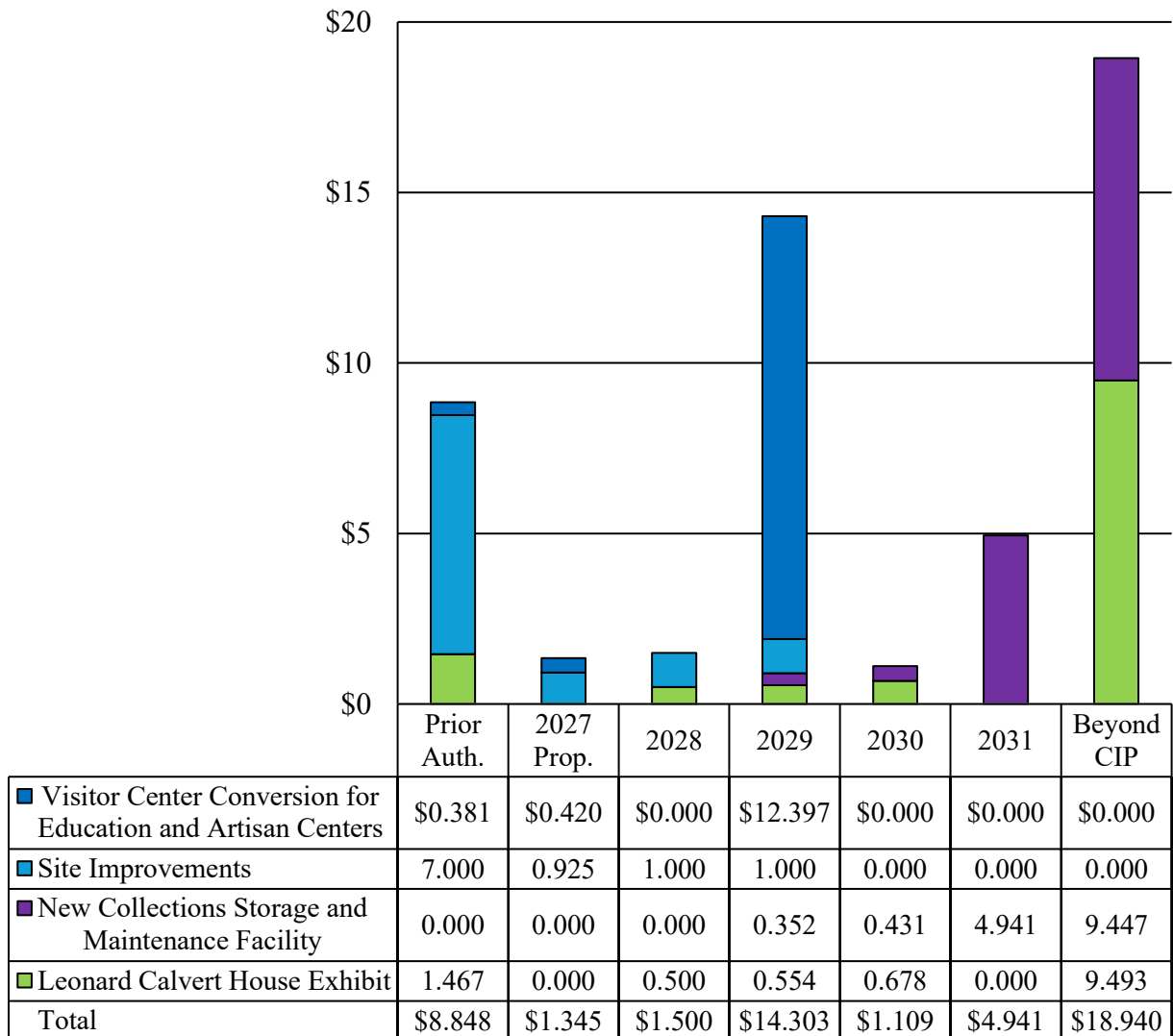


**D17**  
**Historic St. Mary’s City Commission – Capital**

***Capital Budget Summary***

**State-owned *Capital Improvement Program***  
**(\$ in Millions)**



CIP: *Capital Improvement Program*

Note: All projects are funded with general obligation bonds. Funding shown for the Visitor Center Conversion for Education and Artisan Centers does not include an additional \$500,000 in nonbudgeted funds from the Historic St. Mary’s City Foundation programmed in fiscal 2029.

For further information contact: Katharine Barbour

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## ***Key Observations***

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- ***Minor Changes to Visitor Center Conversion Cost and Schedule:*** Design is now scheduled to begin in April 2026, 6 months later than originally planned, however, the estimated project length has been shortened from 18 months to 12 months. The 2026 *Capital Improvement Program* (CIP) has reduced the estimated project cost to \$13.7 million, a decrease of \$1.2 million from the 2025 CIP.
- ***Funding for Site Improvement Projects Resumes in Fiscal 2027:*** The fiscal 2027 capital budget includes \$925,000 in general obligation (GO) bonds for three site improvement projects: (1) resurfacing the parking lot at the Godiah Spray Plantation Exhibit; (2) improvements to the Historic St. Mary’s City Commission’s (HSMCC) hiking trails and footbridges; and (3) new lighting for outdoor exhibits. The program did not receive funding in fiscal 2026 due to a large balance of unexpended and unencumbered funds.

## ***GO Bond Recommended Actions***

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1. Adopt the following narrative:

**Site Improvements Expenditures Report:** The budget committees request that the Historic St. Mary’s City Commission (HSMCC) submit a report by December 1, 2026, detailing all projects within the Site Improvements program, including the priority of each project, the funds encumbered and expended for each project, and a status update for each project explaining any changes to timelines, design, or priority. The report should include a separate accounting and status of projects undertaken with general obligation bond funds, commission resources, and Department of General Services-managed funds through the State Facility Renewal Program.

<b>Information Request</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
Report on encumbrances and expenditures for site improvement projects	HSMCC	December 1, 2026

## Updates

- Grand Opening of Maryland Heritage Interpretive Center Set for July 2026:** The Maryland Heritage Interpretive Center will serve as the museum’s new visitor center as well as a new, interactive indoor exhibit. The project will also establish flexible space for educational and artistic programming and address issues with an insufficient amount of storage space, offices, and restrooms. In July 2025, HSMCC requested to use up to \$724,000 from the Construction Contingency Fund (CCF) to cover unanticipated costs associated with extending the project’s architecture, design, and engineering contract; addressing design flaws; and covering additional exhibit fabrication expenses resulting from project delays. The project is expected to be completed at the end of fiscal 2026, with a grand opening at the beginning of fiscal 2027. The center’s final cost is expected to total approximately \$20.9 million, including CCF funds.

## Summary of Fiscal 2027 Funded State-owned Projects

### Visitor Center Conversion for Education and Artisan Center

**Project Summary:** This project includes the renovation of the existing visitor center at Historic St. Mary’s City, as well as an adjacent storage facility to create a new, flexible-use complex for educational and visitor programs. The conversion of the existing visitor center is possible because it is being replaced by the new Maryland Heritage Interpretive Center, which is expected to open at the beginning of fiscal 2027. This project will provide additional restrooms, storage space, and experiences that are accessible when inclement weather precludes the visitation of HSMCC’s outdoor exhibits.

<b>New/Ongoing: Ongoing</b>	
<b>Start Date:</b> April 2026	<b>Est. Completion Date:</b> July 2029

<b>Fund Sources:</b>								
(\$ in Millions)	Prior Auth.	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	Beyond CIP	Total
<b>GO Bonds</b>	\$0.381	\$0.420	\$0.000	\$12.397	\$0.000	\$0.000	\$0.000	\$0.000
<b>Nonbudgeted</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.500	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$0.381</b>	<b>\$0.420</b>	<b>\$0.000</b>	<b>\$12.897</b>	<b>\$0.000</b>	<b>\$0.000</b>	<b>\$0.000</b>	<b>\$13.698</b>

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<b>Fund Uses:</b>								
<b>(\$ in Millions)</b>	<b>Prior Auth.</b>	<b>2027</b>	<b>2028</b>	<b>2029</b>	<b>2030</b>	<b>2031</b>	<b>Beyond CIP</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Planning</b>	\$0.381	\$0.420	\$0.000	\$0.388	\$0.000	\$0.000	\$0.000	\$0.000
<b>Construction</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	12.116	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
<b>Equipment</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.393	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$0.381</b>	<b>\$0.420</b>	<b>\$0.000</b>	<b>\$12.897</b>	<b>\$0.000</b>	<b>\$0.000</b>	<b>\$0.000</b>	<b>\$13.698</b>

- **Need:** HSMCC is primarily an outdoor museum, which limits revenue intake during inclement weather. HSMCC also reports that there is a lack of indoor space for programming, insufficient storage and office space, and too few bathrooms, which further limit the facility’s operations and the number of people that it can accommodate.
- **Project Status and Schedule:** Design is now scheduled to begin in April 2026, 6 months later than originally planned (October 2025), as HSMCC needed more time for the procurement process. Despite the delayed start, the estimated project length has been shortened from 18 months to 12 months after review by the Department of General Services (DGS). Due to limited fiscal 2028 budget capacity, construction has been deferred to the beginning of fiscal 2029.
- **Changes:** In addition to the aforementioned timeline changes, the estimated cost of the project has decreased due to reduced escalation and the elimination of a green construction premium. While the 2025 CIP estimated a total project cost of \$14.9 million, the 2026 CIP has reduced this estimate to \$13.7 million, a decrease of \$1.2 million (8%).

**Site Improvements**

**Project Summary:** This program addresses problems related to aging and deficient infrastructure.

<b>New/Ongoing:</b> Ongoing	
<b>Start Date:</b> Fiscal 2022	<b>Est. Completion Date:</b> March 2029

<b>Fund Sources:</b>								
<b>(\$ in Millions)</b>	<b>Prior Auth.</b>	<b>2027</b>	<b>2028</b>	<b>2029</b>	<b>2030</b>	<b>2031</b>	<b>Beyond CIP</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>GO Bonds</b>	\$7.000	\$0.925	\$1.000	\$1.000	\$0.000	\$0.000	\$0.000	\$9.925
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7.000</b>	<b>\$0.925</b>	<b>\$1.000</b>	<b>\$1.000</b>	<b>\$0.000</b>	<b>\$0.000</b>	<b>\$0.000</b>	<b>\$9.925</b>

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The fiscal 2027 capital budget includes GO bonds for three site improvement projects: (1) resurfacing the parking lot at the Godiah Spray Plantation Exhibit; (2) improvements to HSMCC’s hiking trails and footbridges; and (3) new lighting for outdoor exhibits.

Site Improvement Project (\$ in Millions)	2027	Future Request	Total
Godiah Spray Plantation Exhibit Parking Lot	\$0.250	\$0.000	\$0.250

- **Project Description:** The Godiah Spray Plantation Exhibit offers historical education through a reconstruction of a typical seventeenth century tobacco farm. This project will regrade and repave the exhibit’s parking lot and install stormwater management.
- **Need:** Poor stormwater drainage has caused surface degradation and large potholes in the parking lot. The drainage issue has also contributed to the erosion of some of the exhibit’s pathways and green spaces.
- **Project Status and Schedule:** The project’s month-long design process will begin in September 2026, with construction commencing in March 2027 and lasting three months. The entire project will utilize \$250,000 in GO bonds and will take less than a year to complete. HSMCC’s 2025 report on site improvement projects listed \$150,000 in prior funding for the project, which the CIP does not reflect. **HSMCC should clarify the total funding allocated for this project and if the fiscal 2025 funding was reallocated to other priorities.**

Site Improvement Project (\$ in Millions)	2027	Future Request	Total
Hiking Trails and Footbridges Improvements	\$0.375	\$1.625	\$2.000

- **Project Description:** This project will restore 3.5 miles of hiking trails and five wooden footbridges throughout the southern end of HSMCC’s property.
- **Need:** The trails have deteriorated over the years, as a large portion of them have not received regular maintenance due to being inaccessible to utility vehicles. The project will restore the condition of the trails and make them easier to maintain and more accessible.
- **Project Status and Schedule:** Updating HSMCC’s trails will cost approximately \$2.0 million in GO bonds and will take roughly 2.5 years to complete. The fiscal 2027 capital budget provides \$375,000 to begin the six-month design phase of the project in October 2026. Construction will begin in September 2027, with estimated completion in March 2029. There was \$100,000 initially authorized for this project in fiscal 2025, but the CIP does not reflect this prior funding. **HSMCC should clarify the total funding allocated for this project and if the fiscal 2025 funding was reallocated to other priorities.**

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<b>Site Improvement Project (\$ in Millions)</b>	<b>2027</b>	<b>Future Request</b>	<b>Total</b>
Lighting Installation for Outdoor Exhibition Area	\$0.300	\$0.000	\$0.300

- **Project Description:** This project will install lighting throughout HSMCC’s outdoor exhibits.
- **Need:** Museum visitors, especially those with disabilities, are currently challenged when navigating the outdoor area during evening programs due to the lack of sufficient lighting. Improving lighting will allow HSMCC to offer extended hours for evening programs and exhibits.
- **Project Status and Schedule:** This \$300,000 project will take less than a year to complete. Design is scheduled to begin in September 2026 and last two months, with construction commencing in February 2027 and finishing in June 2027.

**Site Improvements Prior Authorized Projects**

After reporting \$6.1 million in unencumbered funds at the end of calendar 2024, HSMCC did not receive funds for fiscal 2026 site improvements. This pause in funds was intended to give HSMCC time to encumber funds and pull from its large balance.

As requested by the 2025 *Joint Chairmen’s Report*, HSMCC submitted a report at the end of calendar 2025 detailing encumbrances and expenditures for all site improvement projects. The agency’s submission lists \$7.0 million in projects; \$3.9 million in expenditures; \$459,000 in outstanding encumbrances; and \$2.7 million in unencumbered funds, a decrease of \$3.4 million in unencumbered funds from the year prior. Of the \$2.7 million unencumbered balance, \$2.0 million reflects the entire fiscal 2025 authorization for the following site improvement projects:

- \$500,000 for the Chancellors Point Chase House;
- \$150,000 for the Period Split Rail and paling fences;
- \$25,000 for the Visitor Center Bridge;
- \$100,000 for the exterior renovation of HSMCC’s administrative offices;
- \$70,000 to regrade and resurface the access roads leading to the museum’s interpretive sites;
- \$100,000 for upgrades to hiking trails and bridges;

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- \$150,000 for the Godiah Spray Plantation parking lot;
- \$600,000 for the Westerly House renovation;
- \$150,000 for Visitor Center outbuildings; and
- \$155,000 for signage at the museum’s entrance.

Additionally, in December 2025, the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) authorized the reallocation of funds from the fiscal 2025 Site Improvements authorization to fund two projects:

- \$400,000 for the Pavilion at Chancellor’s Point, which would demolish the Chase House to construct a timber-framed pavilion with an accessible bathroom to serve as a shelter and meeting place. This project represents a scaled-down modification of the Chancellor’s Point Chase House renovation project that received authorizations of \$250,000 in fiscal 2024 and \$500,000 in fiscal 2025; and
- \$750,000 for infrastructure upgrades and renovations to the Branham House. The project would replace the roof, gutters, windows, doors, and HVAC system, refurbish the kitchen and bathroom, and create office space and lodging for visiting scholars.

Conversely, DBM rescinded the approval of \$600,000 for the restoration of the Westerly Complex, a residential property owned by HSMCC. The renovation was primarily to provide affordable housing for staff as well as to earn rental income, which is not an appropriate use of Site Improvements program funding intended to address infrastructure issues impacting visitors’ experience at the museum.

After accounting for the rescission and reallocations, the full allocation of fiscal 2024 and 2025 authorizations by project is unclear. **HSMCC should provide an updated accounting of fiscal 2024 and 2025 authorizations by project.**

**The Department of Legislative Services recommends the adoption of committee narrative requiring HSMCC to submit a report detailing all projects within the Site Improvements program, including the priority of each project, the funds encumbered and expended for each project, and a status update for each project explaining any changes to timelines, design, or priority. The report should include a separate accounting and status of projects undertaken with GO bond funds as specified in the CIP, commission resources, and DGS-managed funds through the State Facility Renewal Program.**

## ***Summary of Out-year State-owned Projects***

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- ***New Collections Storage and Maintenance Facility:*** This project will demolish two buildings and construct a new facility for HSMCC’s Research and Collections department and its Facilities Maintenance department. The facility will include climate-controlled storage for museum collections, as well as general storage, offices, and vehicle maintenance space. The estimated cost of this project in the 2026 CIP is \$15.2 million in GO bonds, an increase of \$1.8 million from the 2025 CIP estimate. **HSMCC should discuss its plan to address storage issues before the project is complete.**
- ***Leonard Calvert House Exhibit:*** Built in the 1630s, the Calvert House was the first major building constructed in Maryland and was the home of Leonard Calvert, the colony’s first governor. This project involves reconstructing the house on an enlarged footprint to safely encase the archeological remains of the original site and provide space for modern exhibits and administrative support. Prior authorizations for the project total \$1.5 million in GO bonds and were used for archaeological research on the site of the exhibit. The 2026 CIP anticipates additional funding beginning in fiscal 2028 with \$500,000 to continue planning. The updated cost estimate is \$12.7 million, \$6.0 million less than the \$18.7 million estimate in the 2025 CIP.

**Appendix 1**  
**Executive’s Operating Budget Impact Statement – State-owned Projects**  
**Fiscal 2027-2031**  
**(\$ in Millions)**

	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
<b>Visitor Center Conversion for Education and Artisan Center</b>					
Estimated Operating Costs	<b>\$0.000</b>	<b>\$0.000</b>	<b>\$0.000</b>	<b>\$0.053</b>	<b>\$0.076</b>
Estimated Staffing	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

The 2026 CIP estimates that \$53,000 will be needed beginning in fiscal 2030 and \$76,000 in fiscal 2031 to operate the planned education and artisan centers, including 2 full-time equivalent contractual positions: 1 full-time receptionist and digital assistant and 1 part-time maintenance technician.