conducted in FY2024 produced similar results.

Annual Aircraft Operations

Aircraft Type	Airport Inventory
Single Engine	197
Multi Engine	24
Jet	4
Helicopter	6
N-Numbers Not Found	2
<i>Total Single, Multi, Jet, and Heli</i>	<i>233</i>

AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE

With an increasing number of based and transient aircraft, access to general aviation maintenance providers at the airport remains extremely important. There is a current and forecast shortage of certified Airframe and Powerplant (A&P) mechanics throughout the aviation industry; with community support and commitment a maintenance-training program in St. Mary's County may be possible.

OPERATIONS EQUIPMENT AND NAVIGATION AIDS

- The Automated Weather Observing System (AWOS) is inspected three times per year, one of which is completed by the FAA. The last FAA inspection was in October 2023. While 2W6 currently has the oldest AWOS system within the State of Maryland, a completely new system has been budgeted and should be purchased and installed within 2025.
- For Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) operations, the airport is serviced by non-precision RNAV GPS approaches for both runways 11 and 29.
- While a GPS WAAS signal is available via Channel 70502 W11A, the GPS approaches have not been developed for CAT II approach minimums and are currently restricted to a decision height of 298 feet Above Ground Level (AGL).
- Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast (ADS-B) Out became an FAA requirement as of January 1st, 2020, for all civil aircraft that operate in airspace requiring a Mode C transponder. Aircraft equipped with ADS-B In can see ADS-B traffic on a cockpit display thus enhancing situational awareness and safety.
- Discovery of the garbage dump within the planned area for the runway extension necessitated an Environmental Assessment that has been completed, and the extension is now estimated to be completed in 2025. It will include the runway, taxiway, and Precision Approach Path Indicator (PAPI) certification.
- Renovations to the terminal included the installment of sound proofing tiles in the ceiling, purchase and installation of new furniture for the terminal, and completion of the major portions of the pilot's lounge. These renovations, coordinated by both DPWT and DED, made use of the terminal for gatherings and other public functions more desirable. Increased traffic in the terminal has been noticeable.

ADDITIONAL FACILITIES ON THE AIRPORT

Various entities conducting business on the airport are shown below. Points of contact for each organization are included should additional information be required or desired.

UMD Uncrewed Aircraft Systems (UAS) Research and Operations Center (UROC)

John Slaughter, 240-925-7588

TechPort Technology Collaboration

Katherine Stormont, 240-587-8156

St. Mary's Composite Squadron, Civil Air Patrol

David Webster, 240-538-5379

Experimental Aircraft Association Chapter 478

Darryl Crawford, 240-278-6751

Commercial Services Provided at the Airport

- ABSI Aerospace and Defense: Expertise in Unmanned Systems Training and Curriculum Development, Acquisition and Program Management Support, Manned/Unmanned Test and Evaluation, and SecondSky Live, Virtual, Constructive (LVC) Training Environment.
- AIRtec Inc.: AIRtec is an aviation and technology integration company that specializes in maritime radar surveillance, range safety, airborne telemetry flight operations, priority air transport; Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR); maintenance, training, equipment integration and sensor operation. Several aircraft are based at 2W6.
- BIRD DOG BISTRO has expanded its hours to provide for lunch from 10:00 AM to 2 PM, Tuesday through Saturday, as well as catering for events at the airport. Their website provides more detail.
<https://www.birddogbistro.com>
- Huntington Ingalls Industries (formerly Alion Science and Technology): An engineering, science, and technology firm with expertise in Artificial Intelligence; Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance (ISR); LVC Training; Modernization & Sustainment, Networks & Software, Systems Engineering & Integration, and Weapons Platforms.
- Atkinson Aeronautics and Technology, Inc.: A dedicated full-service general aviation maintenance facility offering maintenance, repair, overhaul, interior refresh, and modification for all reciprocating engine and light turbine powered aircraft. Also offering 14 CFR Part 91.411 and 91.413 IFR aircraft certification services under a 14 CFR Part 145 Repair Station certificate.
- Aviation Systems Engineering Company (ASEC): Systems engineering, test and evaluation, logistics, flight operations, and training.
- Chesapeake Aviation Services provides inspections, maintenance, and repair of aircraft.
- Chesapeake Technology International: Offering advanced technology engineering including systems work on Electronic Warfare, Tactical/Unmanned, and Training/Simulation.
- MTech: A dynamic aerospace firm, that blends classical techniques with cutting-edge technology allowing for rapid prototyping of optimized and integrated aerostructure design systems. A certified ISO

AS:9100 manufacturer. Strength lies in providing multi-discipline subject matter expertise, analysis, analytical modeling support and best-in-class Product Lifecycle Management modeling software.

- PAE: Training, Logistics, Operations, and Maintenance services.
- Piedmont Flight Center: Aircraft rental, Part 61 flight training, and provide airport courtesy car.
- RCS Services LLC (FBO Services): Aircraft fueling, transient aircraft support
- S. Hunt Aero, LLC: The company continues in developing/leasing general aviation hangars, commercial hangars, office/R&D buildings and production facilities. The rapid growth of St. Mary's County Airport would not be possible without this substantial corporate involvement.
- Ready 9 & Southern Maryland Seaplanes: Steeped in traditions of naval aviation and flight test, we offer specialized flight instruction in seaplanes, tail wheel, or your aircraft. We also offer introductory flights, seaplane sightseeing flights, and other Part 61 flight instruction.
- WGS Services: A system engineering products and services company with expertise in communications, sensor development, system integration, test and performance characterization, sustainment and modernization for Airborne Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR), and weaponized ISR for manned and unmanned platforms.
- Maryland State Police Trooper 7: The Maryland State Police Aviation Command continues to provide critical community services through Trooper 7 located at the airport.

Trooper 7:

316 Medevac Flights

322 Patients

SAR: 20 completed missions

LE: 7 completed missions

Total: 349 completed missions.

- MedSTAR Transport: MedSTAR Transport, a non-profit service based out of MedStar Washington Hospital Center, provides enhanced response times to better assist critical care patients in the Southern Maryland region.

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED OR EXPECTED

- The AAB recognizes the challenges faced by the Commissioners of St. Mary's County and the DPW&T Director, especially with only limited financial resources and staffing. The recent change in Federal Administration promises to bring yet unseen challenges. The Board will continue to coordinate responses to any challenge that may arise and with appropriate county government involvement to ensure that the airport retains its vitality and supports the best that 2W6 has to offer.
- The AAB recognizes the unique operational demographics of the airport when attempting to maintain appropriate Rules, Minimum Standards, Standard Operating Procedures, and other documents. The Board will continue to engage the airport and surrounding community in order to provide sound recommendations to the County regarding these important documents.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Recommendations remain standing from previous years and reflect items addressed across airport development, continued operations and safety.

Development

1. The Board continues to fully support the goals and objectives of the 2002 Airport Master Plan. It has been 21 years since the Airport Master Plan was last updated, and technology and society have changed. The Board will support the upcoming review and revision of the Master Plan to account for growth in the southern Maryland region and at NAS Patuxent River.
2. Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) operations utilizing a new generation of electric Vertical Takeoff and Landing (eVTOL) aircraft present a great opportunity for St. Mary's County and its airport due to the county's peninsular geography, proximity to major urban centers and lack of access to regional transportation networks.
 - AAM offers the opportunity to connect St. Mary's County with regional urban centers and transportation hubs.
 - St. Mary's County Regional could be a key location in the Chesapeake UAS Route Network (CURN) project being led by the University of Maryland.
 - SMECO inspected the terminal ramp area in 2022 and indicated it would be highly feasible to install aircraft electrical charging capability to support vertiport operations.



Photo of an electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft

3. The Board will work with the Department of Economic Development and airport stakeholders:
 - a. To further develop and market the airport and surrounding area (AeroPark Innovation District) as a regional asset for all Southern Maryland.
 - b. Build on the establishment of a cafe and new furnishings in the terminal by supporting establishment of an observation area and pilot store/gift shop to increase utilization of the airport terminal building, attract transient and regional pilots as well as the public to the airport, and to increase revenue.
 - c. Continue to provide and support activities that promote interest in general aviation, flight and maintenance training, and STEM education.
 - d. Support the ultimate goal of growing a qualified workforce to meet the demands of the airport, the Patuxent River Naval Air Station, and the Patuxent River Naval Air Museum. The addition of an aircraft maintenance training program to local education offerings would be extremely beneficial to support high demand for contract maintenance technician support to NAS Patuxent River and for aviation maintenance at St. Mary's County airport. The AAB encourages one or more local education institutions to seriously consider this opportunity.
 - e. Provide a public facing perspective on airport activities and opportunities.
 - f. Update airport website <https://www.stmarysmd.com/dpw/airport-operations/> and social media sites to provide timely information and drive awareness of the airport.

4. The Board concurs with the Airport Operations action items that have been integrated with the DPW&T's 2006 Transportation Plan. Brudis & Associates, Inc. was contracted in November 2021 to update the Transportation Plan. The Board will continue to monitor and address these issues as presented for recommendation and/or action. Specific Action Items of particular interest to the Board are as follows:
 - a. Develop an Airport Business/Finance Plan that is integrated with the Airport Master Plan and in conjunction with the Department of Economic Development. As the County deals with growth, budget challenges, and FAA requirements, it is essential the County have a vision on how to manage this essential resource.
 - b. Once the runway is extended, "open up" the southwestern portion of the airport for development by extending water and sewer with County funding resources as shown in the capital improvement plan and providing a second entrance to the airport via Lawrence Hayden Road connection to the planned Airport Loop Road.
 - c. Work with the Emergency Services Director to provide annual updates of the disaster preparedness plan.

Continued Operations

1. Continue monitoring of development within the Airport Environs and in the vicinity of the airport property to provide sound technical recommendations to the Commissioners of St. Mary's County in order to protect the County's and the FAA's substantial investment in this important public asset.
2. Continue to work with the County and the FBO to evaluate and provide recommendations on the Airport Layout Plan, identify additional areas for tie-down spaces, and consolidate parking areas where available to meet current and future demand.

Safety

1. Monitor the planned purchase and installation of a new AWOS for the airport. While the current system is usually operational, effectiveness, and safety of flight operations are impacted by the short range of the current system and repeated component failures.
2. Ensure increased safety for pilots, aircraft, persons and properties through the review and update of existing safety processes and encouraging participation in FAA Safety Team events (WINGS pilot proficiency program), VMC Club, and other pilot forums.
3. Pursue and obtain all required navigation and obstruction removal easements.

4. Track, monitor, and assist new activities on the airfield to ensure they are conducted with all notifications, permits, and notices. Facilitate the process of allowing new businesses to operate on the airfield in a timely manner.
5. Install working internet access in the terminal for transient visitors and working meetings.