



**Historic St. Mary's City Fort to 400 Commission  
Legislative Annual Report/Update  
November 8, 2024**

In accordance with State Government Article 9-3407, on or before November 1, 2022 and each November 1 thereafter, the Commission shall submit to the Governor and the General Assembly a report that includes:

- An update on the plan of action submitted November 1;
- Implementation timetables and benchmarks; and
- Recommendation for legislative, administrative and other action deemed necessary to further its mission.

**ACTION PLAN – Update as of 11-8-24**

The Commission developed a plan of action to further goals and take concrete steps toward the completion of the Commission’s goals.

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>EXECUTION</b>
Establish communication portal for Commission	Complete
Create 501c- This will take time to create. Question whether we use another established organization (i.e. Historic St. Mary’s Trust) for Commission funds to be deposited into	The identification and formation of a 501c organization has been stalled. There have been discussions about forming a new one or identifying an existing organization with a mission that is adjacent to the goals of the Commission.
Develop a vision and mission statement to articulate the missions and goals of the commission	Complete
Determine a plan for spending the \$125,000 in capital funding that Senator Bailey informed the Commission exists.	The funding was for capital purposes and has not been expended.
Continue discussing staffing for and to the Commission.	The Department of Commerce has twice sought to fulfill this position and has not found/identified a suitable candidate.
The 400 Commission status report is due November 1, 2024.	Complete

No official meetings were held this year.

The staff sought to identify lessons learned from the 400th anniversary of Jamestown, which is often cited as the standard to which the Commission should emulate.

Here are some of the key takeaways from the 400th Anniversary of Jamestown in 2007:

- There was an existing organization that had been formed more than 30 years prior, which was the Jamestown/Yorktown Foundation that administers Jamestown/Yorktown Visitor Center History Museums (akin to the Historic St. Mary's Commission)
- \$48 million in State funding – the Commonwealth of Virginia was the largest contributor
- \$400 million in private and public donations/funding for development of infrastructure, museums, and upgrades to existing legacy products
- Some of the dollars were generated by a surcharge on renewal or purchase of vehicle registration
- Timeline Phases:
  - 1996 - 2002 - Planning (10 to 5 years prior to anniversary)
  - 2003 - 2006 - Program development (5 to 1 years prior to anniversary)
  - 2006 - 2008 - Implementation
- 1998 - Executive Director was hired
- Working Committees:
  - Programs and Events
  - Marketing and Finance
  - Logistics

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

**The plan to commemorate the first non-native settlers to arrive in Maryland in 1634 formally began in the 2021 General Assembly Session with the passage of CHs 687/688, Acts of 2021 - *Historic St. Mary's City Fort to 400 Commission.***

The Commission would provide leadership for and coordinate economic development opportunities in and around St. Mary's City to promote the region for future generations. Assisted by the Maryland Historical Trust and the State Archives, the Office of Tourism and Film within the Maryland Department of Commerce provides staff to the Commission.

Nineteen members constitute the Commission. The Governor appoints five members, and the Senate President and House Speaker each appoint two members. One member each represents the Commission on African American History and Culture; the Commission on Indian Affairs; the Historic St. Mary's City

Commission; the Maryland Rediscovery 400 Initiative; and St. Mary's College of Maryland. Five members serve ex officio.

Authorization for the Commission ends September 30, 2035.

The Commission was appointed by Governor Larry Hogan, including the naming of Brian Norris, Owner, Cherry Cove Hospitality Management as Chair of the Fort to 400 Commission.

**The Chair's duties include and are not limited to:**

- Sponsor Recruitment and Development
- Stewardship and Visitor Experiences
- Education and Curriculum
- Program and Events
- Transportation and Capital Infrastructure
- Communication and Marketing
- Operations and Management

**Duties of the Commission include and are not limited to:**

- Coordinate the planning and implementation of the activities and events
- Promote the identification, documentation and preservation of historical and cultural resources related to the founding of Maryland
- Assist in promoting, improving and developing existing educational and interpretive institutions, sites and museums related to the founding
- Develop a model social studies curriculum on the founding
- Promote nationally and internationally the commemoration of the founding
- Ensure activities, events, and products that provide lasting value and benefits
- Secure the support and financial resources needed to implement the activities and events of the Commission
- Provide leadership for and coordinate economic opportunities in and around St. Mary's
- Perform other actions necessary to carry out the purposes of the Commission