



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Visit Annapolis & Anne Arundel County-led Consortium is Accepting Bids to Determine the Feasibility of Passenger Ferry Service on the Chesapeake Bay**

**ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND** – On January 3, 2023, a five-county tourism consortium spearheaded by Visit Annapolis & Anne Arundel County (VAAAC) began accepting proposals to determine the feasibility of initiating sustainable passenger ferry service to connect key Maryland destinations along the Chesapeake Bay.

Available for download at [www.visitannapolis.org/about-us/our-team/employment-opportunities/](http://www.visitannapolis.org/about-us/our-team/employment-opportunities/), the Chesapeake Bay Passenger Ferry Feasibility Study Consortium's (the Consortium) request for proposals (RFP) invites interested parties to submit bids for determining the financial and operational viability of providing passenger ferry service as well as conducting cost-benefit and economic impact analyses for such a system.

The RFP has been in the works since the Consortium, comprised of VAAAC as well as Calvert, Queen Anne's, Somerset, and St. Mary's Counties, accepted a \$125,000 Local Technical Assistance matching grant from the United States Economic Development Administration (EDA) on October 18, 2022. Consortium grantee, VAAAC Executive Director Kristen Pironis, applied for and accepted the grant on behalf of the Consortium.

The five members of the Consortium as well as Anne Arundel County and the Maryland Economic Development Corporation will provide the required \$125,000 in matching funds via a seven-way split.

Pironis says issuing the RFP is the next step in a quest to help ensure that area residents and visitors to Maryland have access to North America's largest estuary. As Pironis sees it, "It's a transformational moment. Members of the Consortium are excited to be working together on a regional project with far reaching ramifications. It's not just about connecting destinations. It's about being connected to the Chesapeake Bay. If the study determines passenger ferry service along Maryland's portion of the Chesapeake Bay is feasible, we'll be one step closer to

providing equal and equitable access to the Bay, and that would be a game changer.”

**Members of the Consortium have provided the following quotes with attribution:**

“We are excited to collaborate on this tremendous opportunity. The Chesapeake Bay Passenger Ferry project has the potential to expand business and tourism in our county, enabling residents to experience traveling on the bay and visit other areas in our treasured Chesapeake Bay region that have not been as accessible in the past.”

*--President Earl F. “Buddy” Hance, Calvert County Commissioners*

“We are excited to join our neighboring counties in exploring the feasibility of a Chesapeake Bay Passenger Ferry. This will be a great way to enhance tourism in the Chesapeake Bay Region.”

*--Jack Wilson, Queen Anne’s County Commissioner*

“Somerset County is proud to be a part of this transformational statewide project that will position Maryland as a singular destination for water-based travel. Somerset County is committed to a sustainable tourism model that will strengthen our economic growth in the Somerset area for all county businesses and residents by using the Chesapeake Bay as a connector for visitors to experience our county, while providing an economic boost to the area.”

*--Craig Mathies Sr., Somerset County Commissioner*

“St. Mary’s County looks forward to participating in the feasibility study phase of the Chesapeake Bay Passenger Ferry project. It is a priority of our Tourism and Hospitality Master Plan and the County Comprehensive Plan to expand water access along our nearly 500 miles of shoreline. This thoughtful and collaborative approach to attract visitors is a recipe for success for St. Mary’s County and the entire State of Maryland.”

*--Chris Kaselemis, AICP Director, Department of Economic Development St. Mary’s County Maryland*

Chesapeake Bay Passenger Feasibility proposals are due by February 15, 2023. Electronic proposals with the subject line: Proposal for Chesapeake Bay Ferry Study are to be sent to Shannon Harcum at [sharcum@visitannapolis.org](mailto:sharcum@visitannapolis.org) by 11:59 p.m. February 15, 2023. Hand-delivered or mailed-in proposals labeled Proposal for Chesapeake Bay Ferry Study are due by 5:00 p.m. on February 15, 2023. They are to be sent to the attention of Shannon Harcum at Visit Annapolis & Anne Arundel County; 26 West Street; Annapolis, MD 21401.

The Consortium expects to award the job to a qualified bidder on or before March 15, 2023.

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