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DRAFT COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Introduction

Pocomoke City, along with other government agencies, provides essential public services and facilities that are crucial for the health, safety, and well-being of its current and future residents. The city continuously monitors demand and capacity to ensure these services and facilities remain adequate. This proactive approach allows for timely expansion and upgrades when necessary. This Community Facilities Element is a foundational step in planning for the future supply and demand of these vital resources.

Goal and Objectives

Goal

To provide sufficient public facilities and services that safeguard the health, safety, and welfare of all residents.

Objectives

1. **Water and Wastewater Systems:** Plan for the appropriate expansion, replacement, and upgrades of the city's water and wastewater systems.
2. **Recreation:** Ensure all citizens have access to diverse, high-quality recreational environments and opportunities that promote physical and mental well-being.
3. **Parks and Waterfront:** Maintain, expand, and redevelop existing park and recreation facilities, including Winter Quarters Park and golf course. Enhance public access to the river and encourage increased boating and waterfront park usage.
4. **Public Safety:** Maintain a well-trained and equipped police force to ensure public safety. Support emergency service organizations to achieve appropriate response times and care levels.
5. **Waste Management:** Provide effective waste management services for city residents, including accessible recycling facilities.

Public Water Supply

The city has a water distribution system, including water mains and storage towers.

NOTE: What is the inventory, number of wells, storage towers, treatment plants, etc.?

Pocomoke City currently has ample water supply to meet existing and planned needs. Pocomoke City services approximately 1,760 residential and about 132 commercial water accounts. The City water plant was upgraded in 1996 from a daily capacity of 600,000 gallons per day to 835,000 gallons per day to meet expected future needs. Pocomoke City currently draws its drinking water from the Pocomoke Aquifer. The city has four wells at approximately 140 feet, providing drinking water for the city.

Average daily flows in 2006 were about 0.49 million gallons per day (see Table * below) and an equivalent dwelling unit value (EDU) of about 290 gallons per day (GPD).

Table*: Pocomoke Water Treatment Plant Daily Average Flow

Month 2006	Amount (1,000 GPD)
April	545
May	562
June	414
July	542
August	321
September	549

Source: Pocomoke City Department of Public Works

NOTE: Need updated GPD data

There are a few private wells in the city, including some existing residential subdivisions and commercial properties along the US 13 corridor. The city has no plans to provide public water to these properties at this time. The city does not serve areas outside its corporate limits with public water, and annexation into the city is a basic requirement for city access to public water service.

NOTE: Is this statement still true?

The city's Water Appropriations and Use Permit W0197G010(04), which is effective through October 2018, permits an average daily withdrawal of 0.86 million gallons per day (MGD). The city also plans to upgrade its water plant. Within a 1-2 year time frame, the city expects to upgrade water pumping stations by installing new controls. The cost of these improvements is approximately \$250,000.

NOTE: Is the City still operating under the Water Appropriations and Use Permit?

In addition, the city recently received funding to replace water meters. The project entails the replacement of aging water meters with new radio read capable meters and appurtenances throughout the city. The city acquired and installed new water meters in order to accurately track water losses, increase efficiency, minimize leakage, and promote water conservation.

NOTE: What water projects have been completed since the last update?

Pocomoke City publishes annual water quality reports outlining the substances present in the drinking water and confirming their safety levels. While the city has addressed occasional

aesthetic water quality issues, such as taste, color, and odor, ongoing efforts are in place to evaluate and upgrade the water system for continuous improvement.

OTHER NOTES:

According to their website, GMB assisted the city with a multi-tiered approach to improving the water and sewer systems that included a site evaluation at the water treatment plant, wells, and elevated storage towers to evaluate the overall conditions of each. GMB prepared a printed report detailing findings, recommendations and estimated respective costs of corrective actions or capital improvements. What are the pertinent findings, and what projects were undertaken to address issues?

According to a November 2021 newspaper story, the city received a \$1.4 million grant to replace its aging drinking water distribution system. The article went on to say that MDE provided \$777,000 matched with a \$635,727 Community Development Block Grant from the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development to Pocomoke City to replace its aging drinking water distribution system. Where and when were these improvements installed?

NOTE: What is the status of this project? Are there other water system improvements of note?

Public Wastewater Treatment and Collection

Pocomoke City manages a wastewater treatment system encompassing both a treatment plant and sewer collection networks. The city has enhanced its wastewater treatment through the implementation of Biological Nutrient Removal (BNR) technology, contributing to reduced nutrient discharge into the Chesapeake Bay.

Pocomoke City services approximately 1,760 residential and about 132 commercial sewer accounts. There are no known users of individual septic systems/tanks (residential or commercial) in Pocomoke City, nor does the city serve areas outside its corporate limits. Annexation into the city is a basic requirement for sewer service.

NOTE: Is this information still accurate?

Pocomoke City's wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) discharges into the Pocomoke River and has a design capacity and permitted flow of 1.47 MGD (National Pollution Discharge Elimination Permit System MD0022551). The monthly average flow was 0.555 million gallons per day (MGD) in 2005, or an equivalent dwelling unit value of about 290 GPD.

The city has applied for state funds to conduct a study to document the level of inflow and infiltration into the sewer system. Resolving the inflow/infiltration problem will increase capacity in the treatment plant.

NOTE: What are current average flows? Was this study completed, and what follow-up

actions did the city take?

The city maintains approximately 25 miles of sanitary sewer lines and related lift stations. Many are several years old and require constant maintenance or repair. The city should consider replacing and/or upgrading many of its sewer lines and lift stations to be more efficient and to avoid recurring failures that disrupt services to residents.

Public Schools

Students in Pocomoke City are fortunate to be able to attend schools located within the corporate limits. Additionally, based on 2022-2023 enrollment figures, the three schools serving Pocomoke City and the surrounding area have additional capacity for enrollment growth (see Table *).

Table*: School Enrollment and Capacity; 2022-2023

	Enrollment 2021	Capacity	% of Capacity
Pocomoke Elementary	435	506	86.0%
Pocomoke Middle	443	818	54.2%
Pocomoke High	333	786	42.3%

Source: 2022-2023 Educational Facilities Master Plan, Worcester County Board of Education,

Pocomoke Elementary is located on 21.6 acres at 2119 Pocomoke Beltway and serves grades Pre-K through 3rd. The Worcester County Board of Education's 2022-2023 Educational Facilities Master Plan rated this facility as "adequate." The elementary school has 34 full-time teachers, and a teacher-to-student ratio is 1:13. According to USNews.com, 60.9 percent are minorities. According to the 2022-2023 Educational Facilities Master Plan, current projections indicate enrollment will remain relatively stable through 2031, increasing from 435 in 2022 to 477 in 2031, however in the short-term, reassignment of classrooms or the addition of portable classrooms may be needed to accommodate new programs.

Pocomoke Middle School is located on 21 acres at 800 Eighth Street and serves grades 4 through 8. Worcester County Board of Education's 2022-2023 Educational Facilities Master Plan rated this facility as "adequate." The middle school has 42 full-time teachers, and a teacher-to-student ratio is 1:11. According to USNews.com, 72 percent of students are economically disadvantaged, and 59 percent are minorities. Enrollment from 2022 to 2031 is expected to increase from 443 to 507. According to the 2022-2023 Educational Facilities Master Plan, while Pocomoke Middle School operates under state-rated capacity, available instructional space is inadequate, and renovation will eventually be required.

Pocomoke High School is located on 32.5 acres at 1817 Old Virginia Road and serves grades 9 through 12. Worcester County Board of Education's 2022-2023 Educational Facilities Master Plan rated this facility as "excellent". The teacher-to-student ratio is 1:11. According to

USNews.com, 70 percent of students are economically disadvantaged, and 61.4 percent are minorities. Enrollment from 2022 to 2031 is expected to increase from 333 to 456.

Park and Recreation Facilities

Pocomoke City is committed to providing diverse and accessible park and recreation facilities that enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors. The city benefits from a range of local and regional recreational opportunities, as summarized below and shown on Map *.

Existing Local Facilities

- **Cypress Park and Nature Trail:**
 - This park serves as a cornerstone of Pocomoke City's recreational offerings, featuring a 1.5-mile nature trail that highlights the area's unique natural environment.
 - Key features include:
 - Floating boardwalk sections through cypress swamps
 - Exercise stations
 - A 57-foot pedestrian bridge
 - A 260-foot fishing pier (handicap accessible) with a non-licensed fishing area.
 - Gazebo
 - Canoe launch sites
 - Athletic field, Tennis courts, restrooms, bicycle path, picnic tables, dock, tot lot, pavilion buildings.
 - The Nature Trail at Cypress Park is planned to be extended to meet the northern terminus of the municipal docks, creating a continuous pedestrian connection from the Discovery Center on Market Street to Winter Quarters Golf Course.
- **Winter Quarters Park:**
 - This park provides access to the Pocomoke River and offers:
 - Playground equipment
 - Picnic tables
 - Boat ramp
 - Boat dock
 - Fishing pier with non-licensed fishing area.
- **Winter Quarters Golf Course:**
 - A public 18-hole golf course located at 355 Winter Quarters Dr, Pocomoke City, MD 21851.
 - Opened in 1938, it contains a log cabin building, putting green, and cart rentals.
 -
- **Laurel Street Boat Ramp:**
 - Provides a convenient boat launch ramp and dock for river access.
 -
- **Downtown Mini-Park:**

- Offers passive recreation opportunities with benches, a fountain, and walkways, enhancing the walkability and bikeability of the downtown area.
- The city is continuing to enhance the park with bike racks and garden planting with the help of local students.
-
- **Mini Park (Clark Ave. & Willow St.):**
 - Serves as a community garden. The city desires to expand community garden areas, involve youth and seniors in the process, and donate produce to local shelters.
- **School Facilities:**
 - Pocomoke Elementary School: Playground equipment, hard surface play area, basketball court.
 - Pocomoke Middle School: Playfield, tennis, and basketball courts.
 - Pocomoke High School: Tennis courts, soccer field, hockey and baseball fields.

Regional Facilities

- **Pocomoke River State Park:**
 - Encompassing Shad Landing and Milburn Landing, this state park offers a wide range of recreational activities:
 - Camping
 - Hiking trails
 - Boating (boat launch, kayak/canoe launch)
 - Fishing (pier and pond)
 - Swimming pool (at Shad Landing)
 - Nature Center
 - Playgrounds
- **Pocomoke State Forest:**
 - Provides over 25 miles of hiking trails, including:
 - Algonquin Cross County Trail (12.5 miles)
 - Chandler-Colburne Trail (multiple loops, up to 6.8 miles)
 - Hudson-Tarr Bike Trail (8.5-mile network for mountain biking)
 - Camping is available at the adjacent Pocomoke River State Park.
- **Newtowne Park (Worcester County):**
 - A county-owned park with:
 - Lighted baseball and soccer fields
 - Concessions
 - Play equipment
 - Fishing pond
 - Baseball, soccer, and softball fields, tot lot, concession stand, fitness trail, picnic area
- **View trail 100:**
 - A bicycling trail that passes through the city, connecting to a 100-mile loop around the county.

Public Safety Service

Pocomoke City Volunteer Fire Department

The Pocomoke City Volunteer Fire Department is a vital, all-volunteer organization serving Pocomoke City and its surrounding areas. It comprises approximately 60 to 75 dedicated individuals from diverse backgrounds, supplemented by auxiliary members and a cadet program.

They operate a modern fire station housing a comprehensive fleet of apparatus, including a Tower Truck, multiple Pumper and Engine Pumpers, a Rescue vehicle, a Tanker, a Brush truck, and Utility vehicles, as well as specialized water rescue equipment and a restored 1923 antique Engine truck.

The department is currently based in a 16,500-square-foot fire station with five engine bays facing Market Street and two bays on the 14th Street side of the building. The facility features a showcase lobby where the fire company's Clapp and Jones steamer, hose cart, and various historical items are on display. Other areas include a meeting/training room, lounge, recreation room, bunk room, administration and operation offices, fitness area, engineers' work room, and various storage and mechanical rooms.

Safety features include an automatic carbon monoxide removal system in the engine bays with full fire sprinkler and detection systems throughout the facility. An electronic access system provides entry to the building, and a video surveillance system provides security. A 100kW generator supplies power in emergencies.

Pocomoke City Police Department

The Pocomoke City Police Department is a small law enforcement agency comprised of 18 sworn officers and 5 civilian staff members. The department is structured with a clear hierarchy, including a Chief of Police, Assistant Chief Captain, Lieutenants, Sergeants, Corporals, and Patrolman First Class, as well as specialized roles like K-9 Handlers. The department emphasizes a community-oriented approach, actively encouraging citizen engagement and communication.

Pocomoke City's Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

Pocomoke City's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) are provided by a municipal department staffed by full-time, part-time, and volunteer professionals, including a Chief of EMS/Paramedic. They offer both basic and advanced life support, utilizing three fully-equipped Advanced Life Support ambulances. Their services include on-scene emergency medical care and transportation to area hospitals. In addition to the city's EMS, urgent care facilities like "Your Doc's In" offer supplementary medical services.

Solid Waste

The city collects solid waste from residential homes twice a week. Larger waste items (bulk) are

collected from homes once a month. The waste is transported to the county landfill in Newark, MD. The city also provides recycling drop-off centers at two locations.

NOTE: Is this still correct?

Stormwater

The city is responsible for approximately 25 miles of stormwater pipes and open ditches that drain all areas of the city. Many of these systems were originally designed and built several decades ago and are unable to properly handle even minimal to average rainfalls without resultant temporary flooding problems. As a result, the city is experiencing frequent flooding events due to a combination of factors, including sea level rise, undersized stormwater infrastructure, and inadequate maintenance of drainage systems. The most affected areas are Cypress Park, 8th Street, White Oaks, and Winter Quarters. The city has identified several potential projects to mitigate these issues, including stream restoration, wetland creation, and drainage system improvements. However, challenges exist in implementing these projects, such as land ownership, permitting requirements, and funding limitations.

The community is actively involved in identifying and addressing these issues, and there is strong support for implementing projects that will improve the city's resilience to flooding and enhance water quality. The city is committed to pursuing various funding opportunities to support these projects and is optimistic about securing the necessary resources to implement them effectively.

City Code Enforcement

The city is responsible for enforcing codes regarding housing, building construction, building safety, and other concerns. Enforcement for some codes (electrical, plumbing, stormwater management) is delegated to the county.

NOTE: Is this still the case?

City Government

Governance

Pocomoke City operates under a Mayor and Council form of government. The five-member City Council, elected by district, and the Mayor hold regular public meetings, adhering to the Maryland Open Meetings Act, at City Hall. These meetings provide transparency and opportunities for public input.

Fiscal Health and Budget Summary (FY 2023 Actuals)

Pocomoke City demonstrates a solid financial foundation with total combined net assets of \$15,437,333 as of June 30, 2023. This fiscal condition reflects a positive trend, with a net position increase of \$2,729,692 from the previous fiscal year.

Revenue and Expenditure

- **Revenue:** The City generated \$11,446,461 in total revenue. Key revenue sources include:
 - Property Taxes: 32%
 - Charges for Services (e.g., utilities): 31%
 - Grants and Contributions: 31%
- **Expenditures:** Total expenses for the fiscal year were \$8,716,769, allocated as follows:
 - Public Safety (Police, Fire): 26%
 - Water/Sewer Fund: 25%
 - Public Works (Streets, Infrastructure): 17%
 - Ambulance Fund: 14%
 - General Government (Administration): 11%
 - Other Departments: 7%