

## Master Interpretive Plan -- Annapolis City Dock Area, Draft (July 2021)

### Interpretive Themes and Subthemes:

#### 1. Origins

Annapolis's strategic location on the rich and expansive Chesapeake Bay, and the intricate web of maritime trade it supported, fueled the growth and development of the City from a small village to state capital and, temporarily, the Nation's capital.

Annapolis's power of place is informed by its enormous potential for prosperity. A complex interaction of water, land, climate, geological formations, and topographical features has nurtured a unique habitat for life along the water. Humans over time have been attracted to the natural environment and the abundant resources it provides. The cultural landscape of Annapolis reflects changing relationships to these natural resources. The area's earliest peoples—including Native Americans—shaped what would become Annapolis as they interacted with the natural environment. Later, Europeans, Africans, and their descendants would also grapple with the gradual emergence of a new Nation.

#### Subthemes

- Impact of Geography and Topography on Settlement Patterns
  - Indigenous Communities
  - European Arrival and Settlement
  - Africans and African Americans
  - Servitude and Slavery in Annapolis
  - Building Annapolis
  - Maryland's Capital
  - Founding a New Nation
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#### 2. Working the Waterways

The geography of the Annapolis harbor along with the rich resources of the Chesapeake Bay have provided for the historical development of commerce around a maritime economy.

Since indigenous peoples first used the waterways for sustenance and travel, succeeding generations have depended on the water to support their everyday lives and businesses. For nearly two centuries Annapolis pulsed with the comings and goings of passengers and freight. When Baltimore became the dominant seaport for international trade, Annapolis served as a regional port for farm produce, livestock, seafood, raw materials, and manufactured goods. The richness of the Chesapeake Bay fueled a shift to a maritime resource-dependent economy at Annapolis with the harvesting of fish and shellfish as the tobacco and import economy declined.

Subthemes

- Native American Travel and Trade
  - The Evolution of Transportation
  - Waterborne Commerce and Communication
  - Mercantile Neighborhoods
  - Watermen's Work and Culture
  - Migrant Workforce in the Seafood Industries
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### 3. The United States Naval Academy

Established in 1845, the U.S. Naval Academy (USNA) serves as a point of collective pride and purpose for the Annapolis community.

Because of Annapolis's strategic location and connection to the water, the U.S. Navy chose the City as the home of its federal service academy, established to train its students to be Naval or Marine Corps officers. As time passed, the lives and work of USNA students and personnel have both influenced and been shaped by the unique culture of Annapolis. The USNA's growth generated further growth

in the City, attracting people from around the world to Annapolis to join the institution and to work in supportive industries. Residents of Annapolis and visitors to the City have historically participated in the USNA's cultural traditions and celebrations, while Annapolis itself offers opportunities to expand community and personal development for USNA midshipmen and personnel.

#### Subthemes

- Military History in Annapolis
  - Founding the Federal Service Academy
  - Geographic and Economic Growth of the Naval Academy
  - Naval Traditions and Celebrations
  - Developing Young Leaders
  - Expanding Diversity within the Brigade
  - The Naval Academy in the Community
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#### 4. Fighting for Justice, Expanding Equality

The cultural heritage of Annapolis is informed by a history of social, political, and economic struggles for equity and inclusion.

As the City of Annapolis grew and evolved over time—continuing still today—people have fought for expanding justice and equality for its diverse residents, much like the nation as a whole. People from all over the world settled side-by-side in the residential neighborhoods of Annapolis. Their interactions with one another can be described by both cooperation and conflict, shared values and moments of contention.

#### Subthemes

- The Struggle for African American Freedom and Civil Rights
- Ethnic Cultures and Immigrant Communities
- Religious Groups, Activities, and Influences

- Women of Annapolis

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## 5. Recreational Wonderland: Annapolis as Gateway to the Chesapeake

### Bay

The same waterways that fueled Annapolis's development and supported a working waterfront now serve as the basis of a major water-based recreation destination and economy.

Situated along the Severn River, Annapolis is a major destination for sail and power boaters plying the waters of the Chesapeake Bay.

Where Annapolis's waterways were once filled with workboats, now water taxis, tour boats, and paddleboarders glide across Spa Creek, Back Creek, and the waters around Annapolis. The City has evolved into a magnet for recreation and tourism. Water-related recreation has expanded into marinas, boatyards, and waterfront restaurants, creating vibrant experiential opportunities to enjoy Annapolis's natural resources. Notably, a growing recreational economy has also displaced once-working waterfront communities.

### Subthemes

- From Working Waterfront to Recreational Wonderland
  - Watersports and Activities
  - Shoreside Leisure and Food Culture
  - Public Events
  - Parks and Public Access
  - Ecotourism
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## 6. Preserving the Power of Place

For decades, Annapolis has been at the center of ground-breaking local and regional efforts to preserve, conserve, and restore the City's historic landscape and the broader Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Ecological crisis and societal shifts have impelled residents, visitors,

governments, and organizations to reassess the ways in which humans interact with Annapolis's natural resources and honor its cultural heritage. A dedicated diversity of individuals, communities, and organizations are working to preserve and restore historic structures, mitigate environmental impacts to the broader Chesapeake Bay watershed, institute resiliency and sustainability measures, and capture the stories of people and places lost to the physical landscape, but still important for understanding Annapolis's history and culture.

#### Subthemes

- Sustainable Economic Development
  - Adaptive Reuse
  - Historic Preservation
  - Chesapeake Conservation and Restoration
  - Heritage Tourism
  - Individual and Community Stewardship
  - Honoring the Past, Sites and Stories Unseen
  - Urban Archaeology
  - Public Art
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