

Community Design

Community design in the Annapolis Neck Small Area includes the image and unique features of the area, expressed in terms of the type and function of residential communities (urban, suburban enclaves, rural villages), the type and function of activity centers (shopping, employment, recreation, etc.), and the use and function of significant public spaces (government, park, open space).

Residential Communities

Residential communities on the Annapolis Neck vary in type and function. Lots range in size from quarter acre to several acres. There are waterfront homes in subdivisions along the Chesapeake Bay, Severn and South rivers and the many creeks in the planning area. Some communities, like Arundel on the Bay and Bay Ridge are older, platted in the 1920's and 1930's, on smaller, more uniform lots. Most residential communities function as single use areas, dependent upon a local network of roads and waterways for access to other uses, activities and services. There are several newer residential areas on the Neck that provide multi-family housing.

Activity Centers

Activity centers on the Annapolis Neck are areas where a variety of uses have converged in close proximity to one another or where there is an opportunity for this to occur to serve residents of nearby neighborhoods. Some of these activity centers are oriented around a grocery store, such as in the Outer Neck and South Shore centers identified in this Plan. Others are oriented along arteries such as West Street. The West Annapolis activity center is oriented around small specialty shops and businesses. The two regional activity centers on the Annapolis Neck are downtown Annapolis and Parole. These centers provide retail, office and residential uses in a concentrated area and on a much greater scale than the other activity centers.

Public Spaces

The most significant public spaces on the Annapolis Neck are located in downtown Annapolis (State House, Church Circle, Main Street, City Dock). Quiet Waters Park, the third largest in the County, is a significant public space that provides mostly passive recreation for local residents as well as for those who live elsewhere in the region. Another notable public space on the Neck is Thomas Point Park. These public spaces are used for a combination of recreation and leisure activities.

Key Opportunities and Issues

Opportunity Areas

The following areas of the Annapolis Neck were identified by the community design consultant, Alt Breeding Schwarz, as places where the application of design concepts, including streetscape treatment, landmark site identification, building facade improvements, and pedestrian

circulation improvements, could improve the overall function and appearance of the area.

Parole (US 50/301 Gateway) - Enhance the gateway into the Parole area from US 50/301

Annapolis - improve coordination of recommendations between the City of Annapolis Comprehensive Plan and Annapolis Neck Small Area Plan

Ridgely Avenue - this area functions as a service center with the existing medical offices and is a gateway to the West Annapolis area; there is concern that this area should not become more commercialized, that it is a historic community and that it is impacted by traffic.

West Street - the City and County are currently working together to revitalize West Street

Outer Neck - this area serves the eastern part of the Annapolis Neck along Forest Drive. There is an opportunity to create an active mixed use area around the intersection of Hillsmere Drive, Edgewood Road and Arundel on the Bay that would serve as an activity center for the lower part of the Annapolis Neck.

Inner West Street - the concept for this area is for more pedestrian oriented mixed use; there are also opportunities for additional parking in the inner West Street area

Transit Links - a regional transportation center at Parole and a local transit center in Annapolis, possibly near the Taylor Avenue Circle area, would support the concept of linking all parts of the Annapolis Neck with transit

The Annapolis Neck Small Area Planning Committee identified two areas of the Neck for further study. These areas were the Outer Neck and Parole.

The Outer Neck is located generally around the intersections of Hillsmere Drive, Edgewood Drive and Bay Ridge Road and includes existing commercial and nearby residential development. Issues identified by the consultant at this location include traffic congestion due to limited access from one arterial road (Bay Ridge Road). Multiple curb cuts and fragmented parking create excess vehicular movements. There is a lack of pedestrian connections between shopping locations, which also encourages excessive vehicular movements. Finally, there is no focal point or public space in the area that would serve to encourage pedestrian movements from nearby residential areas.

The Parole area includes the portion of developed commercial and office space from Riva Road to the Annapolis Mall. Issues identified by the consultant in this area were the lack of alternative transportation to get from the employment area to the retail area and back. Most trips are done by single occupant car, which adds to traffic congestion on roads in the Parole area.

Another issue is the lack of a strong identity element in the area that can knit together the major commercial nodes.

Design Consultant Recommendations

The consultant makes the following recommendations to address the issues identified in these two study areas:

Outer Neck Activity Center:

- Improve Pedestrian/Bicycle connections. Provide access to the library, separated by landscaping and trees, with crossings at or near signalized intersections, each leading to near-by neighborhoods.
- Interconnect parking lots to reduce curb cuts. Locate shared parking facilities behind commercial buildings.
- Create a public focal space which people can easily identify. This kind of space will help encourage pedestrian movements and provide a site for civic events.
- Reconnect Old Annapolis Neck Road to Hillsmere Drive at the Library, with additional access from the south into the commercial area.
- Consider a parallel road to Bay Ridge Road to provide access to new shared parking facilities and to the rear of commercial uses along Bay Ridge Road.
- Provide ample parking. Mixed use in this area should include 2-3 story buildings, not just one story structures.

Parole

- Create a Pedestrian-Tram Street running from the Annapolis Mall area to the Annapolis Science Center employment area.
- Create a Parole Transit Center to serve as a regional intermodal transportation hub for all of Annapolis Neck and the greater Annapolis-Washington-Baltimore region.