



PORT TOBACCO VILLAGE PLAN

July, 2012

**COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF CHARLES COUNTY, MARYLAND
RESOLUTION NO. 2012-66**

WHEREAS, the Port Tobacco Historic District is recognized as an area of strong historic significance to the County, State, and Nation; and

WHEREAS, the Port Tobacco Historic District should be preserved and enhanced for the benefit of citizens and visitors; and

WHEREAS, the Port Tobacco Village Plan was initiated in 2011 to develop a community vision for the Port Tobacco village; and

WHEREAS, public participation for this plan included stakeholder interviews on January 26, 2012, a visioning workshop on February 15, 2012, a scenarios workshop on March 19, 2012 and a consensus plan workshop on April 26, 2012.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, this 25th day of September, 2012, by the County Commissioners of Charles County that the document consisting of text, maps, and graphics, entitled *Port Tobacco Village Plan, 2012* is hereby adopted by the Charles County Commissioners.


COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF
CHARLES COUNTY, MARYLAND



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PORT TOBACCO

IN THIS CENTER OF CONFEDERATE
ACTIVITY, AT THE BRAUNER
HOTEL, DETECTIVE CAPTAIN
WILLIAM WILLIAMS UNSUCCESSFULLY

1.0 Background and Objectives

OFFERED A
REWARD FOR INFORMATION THAT
WOULD LEAD TO THE CAPTURE
OF JOHN WILKES BOOTH.

1.0 Background and Objectives

Port Tobacco is believed to be Maryland's oldest continually inhabited settlement, dating to 1634 with the first group of English settlers. Formally established in 1727 as the county seat, it served as an important port town and center of commerce in Southern Maryland. At its height during the 19th Century, Port Tobacco's population reached nearly 300, but quickly declined after the silting of the river and the construction of the railroad

in 1895 several miles away, which resulted in the county seat being moved to nearby La Plata.

While most of its former structures are gone and Port Tobacco no longer appears as an identifiable town, it remains Maryland's smallest incorporated municipality, with a population of approximately 13. The few remaining historic structures and several reconstructed buildings, most notably the Port Tobacco Courthouse, reconstructed in

1972, along with several historic markers and plaques, help to identify it as a unique and special place, known today as Port Tobacco Village. Port Tobacco is also a National Register Historic District.

Since the 1940's there has been a great deal of interest in preserving and restoring the rich history of this place, and several groups, most notably the Society for the Restoration of Port Tobacco, have been actively working to keep the history of Port Tobacco alive. There is continuing



Figure 1: Plan of Port Tobacco as it existed in 1888



Figure 2: The Port Tobacco "village core" as it appears today
(Source: Bing maps)



Figure 3: Port Tobacco regional context map showing proximity to Washington, DC. Port Tobacco is approximately 35 miles driving distance from the White House.



Figure 4: Current day aerial view of Port Tobacco overlaid with approximate location of buildings (yellow outlines) and roads (tan lines) that existed in 1888.

interest in Port Tobacco among Civil War enthusiasts because of its well known pro-southern activities and ties to the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln in 1865.

There have also been ongoing archaeological investigations since the 1960's, and the Port Tobacco Archaeology Project, a volunteer effort, was established in 2007 to expand these efforts.

In recent years, there have been a number of county and region-wide planning studies conducted which have recommended various ways of improving Port Tobacco so that current and future generations can better understand and enjoy it as a cultural and historic resource. These include the Southern Maryland Heritage Area Tourism Management Plan (2003), which was adopted by reference in the Charles County Comprehensive Plan (2006/2012). In these, Port Tobacco is identified as a key project area for strategic capital projects including site development, interpretation, and trails. In addition, the Religious Freedom Byway Management Plan (2008) and the Charles County Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (2011) both suggest physical improvements to Port Tobacco to enhance its identity and accessibility for visitors.

In 2009, Charles County also commissioned a conceptual design for Port Tobacco as a follow up to the 1999 Waterfront Development Opportunities Report. In addition, a number of proposals have been developed for reuse of historic buildings in Port Tobacco. In 2010, the Charles County Commissioners identified Port Tobacco as one of three waterfront planning priorities.

In 2011, Charles County, working with the Trust for Public Land, received a grant from the Maryland Heritage Area Authority to



Figure 5: Historic photograph of Port Tobacco looking toward ruins of the Courthouse.



Figure 6: The reconstructed Courthouse as it looks today.



Figure 7: A recent archaeological investigation conducted by dedicated volunteers.

acquire certain undeveloped portions of the Village and also began considering acquisition of Stagg Hall, the oldest known historic building in the Village.

As part of this grant, the County initiated a planning effort (the subject of this report) in order to provide policy guidance regarding the potential property acquisitions, as well as develop a clear vision for the future of Port Tobacco in terms of supporting stated preservation goals, tourism, and redevelopment potential. This effort also includes an evaluation of the feasibility and support for the acquisition and reuse of Stagg Hall.

A consultant team led by TND Planning Group with Randall Gross Development Economics was hired by Charles County in December of 2011 to carry out a six month planning process. A key component of the process is engagement of stakeholders including residents and other interested parties in helping to inform and shape the plan.



Figure 8: Stagg Hall in 1936

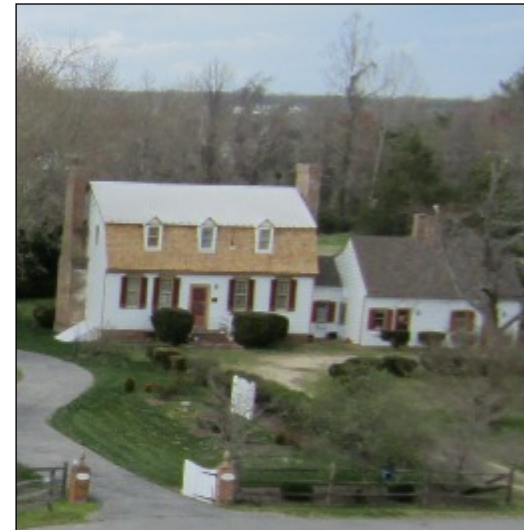


Figure 10: Stagg Hall and grounds today



Figure 9: Recently restored Burch House (Catslide)



Figure 11: Port Tobacco one room schoolhouse



Figure 12: Reconstructed Quinsell/Quenzel Store with contemporary addition



2.0 Process

2.0 Process

The visioning process engaged a variety of stakeholders in a series of three workshops, including Village residents and property owners, archaeologists, historians and preservationists.

In addition to those who live in the Village, the primary groups represented at these gatherings included the Society for the Restoration of Port Tobacco, the Port Tobacco Archaeological Project, the *Charles County Archaeological Society*, the Thomas Stone National Historic Site, the Charles County Historic Preservation Commission and the Southern Maryland Heritage Area Consortium. Numerous other stakeholder organizations and individuals were invited and participated. These are listed in the Appendix of this report. Together, these stakeholders brought diverse interests and perspectives to the dialogue at each workshop.

2.1 Preliminary Stakeholder Meetings

The consultant team visited Port Tobacco Jan. 26 to conduct a site visit and talk to stakeholder groups individually. The purpose was to meet everyone and explain the goals of the workshops; to answer questions and assess concerns people had about change in Port Tobacco; and to get a sense for their priorities and expectations. These meetings included one with members of the Society for the Restoration of Port Tobacco, the Port



Figure 13: Consultant team, County staff, and stakeholders exiting Port Tobacco Courthouse

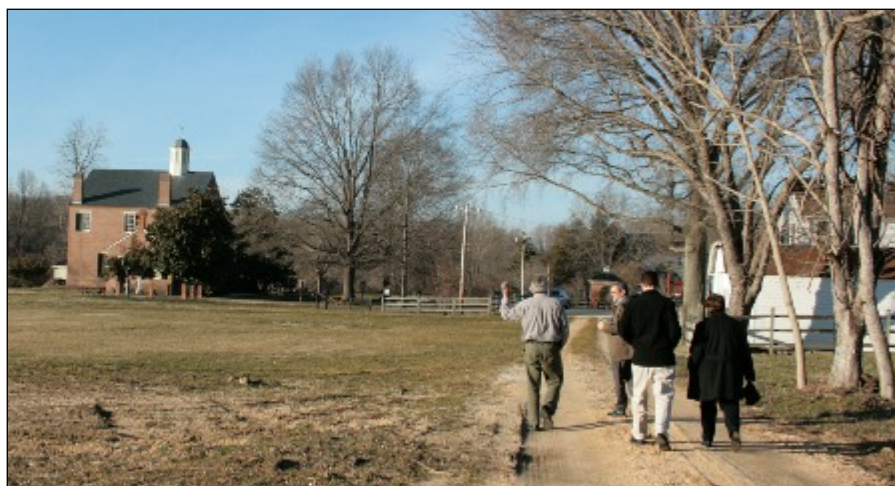


Figure 14: Consultant team, County staff, and stakeholders on walking tour of Port Tobacco

Tobacco Archaeological Project,, and the National Park Service, two meetings with Port Tobacco residents, and one with a representative from the Trust for Public Lands, Drawing from the stakeholder interviews, the consultant team developed a series of three workshops to gather further input, to present various options and scenarios, and to develop a vision for Port Tobacco that would best reflect what stakeholders value most. Each of the workshops was held on a weeknight from 6 - 9 p.m., and was held at the Charles County Government building in the “blue conference” room.

2.2. Workshop 1: Initial stakeholder input through facilitated exercises

The first workshop engaged participants through a series of exercises, the first of which was a “Community Character Survey.” This involved showing participants a series of images in rapid succession of diverse scenes and activities in settings similar to that of Port Tobacco. Participants were asked to rate each based on how appropriate it was for Port Tobacco, with scores ranging from a low of "1" for images that were very inappropriate up to a "10" for those that were highly appropriate, with “5” being neutral or no opinion. Each slide was shown only briefly in order to get participants' immediate reactions. The pictures showed a range of activities and uses



Figure 15: Workshop 1 discussion



Figure 16: Community Character Survey in progress

including historic re-enactors, walking/hiking trails; archaeology, interpretive signs, visitor center/exhibits, tour bus parking, and new housing, to name a few.

After rating the images, participants divided into small groups for a "dot mapping" exercise and small group discussion. Each table was given a large aerial map of the Village and asked to mark it with green and red dots. Participants placed green dots on any features they saw as positive and important to preserve and red dots on features they viewed as negative and needing to change. They were asked to discuss their views and make notes around the dots, where appropriate, to elaborate.

Following the dot mapping exercise, participants engaged in an in-depth discussion of everything from the value of Port Tobacco's historic and natural resources and the prospects for heritage tourism and outdoor activities, to its future as a rural residential community and Charles County's appropriate role in shaping the Village's future.

Afterward, the group reconvened, and a representative from each table reported to the assembled participants what they had discussed.



Avg: 8.1, Range: 6-10



Avg: 6.7, Range: 1-10



Avg: 7.1, Range: 4-10



Avg: 5.1, Range: 1-9



Avg: 2.6, Range: 1-6



Avg: 8.1, Range: 6-10

Figure 17: A sample of the images shown in the community character survey at the first workshop. 150 images were shown over a period of 10 minutes.

Outcome

The combined results of the community character survey, the dot mapping, and table discussions revealed that there were areas of broad agreement and/or support regarding appropriate and inappropriate characteristics of the Village as it could evolve over time, while less so on others. Figure 17 shows the average score for each category of slide shown in the community character survey. The full results of the community character survey are presented in the companion appendix entitled, “Port Tobacco Community Character Survey Results.”

The results were further analyzed to determine the degree of concurrence among stakeholders regarding each of the categories. For this, the team examined standard deviation of responses, combined with professional judgment of the comments received during the dot mapping exercises and table discussions. From this, a composite table (Figure 18) was constructed which grouped categories according to the relative degree of agreement among those stakeholders who participated in the workshop. This analysis helped synthesize the information gleaned during the workshop and to begin developing scenarios for exploration and feedback during the next workshop.



Figure 18: Group discussion and dot mapping exercise during Workshop #1



Figure 19: Report-out by representative from each group

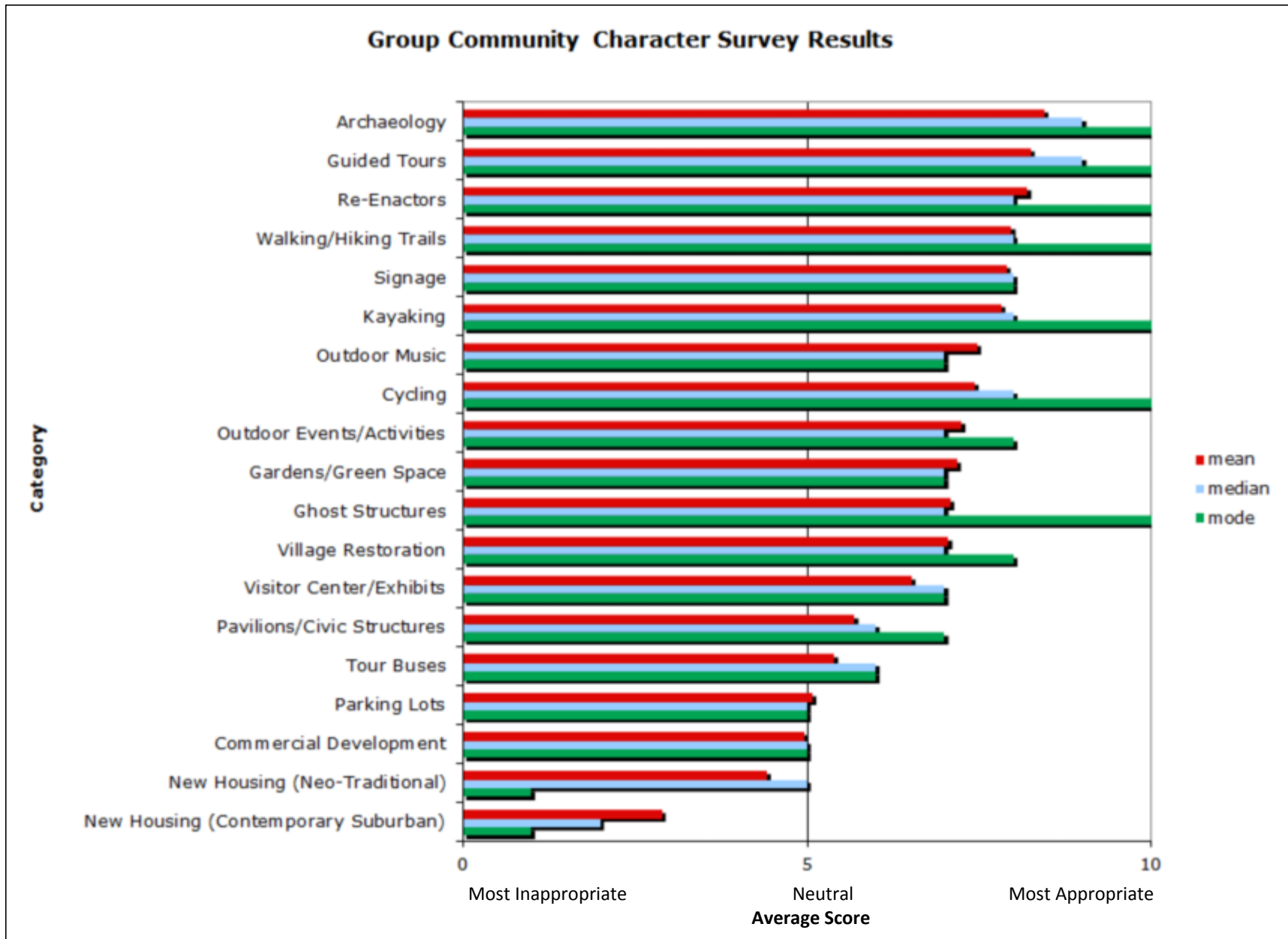


Figure 20: Scoring results summary from community character survey

<p><u>Broad Agreement</u></p> <p>Re-Enactors</p> <p>Walking Trails</p> <p>Kayaking</p> <p>Guided Tours</p> <p>Gardens/Green space</p> <p>Outdoor Music</p> <p>No Contemporary Suburban Development</p>	<p><u>Some agreement – some disagreement</u></p> <p>Cycling</p> <p>Archaeology</p> <p>Signage</p> <p>Outdoor Activities</p> <p>Village Restoration</p> <p>Ghost Structures</p>	<p><u>Vary widely</u></p> <p>Visitor Center/Exhibit</p> <p>Parking Lots</p> <p>Pavilion/Civic Structures</p> <p>Commercial Development</p> <p>Neo-Traditional Residential Development</p>
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Figure 21: Composite table grouping potential village elements by degree of agreement among workshop participants

reuse of Stagg Hall if it was part of a larger revitalization or restoration effort that encompassed other elements of the Village as a whole. More details about this are discussed in Section 3 of this report as well as in the Appendix.

The second half of the workshop involved presentation and discussion of four potential scenarios for the future Port Tobacco Village. The discussion was aided by the use of three dimensional computer generated models of the “village core” that were created to help visualize the physical form of each scenario. The village core is a term that loosely refers to the planning study area and generally includes the portion of Port Tobacco west of Chapel

Point Road and east of the canal bed. The four scenarios , or “Options” as they were called, were as follows:

Option A, "Status Quo."

This option assumed little or no changes to Port Tobacco as it exists today. Under this scenario, Charles County would not acquire the historic properties or actively guide any transformational change in Port Tobacco. Rather, it would be largely left up to individual property owners and market forces to determine the fate of Port Tobacco Village. The ability to preserve Port Tobacco’s historic resources would face an increasingly uncertain future.

2.3 Workshop 2: Scenario exploration and discussion

The workshop began by sharing the findings from the first workshop with participants, followed by a presentation on preliminary findings about the potential reuse of Stagg Hall.

The analysis conducted by Randall Gross revealed that, based on a range of conditions including Stagg Hall’s limited physical size and modest historical significance and notoriety, there is a limited market for its reuse when considering Stagg Hall in the context of Port Tobacco Village as it currently exists. However, the analysis concluded that there would be greater potential for

Option B, "Preservation Park."

This option would entail Port Tobacco becoming a historical park with modest expansion of public access. It would include creation of a village square as a "green" park-like feature for visitors to enjoy and for occasional special events.

It would emphasize the historic identity of the Village by constructing numerous "ghost structures" at the location of former buildings, and would include expanded support for archeological investigations and exhibits.

No reconstruction of historic buildings would occur, nor would any new infill development be allowed. The residential component in the Village core would eventually be phased out. Ownership, maintenance, and operation of the existing historic structures would gradually be transferred to some combination of governmental and non-profit entity control to be determined.

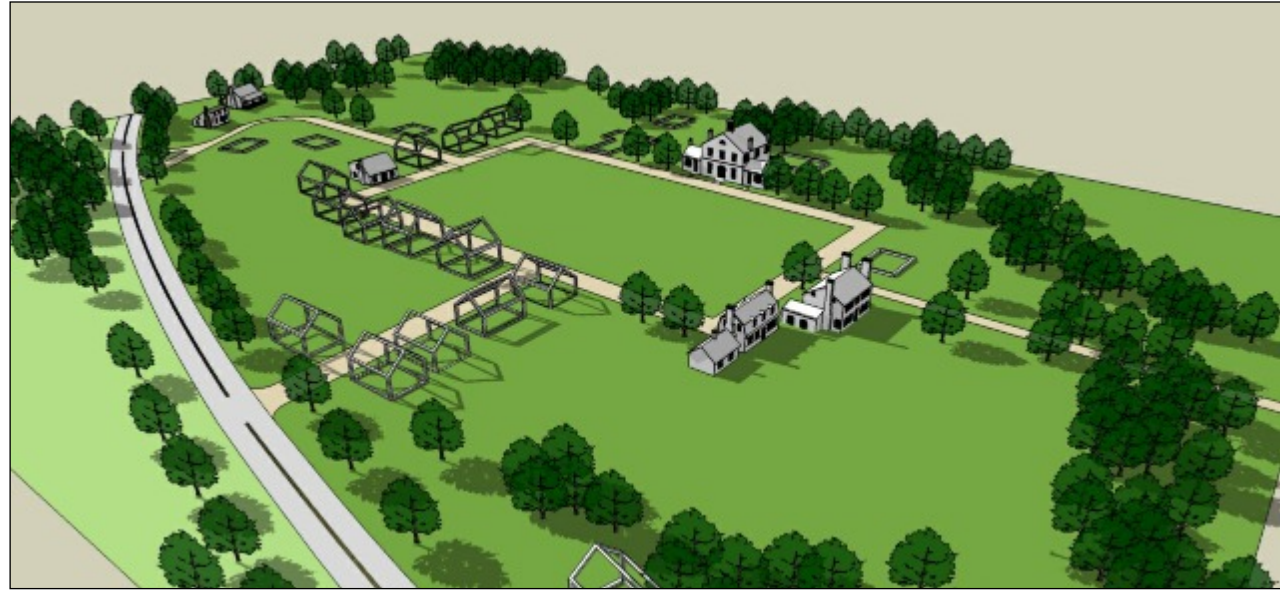


Figure 22: Birds eye view of Option B: "Preservation Park"



Figure 23: Ghost Structure in St. Mary's City, Maryland



Figure 24: Alternate view of Option B: "Preservation Park"

Option C, "Living Village."

This option would transform Port Tobacco into more of a destination with a significant increase and variety of activity. It would include creation of the village green as a central public gathering space, but also would involve creation of a "campus-like" cluster of structures and grounds around the village green.

Among these would be reconstruction of a key building on the site of the former St. Charles Hotel to serve as an inn and dining establishment associated with other possible on-site uses ranging from meeting space to a visitors center with exhibits and/or County museum.

The village green would serve as a setting for frequent public and private events ranging from wedding receptions to concerts to farmers markets. The edges around the village green would be open to vehicular traffic and



Figure 25: Birds eye view of Option C: "Living Village (existing buildings shown in white; future buildings shown in purple)



Figures 26 and 27: Yorktown, Virginia (left) and Harpers Ferry, West Virginia (right) both function as historic parks as well as active, living communities



Figure 28: Main entry view of Option C: "Living Village"



Figure 29: Alternate view of Option C: "Living Village" highlighting new residential development in southern portion of Village core patterned after historic structures.

angled parking would be provided. A handful of ghost structures would be constructed around the village green in order to reinforce the former village form, and two of the key existing historic buildings, including the Burch House and the One Room Schoolhouse, would be relocated to more central locations on the village green in order to increase public interest by creating a "critical-mass" of buildings around the green and to reinforce the campus-like character and feel of the historic destination.

While the existing homes around the village green would eventually be phased out as residences, the southern portion of the Village core would be reserved for a limited amount of new residential infill development that could occur under stringent design standards to ensure compatibility with the historic character of the Village. This new development would not attempt to replicate former buildings exactly in either their floorplans or siting, but would be designed in complimentary architectural style and massing befitting Port Tobacco.

In addition, this option also includes opportunities for expanded recreational activities such as development of a bicycle and walking trail throughout the grounds and natural areas, connecting to other nearby historic sites such as Thomas Stone National Historic Site. A kayak launch area would also be provided, potentially with a rental facility.

In the scenario, Port Tobacco would be actively marketed as a place for eco-tourism that would appeal to bicyclists, kayakers, birdwatching groups, and other outdoor enthusiasts who may also have an appreciation of historic sites.

Together, these characteristics would enable Port Tobacco to become more of a thriving community consisting of a modest increase in population, combined with daily activities that would bring visitors and staffing into the village.

Option D, "Village Restoration."

This option represents the most ambitious vision of the four scenarios, in which Port Tobacco would become the primary centerpiece of heritage tourism and economic development efforts for the county, along with a commensurate funding commitment as an ongoing, long term endeavor. The State of Maryland and/or other government or non-governmental organization (NGO) may also need to provide additional support in order for this concept to be viable.

In this scenario, a substantial number of the former historic structures in Port Tobacco Village would be reconstructed over time, with a critical mass of structures built initially that would be sufficient to market and attract large numbers of visitors from the Washington, DC region and beyond. This scenario could be likened to a "mini-Colonial Williamsburg," whereby the village would become a major heritage tourism attraction and destination, complete with re-enactors and other activities.



Figure 30: Birds eye view of Option D: "Village Restoration"



Figure 31: Duke of Gloucester Street, Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia



Figure 32: Re-enactors at Old Bedford Village, Bedford, PA

While Port Tobacco's history is long and varied, spanning more than three centuries, this village restoration concept would be built according to the time period where there is the most complete information about the physical makeup of the village: the mid to late 19th Century. This is also the period which would likely generate the most visitation because of the ongoing and expanding interest in Civil War history and reenactment and because of Port Tobacco's ties to the assassination of President Lincoln. In addition, it would be unique in that no other village restoration has attempted to recreate a Civil War era period. Other periods of Port Tobacco history would still be interpreted through on-site exhibits and possibly computer-generated imagery (CGI) technology, which allows visitors to peer through an interactive display to visualize what a landscape may have looked like at different points in time.

There would be significant operating costs associated to support the endeavor. Presumably, Charles County would own the properties and have a lease arrangement with a private or non-profit operator. Admission would be charged to the public and groups for

entry to individual buildings, activities, and exhibits.

While the existing residences within the village core would be phased out, the restored village would provide opportunities for "tenancy," similar to Williamsburg, in that employees of the operation who work as re-enactors, groundskeepers, or maintenance technicians would be able to rent and live in specific buildings within the village. This would help maintain security by virtue of continuous activity and occupation within the Village grounds during non-visiting hours.

Like Option C, opportunities for active recreation such as cycling, kayaking, and nature walks would also be available. There would also be ongoing archeological investigations, although this would need to be coordinated with building reconstruction activities.



Figure 33: CGI viewer at Jamestown, Virginia



Figure 34: Option D: View from second story balcony of reconstructed St. Charles Hotel overlooking the village square



Figure 35: Option D: View of reconstructed High Street area

While the village square would be a central focal point as in Options B and C, it would not be a green, but rather retain a more authentic dirt or gravel surface, true to the original Port Tobacco (Note: There are crushed stone stabilizer aggregate products available commercially that could be used when developing the square that would virtually eliminate dust and mud). Under this scenario, the square could still be used for certain public events such as historic reenactments, craft fairs, concerts, and fireworks displays held at the village.

In order to create the kind of immersive environment where visitors feel like they have stepped back in time to an authentic place, the village restoration would benefit by reconstructing buildings on both sides of the former High Street. However, because the historic alignment of High Street roughly follows that of Chapel Point Road, a major rural thoroughfare, it would not be possible to construct buildings on the east side of the road and have pedestrians mix with high speed auto traffic. Therefore, this scenario

includes a recreated High Street approximately 125 feet west of its original location. Doing so allows buildings on both sides of High Street and a safe environment for visitors to the village, buffered from traffic noise and danger.

In order to achieve the desired effect, however, some liberties need to be taken with dimensions of the village square and distance reductions between some buildings. The overall dimensions of the village square would be reduced by approximately 15-20% of its original size.

While adjusting these dimensions to accommodate reconstructed High Street is less accurate historically, it would be imperceptible to the vast majority of visitors and could actually create a more intimate sense of place in the village from an urban design standpoint. Interestingly, this technique was used



Figure 36: Idealized artist's rendering of how Port Tobacco might have appeared in the late 19th Century

to create just that effect in the 1994 artist's rendering of Port Tobacco village shown in Figure 36.

Outcome

After small group discussions about the four options concluded, participants reconvened and were asked to share what they felt were the pros and cons of each. Responses were recorded on flip charts at the front of the room. Each participant was also given a brief survey in which they were asked to rate each of the options according to two criteria: first, the degree to which they believe the each option is practical or feasible, and secondly, the extent to which they would support each option assuming that it is feasible. The survey also provided an opportunity for participants to provide their own scenarios that were either variations or combinations of those presented by the consultant team, or those that were entirely unique.

These exercises proved very effective in helping participants focus on a range of possible tangible changes to Port Tobacco, as opposed to largely abstract ideas or thoughts. It challenged them to express preferences and viewpoints about potential physical and social changes to the village. The feedback received was also invaluable to the consultant team and staff in testing ideas and concepts in an interactive, open setting.

From the discussion and input received, it was clear that the overwhelming majority of participants recognized that Option A, Status Quo would not be in the best interest of Port Tobacco's future. There was a prevailing sense that

some level of proactive intervention by government is indeed warranted, even if there were differing views on how that should be accomplished.

Regarding Option D, Village Restoration, there was a dominant sentiment among residents that while the idea of a significant village reconstruction is an appealing vision - one that was started by parents of current Port Tobacco residents many decades ago and held dear ever since - there is also the recognition that doing so is impractical and unlikely to ever happen. Other participants, particularly those representing historic preservation interests were somewhat uneasy with the prospect of a construction effort of such magnitude, largely because of the inherent difficulty in interpreting a place with over 300 years of history.

Options C and D, however, seemed to resonate with many participants by varying degrees as being both reasonably desirable and feasible. It became abundantly clear that there was little interest among the group for any kind of new infill development as proposed in the Living Village option. There was also an increasing preference expressed for simple foundation outlines as opposed to ghost structures to demarcate former structure sites. Most importantly, though, was that there seemed to be an emerging comfort level for some combination of these two concepts as a vision for the next chapter in Port Tobacco's history.

2.4 Workshop 3: Proposed concept plan and consensus-building

Based on the analysis and input received up to this point in the process, a proposed “work-in-progress” concept plan for Port Tobacco Village was developed and presented to stakeholders at the 3rd and final workshop . The concept is largely a hybrid of the scenarios that were presented at the 2nd workshop which combine elements of the “Preservation Park” and “Living Village” options, while retaining the ability to implement a more robust “Village Restoration” option, incrementally and over a longer period of time, if it is determined to be desirable and feasible in the future. In this concept, the existing residential component

would eventually be phased out, nor would any new residential infill development occur.

A key theme of the concept is a reestablishment of a “public square,” on and around which public activities and programmatic elements would co-exist in a campus-like setting. This would enable the reemergence of Port Tobacco as an identifiable place with active uses, while retaining its historic integrity and value and dramatically increasing interest in visitation as a destination and historic resource.

The village square itself would be envisioned as a village green or great lawn, on which public use is encouraged. While the square

historically was a dirt surface, and not used as a green or park, creating a green would recreate the physical extent and presence of the square as the heart of the village while providing it with a contemporary and relevant function that would also attract visitors.

In this concept, rather than constructing numerous ghost structures or extensive reconstruction of former buildings, markers identifying the outlines of former building foundations, along

with interpretive kiosks or plaques would be included. In addition, unlike the Living Village option which relocated Burch House and the one room school house close to the village green,



Figure 37: Birds eye view of the “work-in-progress” concept plan for Port Tobacco Village

these buildings would be retained in their current, historic locations.

In order to increase the sense of place in the village and to create a critical mass of structures around the village green, this concept envisions three structures being installed around the green: 1) a small, single-story building reconstruction of the former “Lacey Store.” This could house administrative offices, displays, and/or potentially public restrooms; 2) a modified ghost structure with roof and open walls to house interpretive displays; and 3) a large semi-permanent tent between Chimney House and the Courthouse near the site of the former St. Charles Hotel for special events and receptions. Together, these would form a “campus-like” cluster of uses and activities.

Vehicular access and angled parking around the square was included in this concept, although the street and trails would be an unpaved, pervious surface – likely compacted, fine crushed stone with stabilizer to eliminate dust, mud, and washout. An environmentally friendly overflow parking lot for special events was introduced into this concept, and located in the area behind Stagg Hall and Chimney House. This parking lot would also be of the same pervious surface as the internal street system, and would be planted with rows of trees. It would also be screened with perimeter landscaping and a stone wall, making it virtually invisible from most, if not all vantage points in the village.

The village green would become a focal point that would become a desirable, widely-known, and in time, even

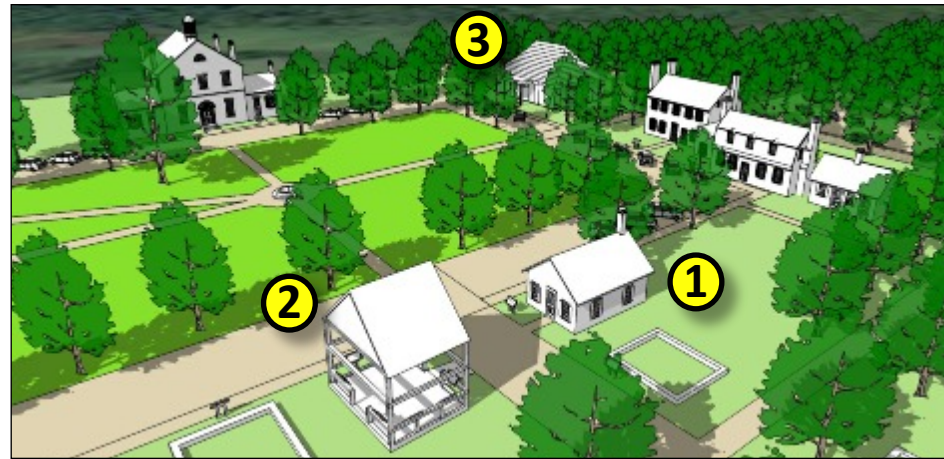


Figure 38: Work-in-progress concept: Proposed new structures: 1) Lacey Store reconstruction; 2) Interpretive exhibit structure; 3) Events tent



Figure 39: Work-in-progress concept: View of “green” parking lot.

beloved, destination for residents of Charles County and beyond. There would be nothing comparable to this place in Southern Maryland or perhaps even all of Maryland. This would become a popular place for coming to spend relaxing afternoons or attending a weekend event, whether it is a “concerts on the green”, an arts and crafts festival, a farmers market or just sitting on a blanket on a warm summer day with friends or family.

The attractiveness of the village square is envisioned not only to be from its aesthetic appeal as a green open space, but also that it is framed by authentic historic buildings, some of which are over 200 years old. These buildings would be augmented by foundation markers of former buildings. Depending on the popularity and activities of the village over time, the possibility of converting the foundation markers to reconstructed buildings is also retained as a possibility.

In short, Port Tobacco Village would become one of Charles County’s premier “postcard scenes” and help create a new image for the County as a destination.

Potential Uses and Activities

This concept carried forward much of the ideas in the Living Village that pertain to creating a “campus-like” cluster of historic buildings around the restored village green.

The buildings, including the Courthouse, Chimney House, Stagg Hall, and Quinsell Store, plus the grounds around them would all become publicly owned and managed by a new entity or organization to be determined at a later date. Port Tobacco



Figure 40: Work-in-progress concept: Birds eye view highlighting the village green as focal point.

would become a sought-after venue for wedding ceremonies and receptions, small corporate retreats, and a number of other potential uses ranging from educational, environmental, or other non-profit organization or institutional offices, and possibly a bed and breakfast. There is also the possibility of a County museum with visitor’s center housed in one or more of the buildings.

There would also be a strong recreational and heritage/eco-tourism component associated with the village including expanded historical archaeological and/or nature exhibits. The use of computer generated imagery (CGI) technology in exhibits to help visualize the former village would be developed as part of the historic exhibit experience, and particular emphasis would be placed on the town’s connection to Civil War history and the assassination of President Lincoln in attracting visitors.

Walking trails within the Village core and surrounding area would be developed, as well as bicycle trails that connect Port Tobacco

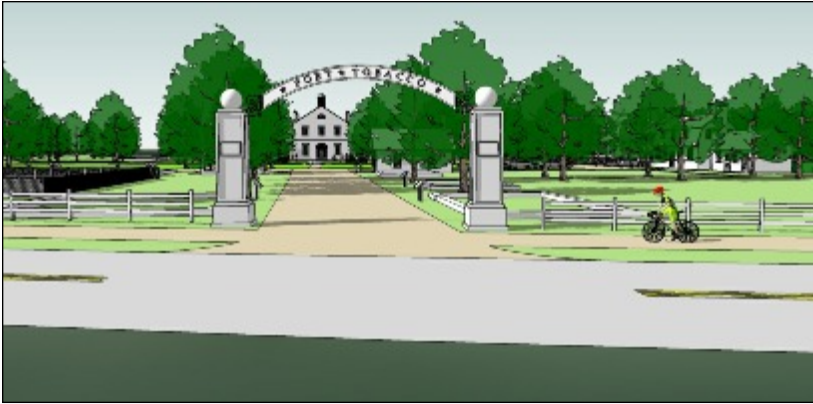


Figure 41: Work-in-progress concept: Proposed gateway monuments with entry arch. Note also the protected bicycle path and cyclist along Chapel Point Road frontage.

to nearby historic sites. The concept also includes a separated bicycle path along Chapel Point Road and a gateway feature at the main entrance to the village.

The presence of wetlands and extensive tree cover make this a desirable location for bird watching groups, and there is also the possibility for establishment of a kayaking center at the village.

The grounds and fields beyond the village square could potentially be developed as part of this concept in a number of compatible ways to increase interest as a destination. This could include organic and/or botanical gardens as well as introduction of limited equestrian activity and/or a petting zoo within the grounds near but beyond the village square in keeping with the village character and further increase interest as a destination.

Outcome

After presentation of the proposed village concept plan, workshop participants broke out into groups to discuss their thoughts and ideas about the concept. Afterward, each person was asked to provide individual feedback about the concept in the full group setting so that everyone could benefit from hearing everyone else's perspective. Participants provided a great deal of constructive feedback about particular elements, which was noted and taken into account by the consultant team.

At the conclusion of the session, it became readily apparent that, while there were some differing views on the details of certain programmatic elements of the proposal, broad support for the overall concept was emerging among the group.

The vast majority of participants expressed favorable views toward the concept as a vision to which Port Tobacco should aspire. At the same time, however, there was some skepticism that the concept could be implemented amid lingering questions about property ownership, management and funding remained challenging issues. Nevertheless, the goal of the workshop was not to directly address or resolve those issues, but rather to work toward consensus of a concept plan and vision.

Near the end of the workshop, consultant team leader Stuart Sirota asked the participants whether they could support the concept as a vision for Port Tobacco, assuming the details could be worked out, and every hand in the room went up.



3.0 Recommendations

3.0 Recommendations

3.1 Final Concept Plan and Vision

After the 3rd workshop, the consultant team made a number of refinements to the proposed village concept plan as well as incorporated several suggestions received during the workshop.

All other aspects of the proposed concept plan described in Section 2.4 remain intact and have been carried forward to the final village concept. An illustration of the final village concept

plan is shown in Figure 42 below. The refinements to the concept plan made since the 3rd workshop include the following:

- Automobile traffic circulation and parking has been eliminated around the village green. The unpaved perimeter around the green has been narrowed somewhat to reflect the elimination of parking and vehicle traffic, and areas that were planned as sidewalk around the perimeter have now been incorporated into an unpaved pedestrian promenade of fine crushed stone with bonding agent.

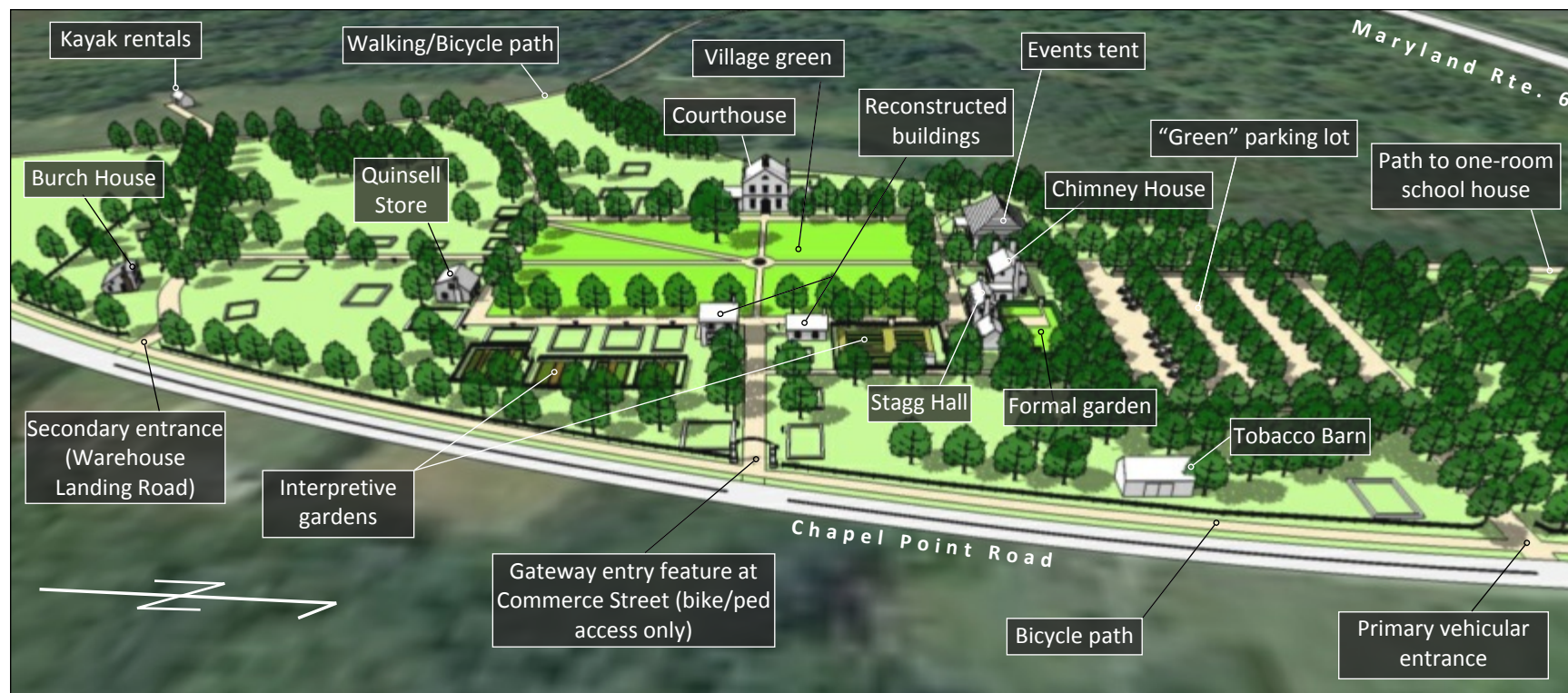


Figure 42: Recommended Port Tobacco Village Plan

- The traditional Commerce Street entrance into the Port Tobacco will become a bicycle and pedestrian only entrance that is no longer to be open to vehicular traffic except for emergency vehicle access. The primary vehicular entry will be to the new environmentally friendly “green” parking lot at the north end of the village, which will become the primary parking facility for Port Tobacco. This lot would be able to accommodate 120-150 vehicles depending on design configuration. A secondary vehicle entry location and potential overflow parking lot would be located at the south end of the village at the Warehouse Landing Road entrance near Burch House. This would also serve a potential kayak rental and launch area that may have a small unpaved parking lot.
- The proposed interpretive structure that had been proposed at the east side of the village green with roof and open walls will now be a fully enclosed structure with facade. This building would be a reconstruction of the simple two-story commercial building that once stood at this spot and would house exhibits or additional meeting or lodging space.
- The single large interpretive garden area originally proposed east of the village green has been divided into four smaller, separate gardens to better reflect their likely configuration. An additional interpretive garden has also been added between Stagg Hall and the proposed reconstructed Lacey Store in order to expand visual interest and diversity of activity.

Note: While several stakeholders provided additional suggestions for eliminating or modifying other aspects of the concept design,

the consultant team incorporated those changes that it determined would improve (or not weaken) the plan. The team ultimately felt that it is important to retain the other characteristics of the concept as proposed in order to convey what it sees as the most compelling vision possible. Once adopted, the concept will undoubtedly undergo additional refinements and there will be ample opportunity to debate and tweak specific design and programmatic elements that will best support Port Tobacco’s renaissance.

3.2 Assessment of the opportunity

This process was successful in developing a village concept plan that garnered broad stakeholder support. This, combined with Charles County’s stated policy goals of priority investment of Port Tobacco as an important cultural and historic resource, provides a clear mandate to dedicate resources and effort toward making this vision a reality.

There is a significant opportunity to showcase the unique, singular qualities of Port Tobacco through implementation of this vision. Port Tobacco should be developed as the centerpiece and hub connecting a cluster of important historic and cultural sites including the Thomas Stone National Historic Site, St. Ignatius Church, Chapel Point State Park and a number of county parklands in the area.

Leveraging this unique position could help enhance Charles County’s image as a special place. Port Tobacco is the geographic center of Charles County and because of its historic location as the original county seat, all roads and towns in the County seem to emanate outward directly from Port Tobacco. Making Port Tobacco a showcase destination could lead to significant

encompasses the historic boundaries of the village square and the structures that front it.

Stagg Hall, Chimney House, and several undeveloped parcels within and around the village square area are currently available for purchase. Figure 43 highlights the parcels in the village core in yellow and outlines the undeveloped parcels and the Courthouse. The dashed black line represents the historic extent of the Port Tobacco square. While the Courthouse is not currently for sale, it is owned by the non-profit Society for the Preservation of Port Tobacco. Charles County should work closely with that organization to explore an ownership transfer or an alternative agreement that increases the County's role in management and disposition of the site.

If possible, Charles County should also move forward with acquisition of Stagg Hall, which is part of a soon-to-be-expired purchase option brokered through the Trust for Public Land, as well as Chimney House, which has recently been listed for sale by its owners, the Volmans. Both properties are outlined in blue in Figure 43.

While acquiring these properties represent a substantially larger financial commitment than the undeveloped lands and the Courthouse, they are critical elements in the village concept plan and therefore, until the County or a preservation organization that is supportive of the plan controls them, there is a continuous high risk that the village concept will be indefinitely unable to be implemented and the opportunity will be lost.

If imminent purchase of those properties is not feasible, the County should investigate creating preservation easements on the structures as well as the grounds.

Acquisition of the adjacent Wade and Compton parcels should also be investigated as these lands are also essential to completing the village plan grounds, facilities, and preserving the character of the rural landscape at the edges of the village core.

3. Form working group and build momentum. PGM should immediately form a working group of Port Tobacco stakeholders to expand and continue negotiations about property acquisition, preservation activities, and forming a framework for management of expanded public activities and facilities in the village. Work with the Society for the Restoration of Port Tobacco and the Town of Port Tobacco to develop a Memorandum of Understanding for the use, maintenance and operations of public property within the village.

Short term actions (0-3 years).

Follow up efforts. These additional county-sponsored efforts will be required:

1. Integrate the Port Tobacco Village Plan into the implementation of the 2012 Charles County Tourism Destination Plan. Port Tobacco should be established as a key destinational assets proposed for enhancement and site development.
2. Develop detailed designs and cost estimates for the village green, trail network, and the preservation and reuse of key historic structures.
3. Investigate the feasibility of restoring the Port Tobacco River for kayaking and small craft. It is important to provide a visual

connection to the Port Tobacco River from the historic village area.

4. Conduct a full market study to quantify economic benefits of Port Tobacco village and identify specific village uses. This will also be useful in supporting applications for additional funding initiatives. This should also include detailed analysis of reuse of Stagg Hall, Chimney House, and the Courthouse as part of a complex, rather than individual uses.

5. Begin an ongoing educational and marketing campaign to promote the vision to potential visitors, groups, and to attract interested tenant organizations and operators/institutions. This should include production of a first rate promotional video with visualizations.

6. Build partnerships with other agencies and organizations to create synergies.

7. Work with the Trust for Public Lands and other entities to

investigate the acquisition of large undeveloped parcels south of the village core.

8. Upgrade visitor services to make Port Tobacco fully marketable. Utilize or augment Charles County visitor center staff to provide adequate staffing and regular hours of operation in the village. This could potentially be housed in the Courthouse or Stagg Hall, if and when it is acquired.

Mid term actions (3-5 years)

1. Construct village green and associated infrastructure including public restrooms and parking lot.

2. Construct Phase 1 trail network.

3. Facilitate kayak launch/rental facility (if determined to be feasible).

3. Complete additional property acquisition as necessary.

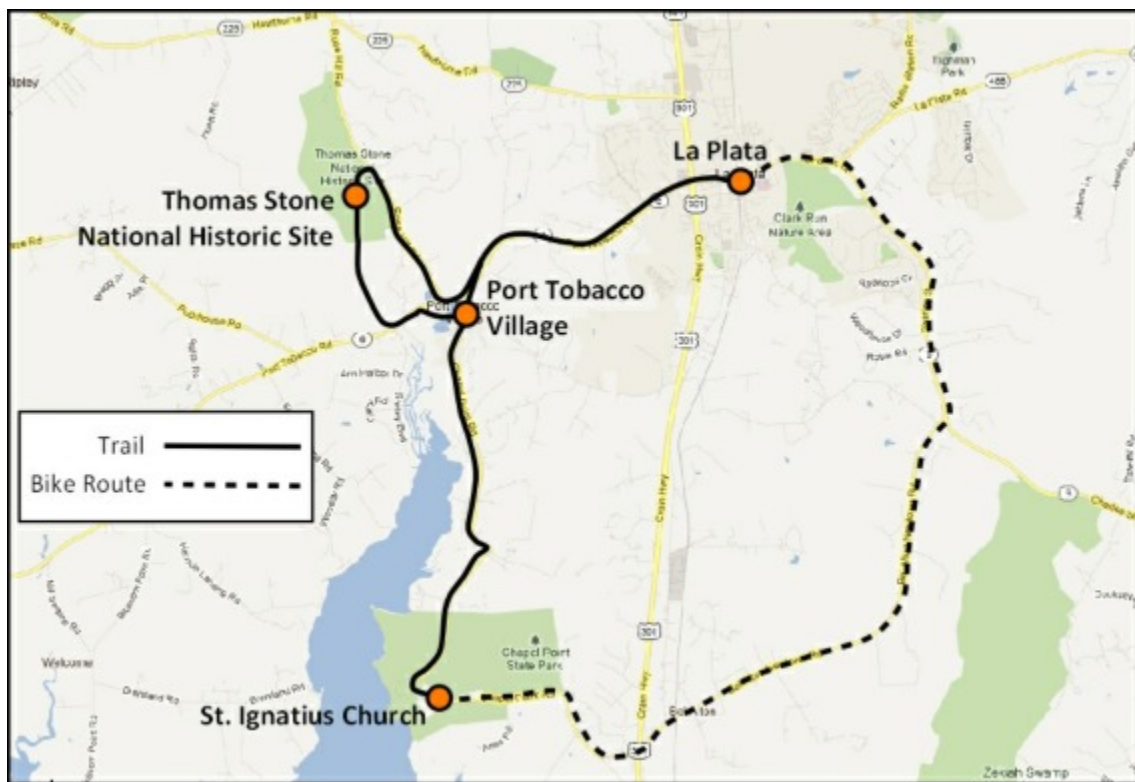


Figure 44: Proposed 15 mile bicycle tour loop. Phase 1 would connect Port Tobacco to La Plata and Thomas Stone. Phase 2 would extend the trail to St. Ignatius Church.

4.0 Appendices

Appendix A: Stagg Hall Reuse Analysis

INTRODUCTION

This report provides a summary of findings from a Market Analysis for Stagg Hall, an historic, privately-owned home located in the Port Tobacco area of Charles County, Maryland. The market analysis examined the house in terms of its basic marketability for various uses within the context of the surrounding historic village and its location within Charles County. Demand for reuse of Stagg Hall for meeting space, weddings, museum, and events and functions was forecasted. Comparable and competitive facilities were also examined in order to determine the potential for the house within the competitive framework.

In the course of this work, it became apparent that Stagg Hall would have more sustainable use as part of a broader concept for reuse and revitalization of the entire Port Tobacco village. As such, opportunities were identified for broader reuse concepts that incorporated Stagg Hall but also other portions of the village. Comparable villages were assessed to provide context on the types of uses that might be possible. However, this study was not meant to determine or forecast the potentials for Port Tobacco, so the overall market has not been tested for the village as a whole. Nevertheless, based on the “opportunities assessment” for Port Tobacco, the concept of using Stagg Hall to accommodate overnight guest rooms was identified as part of the broader concept, and it is this lodging use that was tested further through a financial pro forma.

The following report briefly summarizes the result of site assessments and field reconnaissance in Section 1. A description of several comparable facilities is provided in Section 2, while the market forecasts are provided in Section 3. Finally, Section 4 provides an operations scenario for Stagg Hall for marketing, management, and financial structure including a pro forma analysis. This analysis is based on a scenario whereby Stagg Hall is used as a lodging facility as part of a meeting and retreat center.

Section 1. SITE ASSESSMENT

A thorough site assessment was conducted of Stagg Hall, in order to assess physical conditions, location, accessibility, historic relevance, context, and other factors impacting on its general marketability for various types of adaptive use. The site assessment was informed by field reconnaissance to the site, Port Tobacco, and the Charles County area; as well as by background information collected and reviewed on the heritage of the house and Port Tobacco in local, regional and national history.

Stagg Hall Significance

For any historic home that would be marketed in part because of its appeal as a heritage site, it is important to understand the role of the property in the historical context. Stagg Hall is approaching its 300th birthday, having originally been built between 1739 and 1746 (with substantial additions during the 1750s) by local merchant John Parnham. The gambrel roof frame house originally formed part of the Port Tobacco community, with 80 buildings an

important tobacco port and seat of government serving the prosperous plantations of southern Maryland for nearly 200 years. Historians consider the house “one of Charles County’s finest surviving examples of mid-eighteenth century regional domestic architecture.” The house was nominated for listing in the National Register in 1988 and its great room’s original wood paneling has been displayed in Chicago’s Art Institute before being returned to Stagg Hall. The house is notable for its original features, including large end chimneys, exterior finishes, interior woodwork and doors, cornices, wainscoting, and windows.

Stagg Hall has been owned by prominent families since its construction. However, few of the individual names would be recognized outside of the local area: Zephaniah Turner, Thomas Ridgate, Robert Fergusson, Basil Spalding, and the Padgett and Parnham families among them. Thus, recognition of Stagg Hall itself does not extend far beyond the architectural significance of the house and its retained features. What is more powerful, in terms of interpretation of the house to an audience or a market, is its role in the development, events, and stories of the town of Port Tobacco in the 18th and 19th centuries. This broader context is discussed further later in this section.

Physical Conditions

While a very fine example of the regional architecture of its day, Stagg Hall is in need of restoration and rehabilitation. There is a need to examine the relevance of various elements not original to the house in interpretation of its heritage. There is also an apparent need to shore up the structural integrity of the house and ensure its safety for future generations. In addition to the house itself,

there is the need to examine the lost heritage of various outbuildings, gardens and landscaping that once complemented the structure as part of a larger estate. There is already active archeological study and interpretation of the broader Port Tobacco village site, particularly surrounding the courthouse, but there is an opportunity to further work on the lost heritage at Stagg Hall.

The house has only about 750 square feet on the ground floor plus upstairs living space. As such, it is relatively small when compared with some of the grand estates in the region and nationally which house weddings, meetings, and other events. Further limiting the physical use of the space is the configuration of the house, with relatively small rooms for accommodating social gatherings. There is no large ballroom or other such space that would have the capacity to accommodate more than 30 people. As such, at least 2/3 of the market for event space may not be physically accommodated within the house. Another constraint to marketing the house is the lack of a grand entrance way on the order of comparable estate homes that elicit strong positive responses upon entering.

At present, entry is limited to the back of the house while the front entrance is relatively hidden by the off-center staircase. Overall, the size of the house, particularly its small social rooms, and configuration of the spaces present physical limitations on capacity and therefore the marketability of the space for meetings and functions. That being said, there may be opportunities for an historic architect to help alleviate some constraints through restoration of original spaces and entryways that open and enliven the visitor experience.

Port Tobacco Historical and Natural Setting

The house was also assessed in the context of its location within Port Tobacco and Charles County. Port Tobacco provides an exceptional historic and natural setting. This setting is very important to the marketability of the village and Stagg Hall for various types of community and tourist functions. Also impacting on marketability is the location and accessibility of the site to the primary market base.

Economic History

The village served as the County Seat until the late 19th century and therefore provided a center for the county's civic, economic and cultural life until the advent of the railroad and the relocation of the County Seat to La Plata. The port functioned as an important early gateway for local tobacco product bound for European markets. Situated on a scenic branch of the Potomac River, the village was strategically located just south of Georgetown and the new nation's capital city. The shift from a water-based to rail-based economy and the relocation of the courthouse effectively ended Port Tobacco's reign as the primary economic hub for Charles County. That economic history, in and of itself, is worthy of interpretation.

Civil War and Booth History

Port Tobacco was also a center of Confederate activity during the Civil War, and reached certain notoriety during the search for Lincoln assassin John Wilkes Booth. Sympathizers in southern Maryland helped Booth escape into Virginia. Various personalities that played a role in this dramatic saga, such as the infamous Dr.

Mudd, are remembered through historic tours that include in their itineraries the Mudd home in Charles County.

Historic Sites and Scenic Routes

While only four of the original 80+ Port Tobacco buildings remain, there is still a sense of place generated by the position of the restored Courthouse at the foot of an undeveloped green, framed by several historic houses including Stagg Hall and its neighbor Chimney House. Within a short walking distance from Stagg Hall is the one-room schoolhouse building, itself an historic site although representing a different era. A short drive away is Habredeventure Mansion, center of the Thomas Stone National Historic Site, maintained by the National Park Service. That site has national significance as the home of Thomas Stone, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Other historic sites nearby include the historic Catslide House, St. Thomas Manor, Chapel Point State Park and St. Ignatius Church. A replica of the home of John Hanson, first president of the U.S. Continental Congress, is located just south of Port Tobacco.

The Port Tobacco River waterway has silted up to the village but retains a natural beauty as undeveloped wetlands backing up to the courthouse. Further downstream, the water opens up and provides a beautiful setting for waterfront neighborhoods, several of which have access to the water through docks and boat slips. The surrounding topography provides a stunning backdrop, especially at sunset. The drive south along the river from Port Tobacco is particularly scenic, culminating in a dramatic view from the beautiful St. Ignatius Church and its historic cemetery.

Lack of Development

Importantly, the setting for Stagg Hall remains relatively undeveloped and undisturbed by modern signage, lighting, utilities and buildings. This quiet area retains a rural character and an historic patina. This undisturbed, natural setting is extremely important in marketing the house and the Port Tobacco area not only for tourist-related activity but also as a setting for meetings, weddings, and events.

Archaeology

Due to the significant history of this village and the fact that there has been little new development to disrupt the site, there is significant interest in archeological discovery relating to Port Tobacco. Ongoing archeological digs have helped unearth artifacts that have helped interpret the site and increase our knowledge about the daily life of its inhabitants over nearly three centuries. The presence of active archeological activity provides additional value to the site for marketing to visitors and for the purposes of education and training.

Access & Exposure

Port Tobacco is located off of Route 6, about one mile from US301. While the site is proximate to La Plata, it is relatively isolated from the heart of the Washington Metropolitan Area and from major population, tourism, and employment centers. This relative isolation can work in favor of marketing Port Tobacco and Stagg Hall, by strengthening its appeal as an historic site worthy of “stepping back in time” for meetings, events, relaxation,

recreation, and visitor activities. On the other hand, the visitor base is likely to be smaller because of the site’s distance from the major tourism hubs and population centers in the region. In order to overcome this isolation and appeal to the primary market base represented by the Washington Metropolitan Area, the site would have to become a destination. Stagg Hall, given its lack of physical capacity, may not have the power to draw significant market from outside of Charles County unless it is part of a broader destination venue that includes all of Port Tobacco.

Brand and Naming

What Port Tobacco lacks in physical exposure, it makes up partly through its exceptional name. The Port Tobacco “brand” can be very powerful for marketing purposes as it is relatively unique and evokes a very specific time and place. Every effort should be made by Charles County to protect this name as possible for the purposes of marketing and branding the site and those products generated locally in support of Charles County history and tourism. The name Stagg Hall also has unique characteristics and can be helpful in marketing the site.

Summary

Stagg Hall is an exceptional house with significant Colonial-era architecture and a beautiful and historic setting in Port Tobacco. The house is positioned in a somewhat isolated location, which serves as a “two-edged sword” by helping to protect it from modern distractions but at the same time limiting its exposure to the broader market base of a major metropolitan area. There is significant opportunity for further restoration and use of

archeological sites to interpret the unique heritage of the house and its surrounding location. Adjacent wetlands and nearby heritage and natural sites provide an exceptional setting for events, community and visitor activities. The house itself retains much of its original fittings and material, but the size and configuration are constraints to marketing to attract the majority of meetings and event rentals. While Stagg Hall itself lacks an association with recognizable people or events, it is part of a very marketable historic village with potential for brand recognition and exceptional historic interpretation associated with a specific time and place.

Section 2. COMPARABLE FACILITIES

This section provides an overview of several facilities comparable to Stagg Hall within the region. These facilities are generally comprised of historic homes in outlying locations of or near southern Maryland, offering a related or relevant story for interpretation. Several of the comparable facilities offer a similar setting in an historic village or port, and played a similar role in Southern Maryland history. Data and information on these facilities was collected through interviews and secondary sources in order to assess the existing market demographics, sources and trends in visitation to help inform the market analysis for Stagg Hall.

Mt. Calvert Historical & Archeological Park

Mt. Calvert, like Port Tobacco, has a relatively isolated location on the eastern fringe of Prince George's County. The facility is operated as a public park by the Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission (M-NCPPC). Also like Port Tobacco, Mt. Calvert once offered a port situated at the head of a tributary that

once served as a transportation to deliver local agricultural product to market. Mt. Calvert operated as a plantation with its own port landing, rather than a full village, but there were multiple buildings on site at the height of operations. Similar to Port Tobacco, there has been an interest in archeology at the site and Mt. Calvert serves as the county's primary archeological site and museum. About 3,460 people visit the site each year on average, and attendance has remained relatively steady over time. A surprising share of visitation is generated by water-borne kayakers who happen to be visiting the park's headwaters and only once there learn about the presence of the museum and historic site.

Thomas Stone National Historic Site

Thomas Stone NHS attracts an average of about 5,700 visitors per year. The site is located within a mile of the Port Tobacco area and attracts attendance from a relatively broad regional and national base. Because of the historical significance of Thomas Stone as a signer of the Declaration of Independence, his home has a unique draw to those interested in American history. Information about the house is also available on the National Park Service web site, which provides access and exposure to a national audience.

Dr. Samuel Mudd House

The home of Dr. Samuel Mudd also draws regional and national interest because of the history relating to its owner and his role in the assassination of President Lincoln. Mudd, a Southern sympathizer, treated wounds suffered by John Wilkes Booth during his leap from the stage of Ford's Theatre. The Mudd House is located in Charles County and therefore shares certain synergies

for tourism development with Port Tobacco and Stagg Hall. The house is included in tours oriented to the Booth story, with attendance increasing over time from about 3,500 in 2003.

Surratt House

The Mary Surratt House, located in Prince George’s County, attracts about 8,700 visitors per year. The number of visitors has increased with the advent of tours focused on the Booth story and the assassination of President Lincoln. A recent film which drew particular attention to the role that Mary Sarratt and her family played in protecting Booth have drawn further attention to her story and to the house where she lived. The house featured prominently in the film.

Other Key Sites

Other comparable or relevant sites include Darnall’s Chance, an historic home that attracts about 3,700 visitors per year, and Tudor Hall (and the Old Jail Museum), with a similar number of visitors. Sotterley Plantation attracts about 15,000 visitors per year. Jefferson Patterson Park & Museum, which offers a broader cluster of historic buildings more on the scale of Port Tobacco as a whole, attracts upwards of 26,000 visitors per year. Historic St. Mary’s City, an even larger full-scale historic town with costumed docents, attracts more than 60,000 visitors according to local administrators.

Section 3. MARKET FINDINGS

The Market Analysis forecasted demand for the adaptive use of Stagg Hall for rentals and tourism uses. Ultimately, a key objective of the market analysis was to determine the “highest and best economic use” for the house that could help generate sustainable income to help fund the long-term protection, interpretation, and public access to this wonderful historic home. The market analysis focused on potential uses for Stagg Hall, but it was determined that potential use would be much greater if the house were to be incorporated into a broader concept for Port Tobacco including the adjacent Chimney House. As such, an “opportunities assessment” was conducted to identify possible marketing concepts for Stagg Hall within this broader framework. Findings from the opportunities assessment are provided in Section 4.

Demand for Rentals

Demand for rental use of Stagg Hall was forecasted, with a focus on use of the house for meetings, weddings and other events. Demand for rentals was forecasted based in part on user surveys, comparable facilities and demographic analysis. Two models were tested, one of which was focused on potential for the house assuming it would continue to be constrained by its existing capacity. The second model tested potentials assuming that capacity could somehow be increased through physical changes to the house. However, it was determined that such changes would likely violate the historic character of the house and threaten its listing on the National Register. Thus, the findings from only one model are discussed herein.

Based on this analysis, not more than 12 meetings, receptions, and other events per year should be expected to rent Stagg Hall space, configured as it is now. This assumes weddings and certain other events would utilize outdoor/garden space as well. The 12 rentals at present would consist of about 4 meetings, two wedding receptions, and six other events

Table 1. STAGG HALL MEETING AND EVENT USE POTENTIALS, 2012-2028

Space/Event	2012	2017	2023	2028
TOTAL	12	13	14	15
Meetings	4	4	4	5
Wed/Reception	2	2	3	3
Other Events	6	6	7	8

Source: Randall Gross / Development Economics.

Over time, the increase in population and user base, along with development of a reputation over time, will help increase the potential for the facility to attract up to 13 events in 2017 and more by 2028.

Meeting & Event Attendance

Attendance at rental events in Stagg Hall would total about 210 to 220 per year, increasing to about 320 by 2028. This attendance would be split between meetings, weddings/receptions, and other events.

Table 2. STAGG HALL MEETING AND EVENT ATTENDANCE POTENTIALS, 2012-2028

Space/Event	2012	2017	2023	2028
TOTAL	212	268	295	322
Meetings	70	77	84	92
Wed/Reception	91	99	108	119
Other Events	51	93	102	111

Source: Randall Gross / Development Economics.

Attendance at meetings would total approximately 70, while attendance at wedding receptions could exceed 90. Attendance at other events would be about 50 over the course of a full year. Attendance is relatively low because the house cannot accommodate large groups at any given time. Capacity is particularly constrained for meetings, which would require a single room with sufficient seating to accommodate attendance. In general, the house could accommodate very small meetings, such as a board meeting of four to ten people, perhaps up to 15 if the interior space could be re-configured without compromising its historic integrity. Receptions and open-house types of events would have more flexibility in terms of the use of the space. As a result, attendance at wedding receptions and parties would be higher, so long as there is no requirement for seated dinners.

Museum & Lodging Opportunities

In addition to meetings and events, Stagg Hall could also be made available for organized tours and walk-in tourists. Tourism

potentials, in terms of attendance to a museum, were forecasted. If Stagg Hall were to become part of a broader visitor concept, then there is the possibility that Stagg Hall could accommodate guest rooms for visitors. This lodging alternative was tested as input to a financial pro forma, but the viability of such a concept is highly dependent on the market for the broader visitor or meeting center concept for Port Tobacco, which has not been tested.

Museum

House Museum potentials were determined based on participation rates (the rate at which the population visits historic houses) and population growth within the primary market area (defined as Southern Maryland). “Inflow” to this area from Prince George’s County, DC and other “day-trippers” from within the region, as well as overnight visitors, was also calculated. Overall tourism flow was also examined based on data from economic impact assessments (which estimated 846,000 visitors to the county in 2010), visitor’s centers, local tourism offices, and other inputs.

Comparable house museums and visitor facilities were also examined and considered in determining potential for a tourist site or museum in Stagg Hall. Among the most comparable venues were Thomas Stone National Historic Site, Mt. Calvert Historical & Archeological Park, Dr. Samuel Mudd House, the Mary Surratt House, Darnall’s Chance, and several others.

Key issues with many of the historic sites within Charles County include the fact that their operating structures are comprised of volunteers, they operate on shoe-string budgets and are only open

on a seasonal basis, and there is little marketing or merchandising to increase revenue stream to support them.

It is assumed that Stagg Hall would accommodate a small interpretive visitor facility including permanent or rotating interpretive exhibits as well as gardens and special exhibitions. Stagg Hall tourism visitor potentials are summarized below from 2012 through 2028, disaggregated by source markets for these visitors.

Table 3. STAGG HALL TOURISM POTENTIALS, 2012-2028

Source Markets	2012	2017	2022	2028
Calvert County	158	133	137	141
Charles County	363	283	311	336
St. Mary's County	188	167	183	198
Inflow	674	554	600	641
Total	1,384	1,137	1,232	1,316

Source: Randall Gross / Development Economics.

A total of about 1,400 museum visitors per year could be expected at Stagg Hall during the 2012-2017 period. The primary market area would include day trippers from within southern Maryland, including Charles County, Calvert County, and St. Mary’s County. Additional visitors would be generated primary by day trippers from other parts of the Washington Metropolitan Area and visitors to Washington, DC. There would be a slight decrease in visitation

after 2017 since many local residents from the primary market area would have visited the site and would not return unless there are significant changes or updates.

In general, the site has some disadvantages including its relative isolation from the core heritage visitor areas of Washington. Stagg Hall, while historic, lacks the draw of other house museums in the region which offer the unique stories of nationally or internationally recognized individuals. Stagg Hall was not the home of a President or a signer of the Declaration of Independence (as was nearby Haberdeventure (Thomas Stone National Historic Site). Nor was it a key site in the popular John Wilkes Booth story (“Escape of an Assassin”), although more broadly, Port Tobacco is a part of that story. Nor does Stagg Hall offer exceptional architecture. It was not part of a massive farm. There are no major gardens or other attractions. The “Stagg Hall Story,” while interesting, is not so exceptional when compared with the many house museums in the Washington region.

Thus, the house by itself would likely have modest visitation, assuming an excellent exhibition would be established at the house to describe the history of Port Tobacco and the house itself, the people and farmland of the region, and unique characteristics of the house and the people who lived there.

Guest Rooms

It is assumed that Stagg Hall could accommodate up to three guest rooms for use by visitors. For the purposes of the financial pro forma, the potential use of these rooms was determined based on limited visitation relating to meetings and retreats.

Based on this assumed market, Stagg Hall should be able to capture about **200 to 250 room-nights** in a stabilized year, yielding an occupancy rate of about 19% to 22%. Demand was forecasted based on the assumption of an average 2.0-night stay for retreat visitors and 1.0 to 1.5 nights for other visitors, with about 20% of visits including an overnight stay. It is likely that occupancy and room rates will vary seasonally, with the primary season stretching from April until November.

Summary

The Market Analysis found that, while there is demand for use of Stagg Hall, physical constraints limit its potential to a fairly narrow meeting and event market for small local groups. Stagg Hall, if restored to its original state, would attract perhaps 20 rentals and up to 1,000 people per year for meetings, weddings & receptions, and other events. Another 1,400 museum visitors could also be attracted from around the region and beyond. Thus total attendance could approach 2,400 per year in initial years of operation, assuming that both a museum and events could be accommodated concurrently within the house (which may not be physically possible). By comparison, Thomas Stone NHS attracts about 5,700, Mt. Calvert Historical and Archeological Park attracts 3,460 and the Surratt House Museum (on the Booth trail in Prince George’s County) attracts more than 8,700 per year.

Stagg Hall could also accommodate up to three guest rooms to service a broader Port Tobacco meeting and retreat type concept. Under this scenario, Stagg Hall would logically capture demand for up to about 200 to 250 room-nights per year, generating occupancy of 19% to 22%. These numbers form the basis for testing the

financial sustainability of the use of the house for this purpose. Ultimately, the objective is to generate sufficient income to help sustain the house as an historic resource available for the enjoyment and education of the public.

Section 4. STAGG HALL OPERATIONS SCENARIO

A conceptual scenario for marketing, management, and funding of Stagg Hall operations are provided in this section. These are based on the findings of both the Market Analysis and the operating Pro Forma for Stagg Hall, and incorporate the community’s vision for Port Tobacco. In this scenario, Stagg Hall serves primarily as a lodging facility in support of a meeting and retreat center.

Marketing

The Site Assessment and Market Analysis suggest that Stagg Hall would be more apt to capture a market and generate income to support its restoration if it is incorporated into a broader concept for marketing all of Port Tobacco. The community’s stakeholders have embraced the idea of a broader Port Tobacco restoration project. Namely, the project would, in its initial phases, focus on attracting visitors through the restoration and marketing of the village as a meeting and retreat center. The Courthouse would continue to serve as the primary venue for meetings and events, including weddings and other functions. But there would also be restoration of the other remaining buildings original to Port Tobacco, including Stagg Hall.

Stagg Hall would accommodate up to three guest rooms for over-night stay (bed & breakfast) associated with meetings and events held at the retreat center. There would be restoration of the civic green to re-establish a sense of a public square and civic space for community functions and events. The village might eventually evolve into a broader heritage village and museum or interpretation facility to attract tourism. The market for this amalgamated concept and its various components has not been tested.

Marketing strategies for Stagg Hall, under this restoration scenario would focus at least initially on bookings related to the meetings, events and retreats held in Port Tobacco. Thus, Stagg Hall would be marketed as part of an overall retreat center package to include meeting and event space (at the Courthouse), guest rooms (at Stagg Hall and Chimney House), food & beverage (at either the Courthouse or Chimney House), grounds for event use, heritage trails, and passive and active site interpretation (markers, archeological sites, tours, etc).

Management

The management of Stagg Hall would, similar to the booking and marketing systems, be integrated with the overall management of Port Tobacco. An appropriate model for management of this facility would be a not-for profit (501(c)3) or County entity that could be established to manage all activities at Port Tobacco, as well as an eventual County Museum and other historic sites around Charles County. The board of this organization might include County agencies along with private funders, archeologists, historic

preservation and conservation organizations, a National Park Service representative, and local property owners.

Financial

STAGG HALL LODGING PRO FORMA

Gross Revenue

Room & Breakfast	\$	23,720
Gifts		499
Total		24,219

Cost of Sales

Food		1,294
Gifts		250
Net Cost of Sales		1,543

Gross Income 22,675

Variable Expenses

Room/House Supply		918
Hourly Employees		12,035
F&B /PT Employees		3,009
Utilities		1,048
Towels & Linens		501
Total		17,512

Fixed Operating Expenses

Marketing		513
Commissions		-
Office Supplies		64
Telephone/Web		799

Travel		-
Dues & Subscriptions		64
Auto		128
Maintenance		1,797
Contracts		257
Insurance		1,098
Legal & Accounting		235
Business Taxes		-
Interest		-
Other Expenses		513
Total		5,469

Total Expenses \$ 22,982

NOI* (before debt) \$ (306)

Sources: So Maryland B&B/Inns, Professional Association of Innkeepers Intl, and Randall Gross / Development Economics.

*Net Operating Income

Funding

Initial funding for restoration could be generated several ways, including a capital campaign led by the non-profit operator and/or County Government. The County could logically contribute funds towards restoration and start-up of operations for the site. Again, restoration (and interior reconfiguration) of Stagg Hall could be wrapped into the broader restoration effort for all of Port Tobacco. A strategic plan would be developed that would establish a capital funding mechanism to ensure that restoration proceeds appropriately and that the site is protected from disaster and encroachment.

Operations of Stagg Hall would be funded primarily through guest room (B&B) sales. The pro forma analysis seems to suggest that Stagg Hall could be nearly self-supporting on the net operating income generated through room sales and ancillary activities. A small cross-subsidy might be required that could draw income from meeting/ retreat and event sales. The model assumes that the guest rooms and overall concept operate as a non-profit enterprise and thus, exempt from taxes and certain other costs. Like Colonial Williamsburg and other heritage sites, revenue is often generated through non-profit enterprises that cross-subsidize the educational, restoration, and civic purposes of the facility.

Summary

Stagg Hall would be operated, marketed and funded as part of a broader retreat center facility. Stagg Hall guest rooms would be packaged with meeting space to market the broader concept to prospective venue users with over-night guests. A non-profit or government entity would manage the property but could generate revenues in support of operations so long as the facility meets its educational and heritage restoration purpose. Stagg Hall can generate sufficient room revenues to almost meet the cost for operation. Some of Stagg Hall's operations could also be cross-subsidized through the meeting, retreat and event contracts. However, the viability and sustainability of Stagg Hall would need to be tested as part of a broader market and financial assessment for Port Tobacco, as the house would be fully integrated into the operations of the broader concept.

Appendix B: Workshop Summary Details

Workshop 1 Synthesis Summary 3.2.12

The following is a summary of themes that emerged during the table exercises of the first workshop, held on February 15th, 2012, including points of broad agreement and areas of varying or differing views among stakeholders.

Common Themes of Discussion

- Restoration and historic preservation of the village as a priority.
- Acquisition of land and/or buildings for preservation purposes.
- Green space and access to the water.
- The Village of Port Tobacco evolving into a destination within a regional context.
- Walking and bicycle paths (particularly with respect to connections to other nearby historic sites); kayaking on the river.
- Visitors Center and/or museum or interpretive center, educational facilities.
- The benefits and challenges of special events and programming.
- Wetlands, stormwater management and protection of water quality.
- The compatibility of any future development with existing historic buildings.

Points of Broad Agreement

- **Historic preservation** is vital to Port Tobacco's identity and future. The priority is to restore and protect historic buildings within and around the Village Square, including Stagg Hall, Chimney House, Burch House, the Courthouse, the two barns and the schoolhouse.
- It's important to also preserve the **historic integrity and character of the Village Square** itself with respect to any development, including a Visitors Center. The square should be a very walkable space, with picnic tables, etc., to create an outdoor gathering spot.
- Stakeholders agreed that there's value in the **ongoing archaeological work** in Port Tobacco, which would be of interest to visitors. The archaeologists pointed to the need to protect archaeological resources as a good reason to acquire and protect land within the village.
- **Preservation of green space and better stormwater management** are also important, given areas of severe runoff within the Village. The focus should be on the wetlands behind the Courthouse running north up to and along the road, as well as the forested area running across the south.
- It's important to **protect water quality** in the area in terms of runoff and protection of the wetlands, and there'd be some value in providing **access to the river for kayaking**, etc.
- **Port Tobacco should have a footpath**, running along its west side through the Wetlands behind the Courthouse and north to the road, connecting Thomas Stone, the Village Square and surrounding natural areas. The Village would also benefit from having a **safe bike path** connecting it to Thomas Stone and possibly St. Ignatius.
- **Port Tobacco should have a Visitors Center** (some also mentioned a possible **Nature Center**) with educational materials, exhibits and activities related to its history and natural resources. The consensus is that it should be located at the edge of or just outside the Village, rather than in the Village Square.
- Other ideas include **Ghost Structures** to represent former buildings, with some disagreement about where they should be located.

- Port Tobacco could potentially host a variety of **events tied to history, archaeology and nature**, as well as concerts, wine festivals, weddings and/or holiday festivities.

The Village should have **green (i.e. pervious) parking**, and it would be best to locate the main parking lot at the Visitors Center outside the Village Square.

Stakeholders have **mixed feelings about the liquor store** located where Chapel Point Road meets Route 6. They see some value in having a corner store there, but note that it serves as the gateway to Port Tobacco and this particular store could be improved.

Points of Varying or Differing Views

The Village as a place to live. Stakeholders' views vary on the subject of whether Port Tobacco should continue to exist as a rural community where people live. Some said as time goes on and it becomes more of a visitors' destination, it wouldn't make sense for the Village to remain a place where people live because of potential conflicts with tourism. Others see value in planning to have a few residents who live and work in the Village as a way of ensuring a secure environment and serving as "eyes and ears" to stay on top of any issues that arise.

Additional development. There was a wide range of views among stakeholders about whether it would be appropriate to allow development in the Village, although their individual views did seem to evolve toward greater consensus as they discussed it. Aside from the widely shared belief that development should be very limited, they offered the following views:

- o Some said the only thing appropriate to build within the Village would be a Visitors Center, and that it should be located some distance from the Village Square, at the edge of the Village or even just outside it. It should include the main parking lot.
- o Several stakeholders who said development would be acceptable offered several opinions on what should be allowed – either "Ghost Structures" representing some of the original structures within the Village, or some level of new residential construction, as long as the design was "done right." This inferred that stringent guidelines would be needed to ensure that the design and aesthetics of any new construction would blend with the character of the historic architecture in the Village.
- o At least one stakeholder sees value in recreating one of the original structures to serve as a museum or historical site within the Village.

- o Another person suggested allowing some “live/work” units in the Village Square area, so that people can maintain income-producing office space on the ground floor of a residence. Her group generally supported the idea.
- o An important question still to be addressed is how commercial the Village should be allowed to become as it goes through this transition. Stakeholders generally seemed leery of any commercial development in the village.

The Role of Charles County Government. Stakeholders hold a wide range of views on the best role for the County to play in shaping the Village of Port Tobacco’s future:

- o Among participating residents, there's skepticism that future County elected officials might not live up to the vision being created today. They favor protective covenants in any vision and agreement between the Village and the County about Port Tobacco's future.
- o Stakeholders did agree that the County should play a role in helping to develop Port Tobacco as a destination, but there’s a wide range of opinions on the details of that role. Some felt that the County should buy Stagg Hall as a first step toward transforming the historic Village Square while others were wary of this.
- o Some participants would like to see the County buy property within and around the Village Square for preservation purposes while others don’t think this is a wise use of public funds unless a clear purpose is established beforehand.

Workshop 2 Discussion and Questionnaire Response Summary

Survey Number	Option	Port Tobacco Resident					Society for the Restoration of Port Tobacco Member		Charles County Archaeological Society Member		Other		Pros	Cons		
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11			12	
Resident Restoration Archaeological		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1				
Other					"Taxpayer"			Resident not within corporate limits			Charles County Resident	Southern Maryland Heritage Area Consortium				
	Option A "Status Quo"	Feasibility	-	1	1	5	3	More inclined to like this option	4	Long term status quo will be a problem	3	Can do, but has problems	5	1	Peaceful; no government involved; cheaper option for taxpayer's money	Allows new developments; inadequate public investment
		Appeal	-	1	1	5	5		1	-	3	2	2	1		
	Option B "Preservation Park"	Feasibility	-	1	2	1	-	Would like to see some of smaller buildings rebuilt - newspapers, old school house, shops	2	-	4	3	3	3	Modest compromise; most feasible; lower cost option; allows for interpretation	Too many ghost structures; stagnant time period
		Appeal	-	1	2	-	-		4	-	5	1	3	5		
	Option C "Living Village"	Feasibility	-	4	2	1	-	-	4	-	2	2-4; should be feasible over time	3		Good sense of balance; seems to fit original vision; residents act as caretakers	New residential development; does not follow original foundations; should not move existing schoolhouse
		Appeal	-	4	4	-	-	-	4	-	3	2 to 3	5	Worried about heritage tourist desire for "authenticity;" Colonial Williamsburg struggles with this		
	Option D "Village Restoration"	Feasibility	Definitely PT restored as original preservation	4	2	Amended	1	Do not totally re-do the town to something that it wasn't	1	-	2	1	2		Original village generates most interest	New road distorts village
		Appeal		4	4	5	5		4	-	5	1	4			
	Hybrid	Feasibility	-	4	3	-	-	Each of the 4 options has some parts that are beneficial	-	Affordable restoration on current foundations	4	-	-	Create derivative of Option C; include computer visualization like shown at Jamestown		
		Appeal	-	4	4	-	-		-	Deviation of option D; don't move High St.	5	-	-			
	Different Option	Feasibility	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	Park on Compton property when available	-	-	-	-		
		Appeal	-	4	-	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-		
	Additional Comments				Hybrid option; Modified Preservation Park						Option B; Structures outlined on ground instead of ghost structures					

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