

CAPITAL PROJECT REQUEST
FOR THE
REVITALIZATION OF
CHESTERTOWN MARINA

Submitted to the Maryland General Assembly by the
Mayor and Council of Chestertown, Maryland



Photograph by Tyler Campbell

The Case for the Revitalization of Chestertown Marina

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THE REQUEST



Tall ships at sunrise during Sultana's Downrigging Weekend at Chestertown Marina, October 30, 2015.

The Town of Chestertown requests \$1.5 million dollars from the Governor's Capital Budget to revitalize the community's only working Marina, promote economic development, and preserve public access to the Chester River.

In preserving this important facility for public use, the Town of Chestertown will:

- Support existing jobs and create new employment opportunities on the water
- Increase arts, heritage, and eco-tourism to Chestertown and Kent County
- Preserve the community's 310-year-old heritage as a working port
- Stimulate retail activity within Chestertown's National Landmark Historic District
- Restore and beautify the most iconic waterfront gateway into Kent County
- Preserve public access to the Chester River for residents, transient boaters, and pedestrians

The Case for the Revitalization of Chestertown Marina

THE NEED

After decades of deferred maintenance in the private sector, Chestertown Marina is in urgent need of repair and redevelopment.

Purchased by the Town of Chestertown in 2012 to ensure that the property would continue to be a waterfront amenity for public use, the facility currently needs:

- New bulkheads
- New docks
- Dredging
- Raising the grade of the entire property by 18" - 24" to prevent tidal inundation
- New headquarters

The cost of fully rehabilitating this facility is estimated at approximately 5 million dollars (*see page 16*). With 45% of the community's land owned by non-profit organizations and thus off of the property tax rolls, Chestertown has very limited budgetary flexibility. Resultantly, assistance from state and federal agencies is critical if the Marina is to be preserved for the public.



An old dock that has collapsed and needs to be replaced.



The current state of the bulkheads at Chestertown Marina.



High tides cause flooding throughout the Marina site.



Low winter tides reveal excessive siltation and the need for dredging.

THE VISION



The revitalization of Chestertown Marina is not an isolated project, but part of a 20-year vision for the Town's future that involves the redevelopment of 1/2 mile of waterfront in conjunction with multiple initiatives at Washington College.

Additional long-term projects envisioned for Chestertown's waterfront include:

- Creation of a 1/2 mile Waterfront Promenade and Heritage Loop Trail featuring signage detailing the community's history as well as public art installations
- Construction of a waterfront campus for Washington College, including a new boathouse and academic center for environmental studies
- Carefully planned, high-density residential development at Stepne Manor, a 70 acre farm adjacent to the community's National Landmark Historic District

The Case for the Revitalization of Chestertown Marina

PRESERVING 300 YEARS OF HISTORY



Since its founding in 1706, Chestertown has been a center for maritime commerce. Even George Washington made eight known visits to the busy colonial port in the latter half of the 18th century. In 1782, President Washington lent his name and a piece of his personal fortune to help establish Washington College, the first institution of higher learning created in America after the Revolutionary War.

In 1706, the Town of Chestertown was named one of six Royal Ports of Entry in the province of Maryland, and the port has served the people of Kent County in that capacity for 310 years.

In the 18th century, Chestertown was the chief port for tobacco and wheat on the Eastern Shore. The wealth generated by this maritime commerce is still visible today in the Georgian homes that populate the waterfront and downtown area, a proud architectural heritage that comprises one of only four National Landmark Historic Districts in the state of Maryland.

Today, visitors to Chestertown Marina enjoy one of the most intact colonial-era waterfronts in the nation, located within easy walking distance of the community's historic marketplace.

The Case for the Revitalization of Chestertown Marina

SUPPORTING AND CREATING JOBS

Chestertown Marina directly supports the operations of the schooner Sultana, Echo Hill Outdoor School, and the Chester River Packet - organizations that collectively employ 20 people and bring approximately 6,000 visitors to Chestertown each year.



Built in Chestertown and launched in 2001, the schooner Sultana employs 10 people and brings 3,000 visitors to the community each year.

The Marina itself employs six full and part-time employees. It is envisioned that once the new Waterfront Interpretive Center is constructed, a portion of the facility will be used for retail, creating several new jobs.



As the only waterfront restaurant in Town, the Fish Whistle is literally surrounded by Chestertown Marina and employs 60 people.

The Marina also generates revenue for the Fish Whistle, the only waterfront restaurant in Chestertown that has 60 full and part-time employees.

Finally, transient boaters regularly infuse money into businesses in the Historic District that collectively employ hundreds of individuals.



Waterfront events such as the Chestertown Tea Party Festival drive visitors to the Historic District, supporting hundreds of jobs in the community's many restaurants and storefronts.

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ENHANCING HERITAGE TOURISM



The Chestertown Tea Party Festival annually brings approximately 10,000 visitors to Chestertown on Memorial Day weekend.



Based out of Chestertown Marina, Sultana's Downrigging Weekend Festival brings tall ships and tourism dollars to the community.



Redcoats march to the Chester River during the annual re-enactment at the Chestertown Tea Party Festival.

Each year, thousands of tourists visit the Chestertown waterfront for festivals that generate hundreds of thousands of dollars for the local economy.

Major festivals that rely on a functional Marina for their success include:

- *Chestertown Tea Party Festival* - the biggest event of the year in Kent County regularly draws 10,000 visitors to Chestertown over Memorial Day weekend
- *Sultana's Downrigging Weekend* - this maritime festival has become one of the largest gatherings of tall ships in the mid-Atlantic region, bringing up to 5,000 tourists to Chestertown annually
- *RiverFest* - Riverfest is a celebration of both the Chester River and the arts, and is a growing festival sponsored jointly by Washington College and RiverArts, a local non-profit organization

The repair and redevelopment of Chestertown Marina is imperative if these events are to continue in future years.

The Case for the Revitalization of Chestertown Marina

STIMULATING RETAIL ACTIVITY IN THE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Chestertown Marina is uniquely situated just two blocks from dozens of shops, restaurants, cafés, and art galleries which benefit directly from foot traffic generated by boaters visiting the community for the weekend.

Paul Hanley, long-time owner of the Blue Heron Café - an upscale restaurant three blocks from the Chester River - estimates that before the facility fell into disrepair, *Chestertown Marina brought approximately \$70,000 dollars a year to his business.* When this figure is extrapolated over the entire three-square-blocks of Chestertown's historic marketplace, the economic impact of a fully functional marina is compelling.

For many small business owners, the additional revenue generated by transient boaters makes the difference between operating a successful venture and closing shop.



Stam's Hall, constructed in 1886, is one of dozens of historic landmarks within easy walking distance of Chestertown Marina.

PRESERVING WATER ACCESS

Having easy access to the water is an important component of Chestertown's history, economy, identity, and culture.

Chestertown Marina is the last functional marina in Town, and the public boat ramp is the only deep-water launch site for ten miles in either direction on the Kent County side of the Chester River.

Residents and visitors alike access the river for recreational activities including:

- Fishing
- Crabbing
- Waterskiing
- Wakeboarding
- Tubing
- Beachcombing

These activities contribute significantly to the quality of life found in the "Land of Pleasant Living" and serve as a powerful tool for attracting new residents to the area.

The marina will also feature a public kayak launch and storage area, bringing additional visitors to Chestertown to explore the numerous creeks and marshes in the region.



Crabbing, recreational boating, and fishing are important activities that bring tourism dollars to Chestertown and Kent County. Preserving water access is critical to the future vitality of the community.

PROTECTING THE CHESTER RIVER



A copper butterfly sips nectar from a pickerelweed flower in Radcliffe Creek, a scenic tributary of the Chester River located less than half a mile from the docks of Chestertown Marina. The Creek is a favorite destination for paddling enthusiasts that will be able to launch their small crafts from a new kayak launch at the facility.

The reconfigured Marina will contain many design features that will significantly reduce the amount of polluted runoff entering the Chester River.

These features will include:

- A *pocket park* along Front Street containing native grasses, shrubs, and trees that will serve as a catch basin for rainwater and provide habitat for native insects
- Multiple *bio-retention areas* will catch runoff flowing from parking areas before it reaches the river
- *Pervious pavers* will allow rain water to soak into the ground, greatly reducing the volume of runoff entering the Chester River

The Town is working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to examine additional features, such as underground cisterns, that could be implemented to further lessen the facility's impact on the river.

The Case for the Revitalization of Chestertown Marina

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The current design for the Marina was developed with maximum input from the citizens of Chestertown.

During two public charettes held in 2014, residents were invited to join Mayor Chris Cerino to examine the current condition of the Marina and come up with design solutions to address the facility's many infrastructure needs.

Over 100 participants attended each session, including Town and County residents, business owners, boating enthusiasts, elected officials, and representatives from Washington College.

Public input was incorporated into the final design that was developed by the engineering firm of McCrone, Inc.



Over 100 residents, business owners, and boaters gather at Chestertown Marina on May 28, 2014 to discuss design elements of the renovated facility.



An overhead view of Chestertown Marina. The Town of Chestertown owns the four piers to the right, while the lower dock is private property.



Mayor Chris Cerino describes the tidal flooding issues that need to be addressed during redevelopment of the Marina property.

The Case for the Revitalization of Chestertown Marina

PROJECT DESIGN



Engineering rendering of a rehabilitated Chestertown Marina facility by McCrone, Inc.

The newly renovated Chestertown Marina will be a unique destination on the Eastern Shore, with 15 deep-water slips ranging in depth from 12 to 18 feet. Additional features include:

- 70 total slips with 6' average depth
- New Waterfront Interpretive Center, Marina store, and retail space
- Public boat ramp
- Pocket park with native landscaping
- Dredging throughout the facility
- Kayak launch and storage area
- Public Plaza for river viewing, musical acts, and special events
- Multiple storm water retention areas
- New bath/shower area
- Underground storage for fuel tank/s
- Public art
- Floating piers to negate tidal flooding

The Case for the Revitalization of Chestertown Marina

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION



The masts of the skipjack Sigsbee, pungy schooner Lady Maryland, and sloop A.J. Meerwald are perfectly reflected in the Chester River on a calm morning in late October.

The redevelopment of Chestertown Marina will take place in three distinct phases over the next three years (2015 - 2018):

PHASE I: WINTER OF 2015 - 2016

- Remove downriver pier
- Construct new floating pier
- Replace bulkhead from new pier extending to the Fish Whistle Restaurant
- Re-site and replace boat ramp
- Dredging in boat ramp basin

Funding in Hand: Waterway Improvement Fund (200k), Town of Chestertown (200k), Maryland DNR (500k - dredging)

PHASE II: WINTER OF 2016 - 2017

- Remove upriver piers
- Extend Cannon Street pier 70' into channel
- Build new, floating fuel dock
- Replace bulkhead in front of Fish Whistle
- Dredging on north side of Marina facility

Possible Funding Sources: State of Maryland, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Waterway Improvement Fund, private donations

PHASE III: WINTER OF 2017 - 2018

- Raise grade of property by 18" - 24"
- Construct Waterfront Interpretive Center
- Construct pervious parking area, pocket park

Possible Funding Sources: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Waterway Improvement Fund, Maryland Heritage Area Authority, Chesapeake Bay Trust

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ARTISTIC RENDERINGS



Working in conjunction with Locust Grove Studios in Kennedyville, Maryland, the Town of Chestertown created several artistic renderings of what a restored and revitalized Chestertown Marina will look like once completed.

The new facility will greatly enhance Chestertown's waterfront, support existing jobs and create new employment opportunities on the water, preserve public access to the Chester River, and provide a first-class venue for several major festivals that bring thousands of dollars to the local economy.

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ARTISTIC RENDERINGS

Right: View from new pier on the western (downriver) side of Chestertown Marina



Left: View of the Marina from Front Street looking south. The new pocket park is in the foreground, with the Waterfront Interpretive Center to the left and rear.

Right: The Waterfront Interpretive Center will be a multi-purpose building serving as a riverside Visitors Center, Marina store, and retail space for kayak rentals. The second floor will be a large open room with spectacular river views that can be rented out by community groups. The pervious parking area will substantially reduce runoff entering the Chester River.



THE FINANCES



A crewmember of the Kalmar Nyckel, the state ship of Delaware, adjusts a halyard at Sultana's Downrigging Weekend Festival.

The revitalization of Chestertown Marina is an ambitious undertaking that will cost approximately 5 million dollars to complete. The 1.5 million requested from the State of Maryland will cover approximately 30% of the project overhead.

COST ESTIMATES

Waterfront Interpretive Center	\$ 750,000.00
Demolition	\$ 130,000.00
Dredging	\$ 600,000.00
Bulkheads	\$ 750,000.00
Floating docks (2)	\$ 650,000.00
Fixed pier extension (1)	\$ 350,000.00
Utilities	\$ 550,000.00
Boat ramp	\$ 160,000.00
Permitting	\$ 70,000.00
Design work	\$ 120,000.00
Construction Adm.	\$ 100,000.00
Fill to raise grade	\$ 300,000.00
Paving	\$ 150,000.00
Pervious pavers	\$ 250,000.00
Landscaping	\$ 30,000.00
Storm water control	\$ 25,000.00
Fuel tanks	\$ 10,000.00
Curb, gutter, curb stops	\$ 20,000.00

TOTAL **\$5,025,000.00**



The Case for the Revitalization of Chestertown Marina

TOWN OFFICIALS

Chestertown Mayor and Council

Chris Cerino, Mayor
Liz Gross, First Ward
Linda Kuiper, Second Ward
Samuel Shoge, Third Ward
Marty Stetson, Fourth Ward

Chestertown Port Study Participants

Walter Adams
Gibson Anthony
Don Cantor
Alex Castro
Adam Goodheart
Michael Hardesty
William S. Ingersoll
Kevin Kimble
William Landon
David MacIntire
Al Massoni
Davy McCall
Andrew McCown

Nancy McGuire
Drew McMullen
Ruth Menefee
John Moag
Bob Parks
Libby Patnovic
John Seidel
Elizabeth Seidel
Carter Stanton
Ray Tarrach
Matt Tobriner
Johan Trumpy
Bernadette Van Pelt