



St. Mary's County

Defense Community Infrastructure Pilot Program Award

Prepared By:

The Maryland Department of Planning



To ensure that transportation systems and local infrastructure can adequately support community needs, in addition to those of a military installation, stakeholder collaboration is necessary. Ongoing discussions and coordination between a military installation, the surrounding community, and regional and state transportation/infrastructure agencies can facilitate a better understanding of mutual transportation and infrastructure requirements, challenges, and strategies. Addressing regional infrastructure is a complex, expensive, and ongoing process, as it involves planning for and designing transportation systems vital for community and installation access, as well as providing multimodal transportation choices that serve installation personnel and the public.

When undertaking such efforts, installations and their surrounding communities should consider the [Defense Community Infrastructure Pilot \(DCIP\) program](#). DCIP is a federal funding resource available to defense communities to help finance mutually beneficial infrastructure and services outside an installation, but necessary to support military operations.

Defense Community Infrastructure Pilot Program

The [Department of Defense Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation \(OLDCC\)](#) administers DCIP, a competitive grant program designed to help defense communities address deficient community infrastructure necessary to support the installation. Such improvements can help enhance the value of a military installation, its resilience, and the quality of life for military families.

[Section 2391\(d\) of Title 10, United States Code \(10 U.S.C. 2391\)](#) authorizes the Secretary of Defense to “make grants, conclude cooperative agreements, and supplement funds available under Federal programs administered by agencies other than the Department of Defense,” for projects owned by a state or local government or a not-for-profit, member-owned utility service to address deficiencies in community infrastructure supportive of a military installation. Eligible community infrastructure projects are any complete and useable transportation project; community support facilities (e.g., schools, hospitals, police, fire, emergency response, or other community support facilities); and utility infrastructure projects (e.g., water, wastewater, telecommunications, electric, gas, or other utility infrastructure).

Project Overview

DCIP Grant Award: September 23, 2021

Funding:

Federal Share: \$395,118
Local Match: \$169,336
Total Project: \$564,454

Grant Management:

St. Mary's County Department of Finance

Project Management:

St. Mary's County Department of Public Works & Transportation

Targeted Project Completion:

June 30, 2023

Partners:

- St. Mary's County
- NAS PAX River
- Calvert-St. Mary's Metropolitan Organization
- Maryland State Highway Administration

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Eligibility & Requirements for DCIP Projects

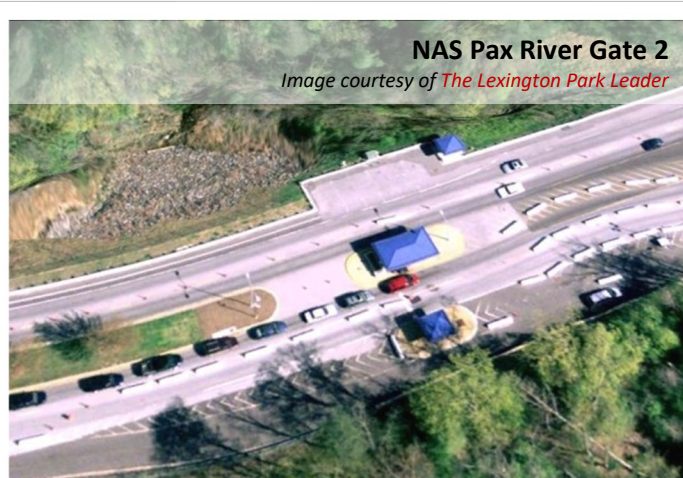
- Located off a military installation
- Supports a military installation
- Enhances military value, military installation resilience, or military quality of life at the supported installation
- Endorsed by the local installation representing the installation benefitting from the proposed project
- Ground-disturbing work has not commenced
- Construction ready within 12 months of the grant award
- Grant funds expended within five (5) years of award

Addressing Regional Transportation Issues to Support Continued Military Operations

As part of a joint effort between St. Mary's and Calvert counties, the **Calvert-St. Mary's Metropolitan Planning Organization (C-SMMPO)** worked with Naval Air Station Patuxent River (NAS Pax River) on a variety of regional transportation efforts to aid traffic flow around the base and to identify and remediate deficiencies in community infrastructure. This evolving partnership has supported collaborative efforts among the installation and the St. Mary's County Departments of Economic Development, Land Use and Growth Management, Recreation and Parks, and Public Works and Transportation to achieve a sustainable and resilient community, while enhancing installation access.

The recent C-SMMPO's Naval Base Multimodal Commuter Study identified the transportation challenges of high traffic volumes along MD 235 (Three Notch Road), which is the main thoroughfare to access NAS Pax River, congestion issues at Gate 2, and the lack of pedestrian and bicycle access in the area. The study included recommended additional multimodal transportation options and enhanced pedestrian access to ease congestion and increase safety. NAS Pax River is St. Mary's largest employer, with a diversity of employees, including those who currently, or would like to, travel to work other than by car.

Ongoing communication and coordination among the installation, St. Mary's County, C-SMPPPO, and the Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration facilitated the design to enhance installation gate access and safety improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as the pursuit for DCIP funding. The NAS Pax River Community Planning & Liaison Officer also played an important role in this process, serving as a bridge between the installation and St. Mary's County to provide valuable insights on installation needs, project limitations, and development of design concepts that were discussed during joint meetings between the St. Mary's County Commission and NAS Pax River commanding officers.



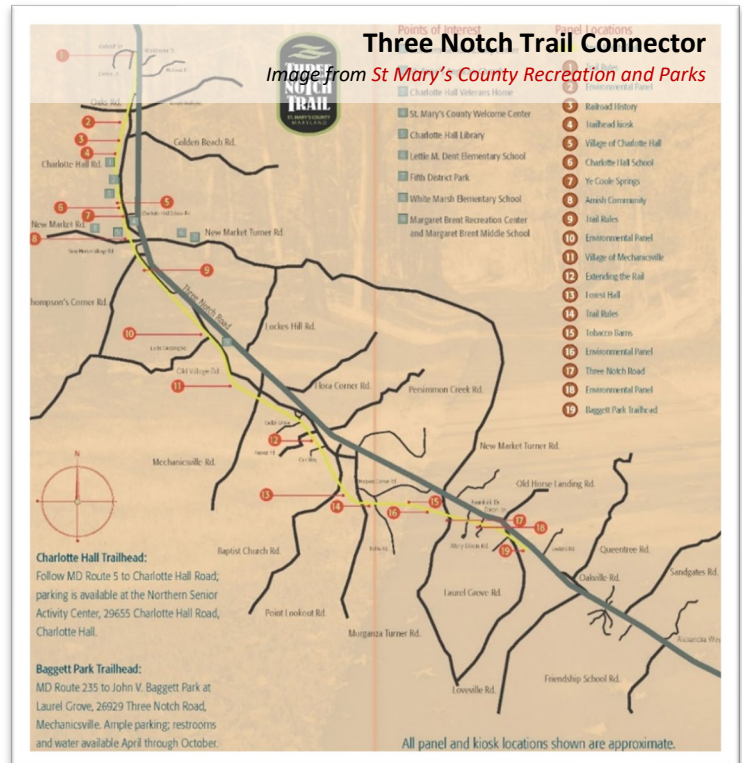
Congestion issues are often identified at NAS Pax River Gate 2 and extend onto Three Notch Road. The NAS Security Pass Office is also located at Gate 2.

Project Design and Construction

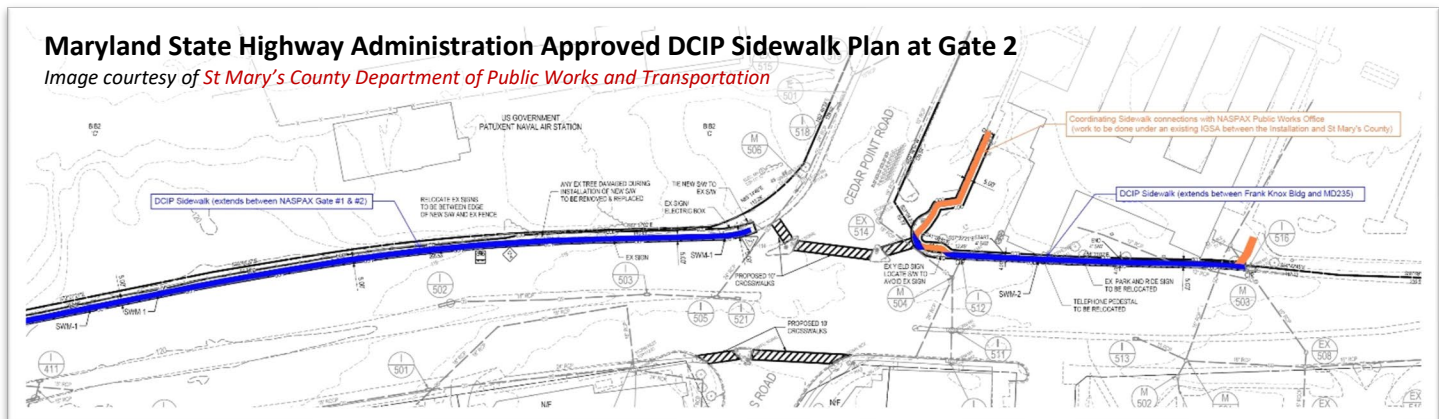
The final design includes a signalized crosswalk at Gate 2, across the heavily traveled six-lane MD 235 and an extended sidewalk to Gate 1. These improvements will allow safe bike and pedestrian access to the installation and provide links to restaurants, services, and other businesses in the Lexington Park commercial district.

The project also provides a direct link to the fully funded and under design **Three Notch Trail**. When completed, it will extend 28 miles from Gate 1 to Charles County, going through St. Mary's County's most intense residential and commercial districts; and completing a connection for NAS Pax River personnel between the two installation gates and these major destinations.

The signalized crosswalk and sidewalk extension project represents a **Traffic Demand Management** strategy that provides installation personnel with a healthy bike or pedestrian alternative to automobile commutes, thereby reducing traffic volumes on MD 235. The **Patuxent Velo Cycling Club**, founded at NAS Pax River, represents bicycle commuters and will promote the use of the sidewalk extension after construction.



When completed, the Three Notch Trail connection will extend 28 miles from Gate 1 to Charles County.



The DCIP Sidewalk layout, shown in blue, extends between NAS Pax Gate #1 and #2 (left) and between the Frank Knox Building and MD235 (right). Additional sidewalk connections, shown in orange, will be completed under an existing IGSA between the installation and St. Mary's County.

St. Mary's County DCIP Grant Award

St. Mary's County submitted its initial DCIP project funding proposal to OLDCC during FY21, which included support from the **Southern Maryland Navy Alliance** and the NAS Pax River installation commander. After review and scoring the proposal, OLDCC invited St. Mary's County to formally submit a grant application.

In September 2021, OLDCC awarded St. Mary's County a \$395,118 federal grant to undertake the \$564,454 project, with St. Mary's County providing the remaining \$169,336 as the required 30% local match. The county's application was **one of 13 awarded in the FY21 grant cycle** with the expectation the project will be construction-ready within 12 months of the award.

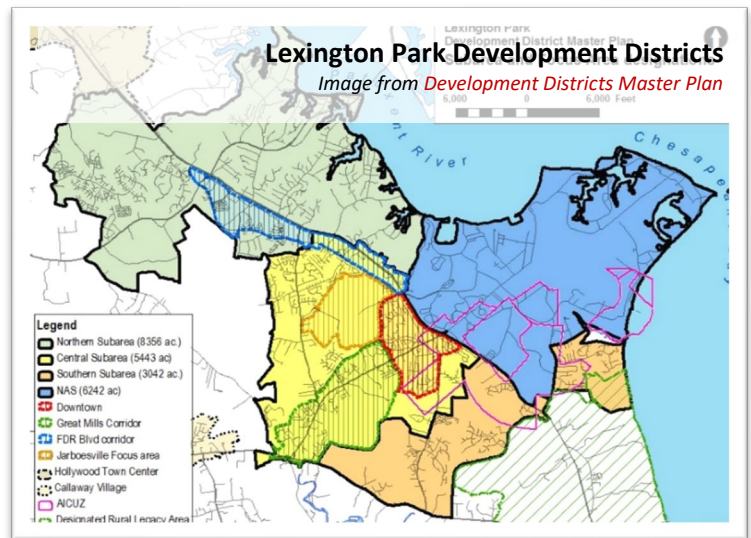
Role of State and Local Planning for Project Development

Land use and transportation planning can help support needed military installation and regional infrastructure improvements by referencing them in documents and plans. Several state, regional, and local plans prepared since 2010 identify the improvements found in St. Mary's County's DCIP proposal.

- St. Mary's County 2010 Comprehensive Plan* references an expanded network of sidewalks and bicycle trails to accommodate alternatives to automobile use. Other projects include traffic calming strategies and retrofits to reduce vehicle speed and enhance pedestrian and bicyclist safety. In further support of creating a safe, pedestrian friendly and visually attractive area, the core area surrounding NAS Pax River Gate 2 and along either side of Great Mills Road is planned for mixed-use.
- The *Naval Air Station Patuxent River Joint Land Use Study (January 2015)* includes a recommendation for alternative transportation modes, including bicycle and pedestrian, to serve NAS Pax River Main Station. The recommendation prompted quarterly regional transportation meetings among local, state and DoD transportation and planning agencies to identify potential projects, partnerships, and funding sources.
- St. Mary's County 2016 Lexington Park Development District Master Plan* recommends strengthening the visual and physical connections between NAS Pax River and Lexington Park. New and infill development and redevelopment should provide street networks designed and operated to enable safe, attractive, and comfortable access and travel for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and public transportation. The plan further proposes expanding sidewalk and bikeway networks even when improvements to vehicle travel lanes are not planned. Other recommendations include providing marked pedestrian crosswalks at new and existing public roads and expanding connections to sidewalks and hiking and biking trails.



Many St. Mary's County planning studies references the desire to expand the network of sidewalks and bicycle trails to provide alternative modes of transportation.



As new and infill development occur in the area, street networks should be designed to strengthen visual and physical connections between NAS Pax River and Lexington Park.

- *Moving Forward 2045*, adopted in March 2020, is C-SMMPO's Long Range Transportation Plan that establishes transportation investment priorities across the region over the next 25 years. The primary purpose of the plan is to guide the C-SMMPO and government agencies in making decisions and directing transportation investments where they will be most effective. The plan includes specific recommendations noted in the *2019 Navy Base Multi-Modal Study* specific to increase telework opportunities, transit and bicycle subsidies, and a transit awareness campaign. To reduce the number of single occupancy vehicles entering NAS Pax River, the plan also includes recommended MD 235 pedestrian crossing and sidewalk connections at Gates 1 and 2 and completing Three Notch Trail.
- The state approved action plan for the *Lexington Park, Charlotte Hall Sustainable Community* applies to an area adjacent to NAS Pax River. The plan recommends improving choices for residents and workers to use transportation options other than the automobile to get to work and shop. It also recommends addressing existing gaps in pedestrian, bike, and transit networks to improve access to NAS Pax River and provide safe pedestrian crossings at MD 235.
- The C-SMMPO funded *Complete Streets Plan* recommends enhanced pedestrian and bicycle connections at Gate 2 and Tulagi Place. These will improve access to retail and restaurant areas along Great Mills Road and provide linkages to Tulagi Place and Lancaster Park's existing recreational, bike, and pedestrian amenities.
- The recently approved *Naval Base Commuter Multi-Modal Mobility Planning Study Naval Air Station, Patuxent River*, recommends a number of transportation demand management projects targeted to not only reduce traffic volumes, but improve the overall livability of the Lexington Park Neighborhood and St. Mary's County. It was developed in coordination with the C-SMMPO, St. Mary's County Department of Public Works and Transportation, NAS Pax River, and the Maryland State Highway Administration.

What's Next?

Completion of the signalized crosswalk and sidewalk extension project will allow more transportation modes to access the installation, ease congestion along MD 235, and increase safety, for both pedestrians and cyclists. The county expects that the completed project will spur more pedestrian paths to interconnect the NAS Pax River Air Museum, the County Transit Hub, Lexington Manor Passive Park, Lancaster Park, and the Navy's Glenn Forest Housing Area. As the county's largest employer, it is vital for NAS Pax River and St. Mary's County to continue to build upon their strong bond and seek ways to achieve a sustainable and resilient community and installation.



Maryland

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