

CHESAPEAKE BAY PASSENGER FERRY FEASIBILITY STUDY



BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

The Chesapeake Bay is steeped in maritime history, including a time when water ferry transportation drove the development and success of our coastal communities. In recent years, many of these communities on both the western and eastern shores have lost the water transportation connectivity, and, in many cases, lost quality access to the Bay other than by private boat or limited charters. For many communities, the Bay has the potential to serve as a key economic driver for water activities and as a transportation gateway for both residents and visitors to bayside destinations throughout the region.

The purpose of the Chesapeake Bay Passenger Ferry Feasibility Study is to evaluate the potential for a new passenger ferry service that could stimulate economic growth within each host community, provide improved access to the Bay, provide new water transportation connectivity options, and promote enhanced tourism opportunities throughout the region.

APPROACH

Our approach is designed to define a proposed passenger ferry system in the Maryland part of the Chesapeake Bay, identify a more limited short-term baseline Passenger Ferry System to focus immediate investments, develop ridership forecasts and supporting financial analyses, assess vessel options, and provide recommended actions and strategies to advance the project.

A key part of our approach has included visits to and engagement with representatives from each identified host community to better understand the level of interest, available infrastructure, and types of available tourism/visitor activities that could help drive ridership for the system. We are also assessing the potential of the new service to stimulate economic growth opportunities, with a particular focus on our more rural communities.

OPPORTUNITY TO ADVANCE THE INDUSTRY

The next generation of green technology is a key factor being considered as part of this feasibility study. Specifically, options to deploy alternative fuel vessels are being included as part of the analysis. The deployment of this type of technology would likely become a key part of the system branding, and provides the opportunity for the Chesapeake to lead the nation in an advanced water passenger ferry system focused on the promotion of water access, economic development, and environmental stewardship.



KEY CHARACTERISTICS

Passenger Ferry Only

Phased Development of Service

*Focus on Rural Economic
Development Opportunities*

*Consideration of Alternative
Fuel & Vessel Technology*

Built for Ongoing Expansion

*Positioned for Immediate
Service Demonstrations*

OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED SYSTEM

Twenty-one (21) host communities and possible routes linking the communities have been identified and represent the full system. Thirteen (13) of these communities have been further selected to represent the proposed baseline Passenger Ferry System – that is, the sites anticipated to have the greatest possibility of demonstrating interest in and success of a passenger ferry service on the Chesapeake Bay within one (1) to three (3) years – while also ensuring geographic diversity. The map provides an illustration of the baseline communities (green dots) and full system communities (yellow dots). Each line color represents the six (6) distinct routes that make up the baseline system.

This study, as noted above, is focused on the Maryland portion of the Chesapeake Bay. This limits the proposed station locations and routes to this geography. With that said, it should be acknowledged that as the system develops and expands, there will be numerous opportunities to identify routes that connect our Maryland communities with locations in Virginia (via the Chesapeake and Potomac), Washington, DC (via the Potomac), and Delaware (via the Chesapeake & Delaware Canal).



Potential routes included in the baseline Passenger Ferry System include:

BALTIMORE ↔ ROCK HALL ↔ KENT NARROWS ↔ ST. MICHAELS ↔ MATAPEAKE ↔ ANNAPOLIS

BALTIMORE ↔ ANNAPOLIS

ANNAPOLIS ↔ CHESAPEAKE BEACH ↔ SOLOMONS ISLAND ↔ CRISFIELD

CHESAPEAKE BEACH ↔ OXFORD ↔ EASTON ↔ CAMBRIDGE

SOLOMONS ISLAND ↔ ST. MARY'S CITY ↔ CRISFIELD ↔ SOLOMONS ISLAND

SOLOMONS ISLAND ↔ CAMBRIDGE

The Chesapeake Bay Passenger Ferry Feasibility Study is being conducted by Cambridge Systematics and supported by a consortium of counties including Anne Arundel, Calvert, Queen Anne's, Somerset, and St. Mary's. The study is funded by a matching grant awarded to Visit Annapolis & Anne Arundel County by the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration's American Rescue Plan: Travel, Tourism & Outdoor Recreation Program.

GETTING INVOLVED!

Your input is critical to the successful develop and implementation of a new water passenger ferry in the Chesapeake! If you have questions, please reach out to your county tourism director.

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